CONTENTS

VOLUME 15 □ ISSUE 40 □ RS 6.00 **SUNDAY** AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

4—10 SEPTEMBER 1988

COVER STORY **29**

LOVE, BADMINTON AND MURDER

Was Jan Morcha leader Sanjay Singh behind ace badminton player Syed Modi's murder or is he being framed by the Congress(I)? And, was there a love triangle? An indepth report.

NEWSWATCH **13**

A CHARADE OF DEMOCRACY

How humane is the world's largest democracy? Recent Amnesty International reports have indicted India for human rights violations by its security forces

DIARY **16**

AMONG THE BELIEVERS

Impressions of Pakistan sans Zia.

SPECIAL REPORT **20**

FORTY SECONDS THAT SHOOK BIHAR

The earthquake that ravaged Bihar may not have been as devastating as the one in 1934 but it brought back memories of that traumatic event. An on-the-spot report.

INTERVIEW **39**

THE EVERYDAY RAJIV



Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi takes time off from affairs of state to discuss his diet and other weighty matters.

PEOPLE **43**

ROUGH WEATHER

Rajiv's pilot buddy Satish Sharma flies into turbulence.



Page 29



Page 20

COMMENT

Opinion 4
Byline M.J. Akbar 6
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 8
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 9
Sight and Sound 12
Business Diary 73
Bodyline Ravi Shankar 83

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Deccan Diary 97
Delhi Diary 98

Cover transparency of Sanjay Singh by Sondeep Shankar, of Syed Modi by Phal S. Girota and of houses destroyed by earthquake in Bihar by Nirmal Mitra

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bijit Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001

Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura 20 paise, North-Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup, Barpeta, Kokrajhar Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts of Assam 30 paise

RELIGION **48**

KRISHNA AND THE REDS

The Russians are beginning to take interest in the cult propounded by ISKCON. A report.

MARKETS **52**

NOT JUST FAKES

Bombay's Chor Bazaar is a shopper's delight, a storehouse of a wide range of artefacts, including antiques.

ANALYSIS **56**

GUBERNATORIAL WHIMS

The dissolution of the Nagaland Assembly by Governor K.V. Krishna Rao has raised vital questions about the role of heads of state. Has the Governor ceased to be an impartial judge?

CRIME **59**

BIG TROUBLE IN 'LITTLE ENGLAND'

Passions are inflamed in a small hill town of Tamil Nadu over the alleged rape of a school teacher by cops inside a police station.

NEWS **61**

BUSINESS **68**

BOOK EXTRACT **84**

FIGHTING THE INSURGENTS

The brave fighters of the Gorkha Rifles have done the Indian Army proud on a number of occasions. In this extract from his book, *Path of Glory*, Lt-Col Gautam Sharma describes the heroic exploits of the Gorkha Rifles in the north-east.

Khaas Baat 79
Spotlight 80
Sundayweek 94
Odds and Trends 95



Keeping in step

The cover story about our army (*Out of step*, 14-20 August) was thought provoking. The way our jawans are used in all eventualities, it is clear that our internal administration is not foolproof. There is too much political influence on our armed forces, which is running the morale of our defence personnel.

B.N. Bose, Jamshedpur (Bihar)

■ The stumbling blocks mentioned in the article are a result of the changing scenario at the national and international levels. Notwithstanding the other controversies surrounding the Bofors deal, there is no denying that qualitywise the gun was the best bet at its price and has been unanimously acclaimed, even by those who are bent upon seeing Rajiv Gandhi in the dock because of the controversy surrounding the deal. The very fact that the ignominy of the 1962 war was erased in the 1965 and 1971 wars, speaks for the growth in stature of the Indian Army over the period which has seen a tremendous upheaval in the international arena.

Shreeniwas Mishra, Bombay (Maharashtra)



Two army jawans at an outpost: raw deal

■ The deteriorating relations between officers and jawans, lack of surveillance and reappointment of unfit personnel ... the factors responsible for creating a severe vacuum in [illegible]ism. There are forces within the country [illegible] direct aggression from outside will lead to a rise in [illegible] and separatism. It is high time that matters were set right in our armed forces.

Subal Chandra Saha, Malda (West Bengal)

Biased

Your article, *Wooing the Vanniyars (Deccan Diary*, 14—20 August), is based on wrong judgement. The Aadhipra Shakti movement guided by His Holiness Adigalar functions without regard to caste, creed, religion and nationality. It does not lean towards any political party. The *yagna* held recently was aimed at the "betterment of natural resources". We would expect your magazine to lend support to the movement, not otherwise.

R. Surendranath, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

■ Your report was biased. Moreover, the photograph used in the piece was prejudicial. Whenever a politician performs a ritual, the media invariably blows up the event. The photograph you have used can only serve to create anti-religious propaganda. Even politicians are ordinary Indians and have every right to participate in religious functions, without the press overreacting.

Dandapani Panda, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

Sensitive portrayal

Your article (*The love that dare not speak its name*, 31 July—6 August) on gays was both balanced and sensitive and adequately conveyed the loneliness of Indian gays. As a foreign gay, I am appalled at the scant and inaccurate knowledge of Indians on the dangers of AIDS. Your publication would do the nation a great service if it ran an occasional column on safe sexual habits.

David Greene, New Delhi

Happy as Governor

Your report, *Enter the bureaucrat (Deccan Diary*, 14-20 August), mentions that Dr P.C. Alexander, the Governor of Tamil Nadu, has been "toying with the idea" of taking up A.P. Venkateswaran's place in the Hinduja Foundation. Dr Alexander, on the contrary, considers it a privilege and honour to have been given the opportunity to serve as Governor, and to say that he is even thinking of taking up private employment is an insinuation against his sense of duty.

R. Santhanam, secretary to the Governor, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

P.C. Alexander: a sense of duty



Identity crisis

The comfortable conclusions drawn by Pico Iyer are most uncalled for (*Book Extract*, 17 - 23 July). The extract betrays a superficial attitude, born probably out of an agitated identity crisis Iyer, it seems, needs to slot



Pico Iyer: 'Western' credentials

India in the insane-cum-amusing category to reassure himself of his own 'Western' credentials. He reveals a staggering lack of insight about the profound socio-economic forces that create the Hindi film. Does all the vast complexity of India have to be at the mercy of these eager-eyed, showbiz brained propagators of the 'Coca Cola' form of analysis?

Sagarika Ghose, New Delhi

The face of SUNDAY

I agree with M. Bhatt (*Opinion*, 14—20 August) that SUNDAY is showing signs of tiredness. After blazing

through a glorious trail for nine years, the magazine is beginning to lose its distinctive identity and is now like any other run-of-the-mill glossy.

Sudip Gupta, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ I agree with Bhatt on some points, but totally disagree with his complaint over the changes in the magazine. When the country itself has undergone significant changes in the past decade, why shouldn't SUNDAY? Television soap operas, computers, hi-tech equipment, push-button telephones and VCRs are here to stay. Bhatt cannot take us back to 1978

Amit Bagaria, Calcutta (West Bengal)

Requiem for whom?

M. J. Akbar's main aim (*A requiem for the Janata Party* 7—13 August) is to criticise V.P. Singh and Opposition unity moves. Not finding any excuse to disparage these moves, he takes up the issue of the name of the united Opposition party. He calls it a battle formation and hopes that it will end as a battle. This is wishful thinking as there is no longer a Charan Singh with lifelong dreams of becoming Prime Minister or a Jagjivan Ram who deserved the Janata leadership but had no following in the party.

B.R. Nanda, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)

In a shambles

The dilemma of the Congress(I) has been analysed quite well (*Learning to cope with defeat*, 17—23 July). It may not be far from the truth to say that what is happening today is the cumulative effect of the long neglect of basic issues facing the party. Perhaps the Congress(I) leadership, which essentially means Rajiv Gandhi, is incapable of taking drastic steps to revamp the entire party at various levels. Unlike the selfless workers of yesteryear, those who now join the party regard it strictly as a profession and are often suspect in the public eye.

The readmission of ex-Congressmen, who have been expelled or who have resigned from the party, may be a short-term solution. Similarly, paid workers at the time of elections quite often prove to be a liability. Revamping the party is a must but the odds against it are too many. And time is running out.

V.S. Garg, Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh)

Irreparable loss

Syed Modi's death (*A champion's exit* 7—13 August) cannot be dismissed lightly. Sports should not be used by governments to resolve political conflicts. Sports stars will be useful ambassadors and can enhance the bond of friendship beween two countries.

B.S. Uppal, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)

■ Syed Modi is no more. After a few condolence meetings, the shock will diminish and life will return to normal. What can never be forgotten is the gruesome manner in which he was killed. Modi's death is a big loss not only to his family but to the entire nation. Positive action is needed to bring the culprits to book. It's time our



Syed Modi: untimely end

government stopped squandering money on foreign tours, the Africa fund and the IPKF operations, and instead utilised the finance and manpower to make the country safe for its citizens.

Savitri Ratho, Cuttack (Orissa)

Sunday morning vacuum



On the sets of *Ramayan*: sorely missed

The end was not welcome (*Exit, the gods*, 31 July - 6 August). Viewers who got virtually addicted to the opium of religion are finding it very hard to set aside the 79-week habit of viewing *Ramayan*. Though Sagar has announced a two-month recess, Doordarshan director-general Bhaskar Ghosh is said to be opposed to any extension of the serial on the grounds of questionable quality. Ghosh's attention to quality is commendable. However, if *Ramayan* is discontinued on these grounds, then serials like *Amir Khusrau* and *Hakke-Bakke* should be disqualified forthwith. Doordarshan has a long way to go before it produces masterpieces like *Yes Prime Minister* (BBC) or *The Old Fox* (Transtel). At least Sagar's serial pleased millions and fetched good money.

Nanda Dulal Roy Chowdhury, Kharagpur (West Bengal)

■ The photographs were excellent. However, it is not Dara Singh who played Sugriv, as your caption for one of the photographs wrongly states.

Lakpa Dorjee Bhutia, Kalimpong (West Bengal)

The error is regretted—Editor

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager(U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta 700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of:
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

A demand

I am a regular reader of your magazine. SUNDAY is excellent in its content with the latest news coupled with interesting features. In recent times, you have discontinued the page on television titled *Small screen* by P. Chaitanya. You must restore this page as soon as possible. It is pages like this one which make a complete magazine.

Suvarna Kagal, Bombay (Maharashtra)

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

The sensible merger

Now that time has let out quite a bit of the air in the Samajwadi Janata Dal (SJD) balloon, a far more sensible option is being explored: the merger of the Lok Dal (B) with the Janata. The possibility has many attractions, but none greater than the fact that this particular merger is likely to be outside the range of Chaudhary Devi Lal's outstretched *lathi*.

One of the most respected political thinkers in the country, Nikhil Chakravartty, editor of *Mainstream* and ranking doyen of the Indian media, has described Devi Lal best: charlatan.

Chandra Shekhar: anything but a Congress(I) agent



Rajesh Kumar

Little could be more unfair than describing Chandra Shekhar as a Congress(I) agent...He could have been a minister any time he wanted, but he refused to surrender his independence. He broke with Mrs Gandhi over the JP movement, and spent the Emergency in jail. It is astonishing that Devi Lal has accused Chandra Shekhar of being a Congress(I) agent just because he refused to accept his version of Opposition politics

Chambers defines charlatan well: "a mere talking pretender; a quack". The tragedy was that this pretender took upon himself the mantle of a hero of the freedom struggle like Jayaprakash Narayan and thought that aggressive bullying was a substitute for persuasion and slander the substitute for discussion. Towards the end of last month Devi Lal set out to solve the complex problem of Opposition unity singlehanded (but, of course, with a *lathi* in that hand). His only rationale was acceptance of a common candidate for a substitute Prime Minister: everything else was irrelevant. All talk of a common programme had to subserve a simple and simplistic idea of unity. Not particularly interested in ideology or any defined social commitment himself, he tried to answer the criticism about the lack of a programme by accepting every option that was suggested. In the end the SJD discovered that it had a 71-point programme: if there were sniggers all around, then Messrs Lal and Company had no one to blame but themselves. It was literally tack-on politics, built on the view that a credible Opposition could be constructed simply by endless accommodation rather than by agreement on any principle or even, come to think of it, much political understanding. The SJD was being already perceived as a Jat-Thakur dominated alliance, and the reluctance of Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav for instance to associate with this combination was perfectly understandable. He came eventually to the "merger" convention hosted by Mr Devi Lal but only after some very friendly persuasion by Mr George Fernandes. As it turned out, the victory was pyrrhic, because all talk of merger was quietly buried after the merger convention. The SJD was left hanging in the air, while Mr H.N. Bahuguna and Mr Chandra Shekhar initiated their own unity efforts. A logical culmination of this effort would be a strengthened Janata Party, which is a far more sensible idea than announcing a new party out of pretty thin air.

For the past few weeks, Mr Devi Lal has been behaving as if the greatest enemies of the country have stopped being Mr Rajiv Gandhi and Mr Amitabh Bachchan, and have become Mr Chandra Shekhar and Mr H.N. Bahuguna. Mr Bahuguna of course has been at the receiving end of a bad press for a long while, and it has become almost mandatory for some Opposition leaders to taint him as the ruling party's "agent". But in the last five years, there have been few Opposition leaders who have suffered—directly, personally—as much as Mr Bahuguna has in the last five years. He after all was the man who stood up to Mrs Indira Gandhi, resigned the seat

he had won as a Congress(I) candidate and contested once again from Garhwal. Mrs Gandhi spared nothing in her efforts to see that he was defeated. Every possible effort and trick was used. Mrs Gandhi herself came to campaign against him, lending her considerable weight to what was only a byelection after all. Half the central leadership and the whole of the state leadership sat in Garhwal with no purpose other than to defeat Mr Bahuguna. The chief minister of UP then made every use of state power to destroy Mr Bahuguna, and after it became evident during the election campaign that Mr Bahuguna had the clear edge, the election was suddenly postponed at the request of the UP chief minister. All of this was documented very substantially in the relevant SUNDAY issues of the time. But, of course, all this is being deliberately forgotten now, because if you want to recall those events, then you will also have to remind yourself that the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh in those days was none other than Mr V.P. Singh. This could hardly be a very comfortable thought for Mr Devi Lal. Since he left the Congress then, Mr Bahuguna has stayed with the Opposition and, if anything, emerged as one of the most trenchant critics of Mr Rajiv Gandhi and his administration. When many of today's Opposition stalwarts were finding very positive hings to say about the new, young Prime linister, it was Mr Bahuguna who kept insisting that this government would not work.

Interestingly, the one man who shared a similar consistency was the Janata president. When the Opposition was ready to support the Anti-Defection Bill, for instance, Mr Chandra Shekhar wanted to oppose it. Similarly, when praise was pouring in for the Punjab accord, Mr Chandra Shekhar took a different position. Mr Chandra Shekhar and Mr Bahuguna joined the Left in their scepticism about the first two Budgets produced by the new government. And so on and so forth. Many of today's heroes were the greatest advocates—and indeed authors and implementers—of these policies. It is a most curious situation that these pillars of the Rajiv Gandhi establishment today want to become the stars of the Opposition when the policies they themselves initiated were found wanting. And those who fought consistently are being relegated to the sidelines as has-beens. Mr Devi Lal is not just wrong, he is being deliberately mischievous when he accuses a man like Chandra Shekhar of being a Congress(I) agent. If Mr Devi Lal looks around him with candour instead of prejudice he will discover that all the Congress(I) stalwarts and Rajiv Gandhi agents are on his side—and not with either Mr Bahuguna or Mr Chandra Shekhar. In fact, it is most fascinating what the old Rajiv heroes are doing. The man he made foreign secretary, Mr A.P. Venkateswaran, for instance, is now a public advocate of the RSS! On 14 August, the suave former foreign secretary presided over an RSS *guru pooja* function in Madras—and made a plea for what he called the true reality of this country, that it was a "Hindu India". Since such convictions are hardly formed overnight, one can only presume that the extremist in Mr Venkateswaran was neatly camouflaged all these years. Some of his colleagues in South Block will probably find this manifestation to be a bit of a shock.

To return to the main point, however: little could be more unfair than describing Mr Chandra Shekhar as a Congress(I) agent. A disciple of Acharya Narendra Dev, he was one of the stars of the PSP in his younger days, and came to the Congress only in the late Sixties, where he was an active supporter of Mrs Gandhi when she took a leftist line against the right-wing Syndicate. He could have been a minister any time he wanted, but he refused to surrender his independence. He broke with Mrs Gandhi over the JP movement, and spent the Emergency in jail. This is the first time since then that anyone has ever accused him of having any truck with the Congress. It is astonishing that Mr Devi Lal can accuse anyone of anything, just because the person refused to accept his version of Opposition politics.

What Mr Devi Lal will discover is that the rank and file of the Janata Party is still with Mr Chandra Shekhar, and that Mr Chandra Shekhar will not surrender JP's legacy so easily. Bluster is not a substitute for sensible analysis. And irresponsible accusation is not the best method to create a viable Opposition party. But who can convince a charlatan about such things?

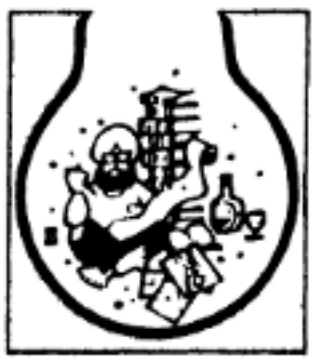
The tragedy was that this pretender, Devi Lal, took upon himself the mantle of a hero of the freedom struggle like JP and thought that aggressive bullying was a substitute for persuasion and slander the substitute for discussion. Towards the end of last month he set out to solve the complex problem of Opposition unity singlehanded. His only rationale was acceptance of a common candidate for a substitute Prime Minister



Devi Lal: wielding an intemperate *lathi*

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Mighty Mukhi demolishes the Tower of Babel



While addressing Delhi University students on the "need of a new religion for India", a sheaf of cyclostyled papers was pushed in front of me. After I had finished speaking and answering questions, I glanced at its contents. The writer claimed that he could prove conclusively that Sanatan Dharma was the mother of all religions including Christianity and Islam, that their scriptures, if carefully scrutinised, would reveal that they started as the Hindu with an invocation to Ganpati: *Shri Ganeshay Namah.* Having read the Bible and the Qoran and having missed the preliminary salutations to the elephantine deity, I put aside the paper, as the outpourings of one of those oddballs who are forever discovering nuggets of gold under the garbage of ignorance.

I wasn't let off. A few days later Mr M. L. Mukhi, a real estate consultant, rang me up and claimed the authorship of the document. He wanted to discuss the matter in detail.

"Christianity recognised the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh," asserted Mr Mukhi. Proof? "The word God is composed of three letters—G for generator (Brahma), O for operator (Vishnu) and D for destroyer (Siva or Mahesh)."

I lost my cool. "That is absolute rubbish!" I exploded. "This acronym was manufactured by that Balyogeshvar who married his American secretary and has settled in the States. I wrote about it making fun of him."

Mr Mukhi did not bat an eyelid. In rapid succession he placed one sheet of paper after the other. They were copies of letters he had written to editors of papers. "Were they published?" I asked him.

"No," he replied unabashed. "But I keep copies of everything I write."

I went through a dozen or more. In everyone Mr Mukhi had laid claim to exclusive knowledge which could resolve all disputes in the world. Besides claiming Sanatan Dharma ancestry for Christianity and Islam, he had made important discoveries in world's languages. "You see, after religion, it is language which divides people. I can conclusively prove that English and Hindi are not two languages but different dialects of one and the same language. I have decoded almost half the words of the English language and discovered their Hindi origins."

Mr Mukhi's study of etymology was charming in its naivete. To start with, the word dictionary. According to him it derives from the Hindi *diksha* for knowledge and *Hari*, the giver. Put the two together and you get the English dictionary. Likewise Christianity. Break up the word in three *kri, satya* and *neetee*. They total up to Sanatan Dharma. The name Adam comes from *ad* and *om* put together. The word permanent from the Hindi *perm* and *ananta*, bond from *bandhan*, media from *adhyam*, door from *dvaar*, durable from *dohra* and *bal*, embassy from *ham* and *vassy*, genesis from *janani*, hither from *idhar*, interim from *antrim*, candy from *khand*, sympathy from *sam* and *pathy*. And so on.

So far Mr Mukhi has got no change from editors, vice-chancellors or government functionaries. But he assured me that he has a lot to contribute in simplifying the language problem and is "at the beck and call of his country". Any takers?

A writer claimed that he could prove conclusively that Sanatan Dharma was the mother of all religions including Christianity and Islam, and that their scriptures started as the Hindu with an invocation to Ganpati



Illustration Debasha Deb

SUMMIT MEETING

After the last summit meeting between Rajiv Gandhi and President Zia-ul Haq, the two met privately for a friendly exchange of views. "What is your favourite hobby?" Zia-ul Haq asked Rajiv Gandhi.

"I collect jokes people tell about me," replied Rajiv. "And what is your favourite hobby, Mr President?"

"I collect people who make jokes about me", replied Zia-ul Haq.

GAMBLING DOESN'T PAY

A Haryanvi peasant was given to gambling. Much as his wife nagged him into giving up the bad habit, she failed. Ultimately she decided to put down her foot. "As from today there will be no gambling in this house. Gambling is a sin," she announced. "How can it be a sin?" her husband protested. "Men have been gambling since the times of the *Mahabharat*. Nobody called them sinful."

"Okay, if you want to follow the heroes of the *Mahabharat*, I can do the same. Remember, Draupadi had five husbands."

(Contributed by Shashank Shekhar, Meerut)



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

Time the IPKF returned

New Delhi, according to official sources, has spent Rs 65.9 crores in the first six months of the operation of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka. This excludes the troops' normal pay and allowances, cost of provisions, etc., and what was spent in Tamil Nadu, the base of the operation. At that time the strength of the force was a fifth or sixth of what it is today. The cost must be correspondingly higher, but no official figure is available.

Indian casualty figures, again from official sources, are 534 dead and 1,547 wounded. However, unofficial quarters put the figures at a much higher level.



An IPKF convoy in Sri Lanka: time to move out

When the operation began, I warned that it might prove to be India's Vietnam. New Delhi was furious. But, sadly, my fears are turning out to be justified. Let me quote a former Sri Lankan ambassador to the US, who a few days ago said: "It is possible now to talk of Sri Lanka as India's Vietnam."

In Vietnam, America's involvement was bad enough, but what made the operation worse was the cross purposes at which the Pentagon, the state department and the CIA worked. Washington's right hand did not know what the left did.

New Delhi seems to be similarly bedevilled in Sri Lanka. The LTTE's possession of SAM-7s, which can shoot down helicopters, and the AN-325 and IL-765 that the Indian Air Force uses to transport troops and supplies, also suggests a parallel with the Vietnam operation.

The Tigers have claimed that the SAM-7s were supplied to them by India, not "foreign powers" as New Delhi has alleged. Which agency did it, why it did it and what effect it has had are questions which will have to be answered in due course, if not by the Rajiv Gandhi regime, then by its successor government. A comment from a Sri Lankan newspaper is: "So, it was mother India and big brother Tamil Nadu, not Uncle Sam, who gave the toys to the 'boys'."

LTTE's charge is serious enough. It has given us a bad name abroad, more so in Sri Lanka. There must be an independent inquiry, if possible by an all-party parliamentary committee, to clear the charge. Otherwise, we will have no moral authority to criticise America for arming the Contras in Nicaragua or Pakistan for allowing its land to be used for forays into Afghanistan.

The inquiry, if it is held, may reveal the extent of our involvement in arming the LTTE. But it will not affect our operation as such. Jaffna, the Northern province, where most Tamils live, is normal and more or less so is the Eastern province. After that, why should we take upon ourselves the responsibility of liquidating the Tigers, who are from the soil and who, from all reports, are still looked upon as liberators? After all, they are the ones who brought the Tamil question to the fore and they are the ones who will be regarded as a "dependable" defence against the "aggressive" Sinhalese majority when the IPKF withdraws.

But if the purpose of the Sri Lankan exercise was to "protect" the Tamils and to get them more of a say in their areas, New Delhi has not succeeded. The gush of enthusiasm that the Tamils exhibited at the beginning for the IPKF has waned. Instances of innocent killings, however small, are circulating and in any operation, as the Americans experienced in Vietnam, some incidents like "Myly" are inevitable in a situation where the army is fighting an insurgency.

Even the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement, the LTTE alleges, has been watered down. While accepting the accord, Rajiv Gandhi said in Parliament that "the agreement meets the basic aspirations which animated the Tamils' struggle".

The main task entrusted to the IPKF has been accomplished. The LTTE's back has been broken and most Tamil areas have been cleared.

The LTTE says that the main thrust of the argument is to show that the structure of the framework proposed is incompatible with the model of regional autonomy provided by the Indian Constitution. The alterations that have been made on the Indian model are so significant that they defeat the objectives of the agreement and other Indian proposals. According to the LTTE, Rajiv Gandhi had assured Prabhakaran, the LTTE leader, that the residual matters would be discussed and resolved to the satisfaction of the Tamils. But the Jayewardene regime has refused to discuss the residual matters.

It is no use blaming the LTTE for violating the undertaking it had given before the Rajiv-Jayewardene accord; the LTTE says that the Indian government has gone back on its assurances. Let there be a white paper. One thing is definite: the longer the IPKF stays in Sri Lanka, the greater the chances of disaster on the Vietnam scale. A date will have to be fixed for the withdrawal. The sooner the better.

BUMPER 204-PAGE ISSUE NOW ON SALE

THE ISSUE OF THE DECADE

VINTAGE

GENTLEMAN

AUGUST 31, 1988 ■ Rs.8 THE COMPLETE MAGAZINE

SPECIAL 100TH ISSUE

1980-1988

A COLLECTOR'S ISSUE

A CHRONICLE OF THE FINEST STORIES, INTERVIEWS, COLUMNS AND FEATURES DRAWN FROM THE FIRST 100 ISSUES OF INDIA'S LEADING FEATURES MONTHLY.

- **Original columns by: Nani Palkhivala, Dom Moraes, Henry Kissinger and Ram Jethmalani.**
- **A scoop interview with Zia-ul-Haq.**
- **A historic dialogue between Piloo Mody and Khushwant Singh.**
- **M.J. Akbar's first press interview.**
- **Mrs Indira Gandhi's last interview.**
- **Exclusive interviews with: Rajiv Gandhi, Atal Behari Vajpayee, Maneka Gandhi, Arun Nehru, V.P. Singh, R.K. Narayan, Chandra Shekhar, Morarji Desai, Dhirubhai Ambani, Julio Ribeiro, President Jayewardene, Gen Ershad, V. Prabhakaran and many others.**

A COLLECTOR'S ISSUE

A chronicle of the finest stories, interviews, columns and features drawn from the first 100 issues of India's leading monthly magazine of ideas and opinion.

■ **Interviews with Rajiv Gandhi, Atal Behari Vajpayee, Maneka Gandhi, Arun Nehru, Nayantara Sahgal, R.K.Narayan, Amrita Pritam, President Jayewardene, V. Prabhakaran, Gen Ershad, Harivanshrai Bachchan, Dhirubhai Ambani, Satyajit Ray, Nirad Chaudhuri, V.P. Singh, Rahul Bajaj, Gulzarilal Nanda and Morarji Desai**

■ **Original columns by: Nani Palkhivala, Minoo Masani, L.K. Jha, Dom Moraes, Dr Henry Kissinger, George Verghese, Kuldip Nayar, S. Nihal Singh, C.R. Irani, Mallika Sarabhai, Ram Jethmalani and Jaswant Singh.**

■ **A scoop interview with President Zia-ul-Haq.**

■ **Indira Gandhi's last interview.**

■ **A historic dialogue between Piloo Mody and Khushwant Singh.**

■ **Pre-publication excerpts from V.S. Naipaul's autobiography and R.K. Narayan's *A Tiger for Malgudi*.**

■ **A first-of-its-kind dialogue between Sunil Gavaskar and Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi.**

STERLING NEWSPAPERS PVT. LTD.

■ GENTLEMAN ■ GFQ ■ TV & VIDEO WORLD
■ TECHNOCRAT ■ BUSINESS COMPUTER ■ MEGA CITY
■ STERLING BOOKS ■ STERLING INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS

1980 ■ 1988



R K Laxman The Times of India

"I only did my duty.

SUBASH GHISINGH, *GNLF chief, after the signing of the Darjeeling accord*

"The accord is in line with the process of reconciliation launched by the Centre.

BUTA SINGH, *Union home minister*

"I feel that it is important for us to have good relations with India and certainly a People's Party government will make that one of its top priorities

BENAZIR BHUTTO, *after the death of Pakistan's president Gen. Zia-ul Haq*

"Our father kept us away from public life and none of us is going to enter the arena of politics

EJAZUL HAQ *elder son of the late Gen. Zia-ul Haq*

"I think Syed Modi was murdered just to fix me

SANJAY SINGH, *Jan Morcha leader*

"It appears Rajiv Gandhi is visiting the slums. He is also talking to women. But all this cannot make him MGR, no, not even his fair skin.

VEERAPPAN, *former AIADMK minister, commenting on the Prime Minister's recent visit to Tamil Nadu*

"Whether we like it or not, we are a Hindu India.

A. P. VENKATESWARAN, *former foreign secretary*

"It is painful and shocking to see press reports that a member of the presidium is dubbing another member of the presidium (the present Lok Dal president) an agent of the Congress(I) and is reported to have remarked that a former president of the Janata party is not only an agent of the Congress(I) but also their guru.

SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA, *in a letter referring to Devi Lal's derogatory remarks*

"All this smacks of authoritarianism and must be curbed.

S. P. MALAVIYA, *Janata leader, on the utterances by Devi Lal*

"I am ready to fly to Patna at the behest of the Bihar chief minister and do whatever is possible to mitigate the sufferings of the people.

SHATRUGHAN SINHA, *filmstar*

"God is angry and that is why we are being punished.

EARTHQUAKE VICTIM *in Darbhanga*

"I can wait still. I have the patience of an opening bat.

SUNIL GAVASKAR, *on not being made a member of the Bombay Press Club*

"I don't believe in denying myself anything. Why should I? You live only once. Nobody's proved any different.

VINOD KHANNA, *filmstar*



Police ask people to return to their homes during the Meerut riots flouting civil liberties?

NEWSWATCH

A charade of democracy

Recent Amnesty International reports indict India for human rights violations by its security forces

How humane is the world's largest democracy? Not very, if the reports of Amnesty International, the influential civil liberties organisation which monitors human rights violations all over the world, are anything to go by. According to them, it is the poor and underprivileged in Punjab, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra and the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka who are the worst victims of oppression by the Indian army and police. But Indian external affairs ministry spokesmen maintain that the reports present a "very one-sided and distorted" account of the situation in India and Sri Lanka.

Can Amnesty's reports be wished away? The Indian government alleges that the organisation does not have a "reliable" way of collecting evidence. It depends on its own confidential sources to verify affidavits from victims of state terrorism. Also Amnesty is said to have minimised the importance of numerous rights and press freedoms enjoyed by Indian civilians. Is the government then in a position to rebut the charges?

A review of India's human rights record since January 1987 released by Amnesty points out that it is the poor and the underprivileged who are the worst victims of police oppression. Detention without trial, removal of crucial safeguards in security legislation and the failure to curb lawlessness by national and state security forces are among the charges against India. Amnesty had apparently sent the review to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi but he had come out publicly against the allegations and refused to allow representatives of the organisation to investigate complaints in Punjab.

Most of the affidavits Amnesty received in the last three years are from victims of police oppression in Punjab and of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka. The Indian government argues that most of the complaints are from extremists who were responsible for killing innocent civilians and members of security forces. Amnesty recognised that many of the people were involved in violence themselves, but the action taken against them 'transgressed international human rights standards". India, Amnesty pointed out, has long-established institutions which intervene to protect human rights. But the violations had continued in spite of them. The official reaction to this contention is that in coping with terrorism the security

forces do have to take firm action, and sometimes even commit excesses, or not strictly adhere to the law. But all cases of unlawful killings and illegal activities by security forces are always investigated and the guilty punished.

Extracts from the Amnesty reports on Sri Lanka tell a very different tale about the IPKF from what the Indian government has been standing by: "Members of the IPKF were accused of raping Tamil women and of deliberately killing dozens of unarmed Tamil civilians, among them elderly people, women and children. Even though Indian government spokesmen said that those killed were members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) or civilians who had been killed in 'crossfire', evidence mounted that in several cases the victims were non-combatant civilians apparently shot without provocation or in reprisal for the killing of IPKF men by the LTTE." No such complaints were made against the IPKF, however, during their most recent military operation in February when they conducted a major search operation for the LTTE members in Batticaloa.

The report gives details of several incidents. For example, on the night of 12-13 October, 1987, Indian commandos descended by helicopter to capture an LTTE base near the Jaffna University campus at Kokuvil, two miles from Jaffna, in the course of a major Indian military operation launched to obtain control of the Jaffna peninsula from the LTTE. Twenty-nine Indian commandos were reportedly shot dead by the LTTE, but several others fled and allegedly killed an estimated 40 non-combatant Tamil civilians living in the area. Relatives of the victims said that several IPKF soldiers took refuge in nearby houses and shot inhabitants at point-blank range, including women, children and an elderly couple, on 13 October in their homes at Pirampaday Lane, Kokuvil.

The Indian government, however, assumed responsibility for one extra-judicial killing on 22 November, 1987, it court-martialled a soldier who had the previous day killed two Muslims and wounded five others when he fired on a crowd near the Trincomalee clock-tower. The Sri Lanka government has been investigating conflicting reports of another incident in which at least 25 Muslim civilians were shot dead in the eastern village of Ottamawadi on 2 December, 1987. The IPKF maintained that the victims were killed in crossfire, but residents said villagers were indiscriminately killed after nine Indian soldiers had been killed in an LTTE ambush. Said the report: "To Amnesty International's knowledge, this is the only instance of a Sri Lankan government investigation into IPKF activities. And in no instance, it seems, has an impartial body attempted to carry out investigations into these and other alleged IPKF killings." A total of 680 people in the troubled areas have also mysteriously disappeared.

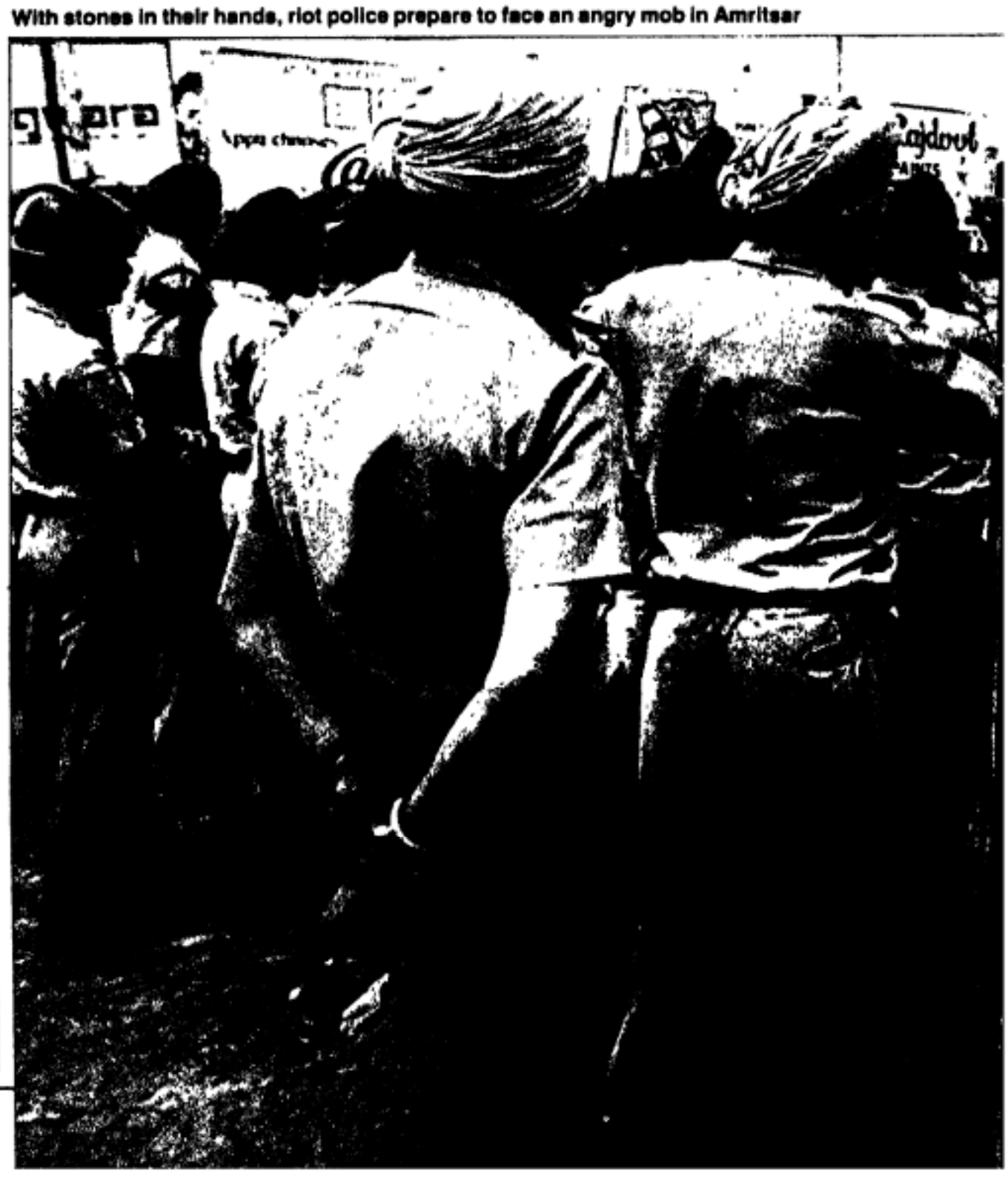
Can Amnesty's reports be wished away? The Indian government alleges that the organisation does not have a "reliable" way of collecting evidence. It depends on its own confidential sources to verify affidavits from victims of state terrorism

The most number of reports of encounter killings came from Punjab where security forces virtually have shoot-at-sight orders in several areas. Several young Sikhs were said to have been killed by the police in "fake encounters" in Amritsar district in August 1987. Other killings of this type by the police and military have been reported from Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Manipur.

Since January 1987 dozens of prisoners have also died in prisons all over the country after they were tortured in police stations. And the two groups most often subject to third degree tortures are political prisoners and members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, who have been singled out by the Constitution for special protection.

Allegations of torture of political prisoners in Punjab included the beating up of prisoners while they were hung by their feet with their hands tied behind their backs and administered electric shocks. Harijans in Bihar, too, were beaten and given electric shocks in police stations after they had disputes with their landlords. Several hundred lower caste women are alleged to have been raped by the police every year. But such cases have been investigated. Also, those responsible for torture are almost never brought to justice, even though the victims might have been compensated with money in rare cases.

With stones in their hands, riot police prepare to face an angry mob in Amritsar



The report also points out that hundreds of political prisoners were being held in Indian prisons under special security laws. These include 326 Sikhs being held in Jodhpur jail since June 1984.

An alarming number of crimes against women go unnoticed, too. Said an Amnesty report on allegations of rape by the police: "Although most cases of rape in India, as in other countries, are believed to go unreported, several thousand cases of rape are reported to the police each year all over India. A large proportion of these—estimated at between a third and half of all reported rape cases– concern members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes." For example, the minister of state for welfare informed the Rajya Sabha on 14 November, 1986,that of all the 936 rape cases reported between January and June that year, 492 concerned women belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes. The same ministry reported the following year that rape of women belonging to scheduled castes and tribes was particularly common in the north Indian states. On 5 March, 1987, the deputy minister for welfare was reported as saying that Uttar Pradesh headed the list with 229 such cases





Viswas Teja

Amnesty reports on Sri Lanka differ from the Indian government's version: "Members of the IPKF were accused of raping some women and of deliberately killing dozens of unarmed Tamil civilians, among them elderly people, women and children"

The IPKF in Sri Lanka: not a clean record

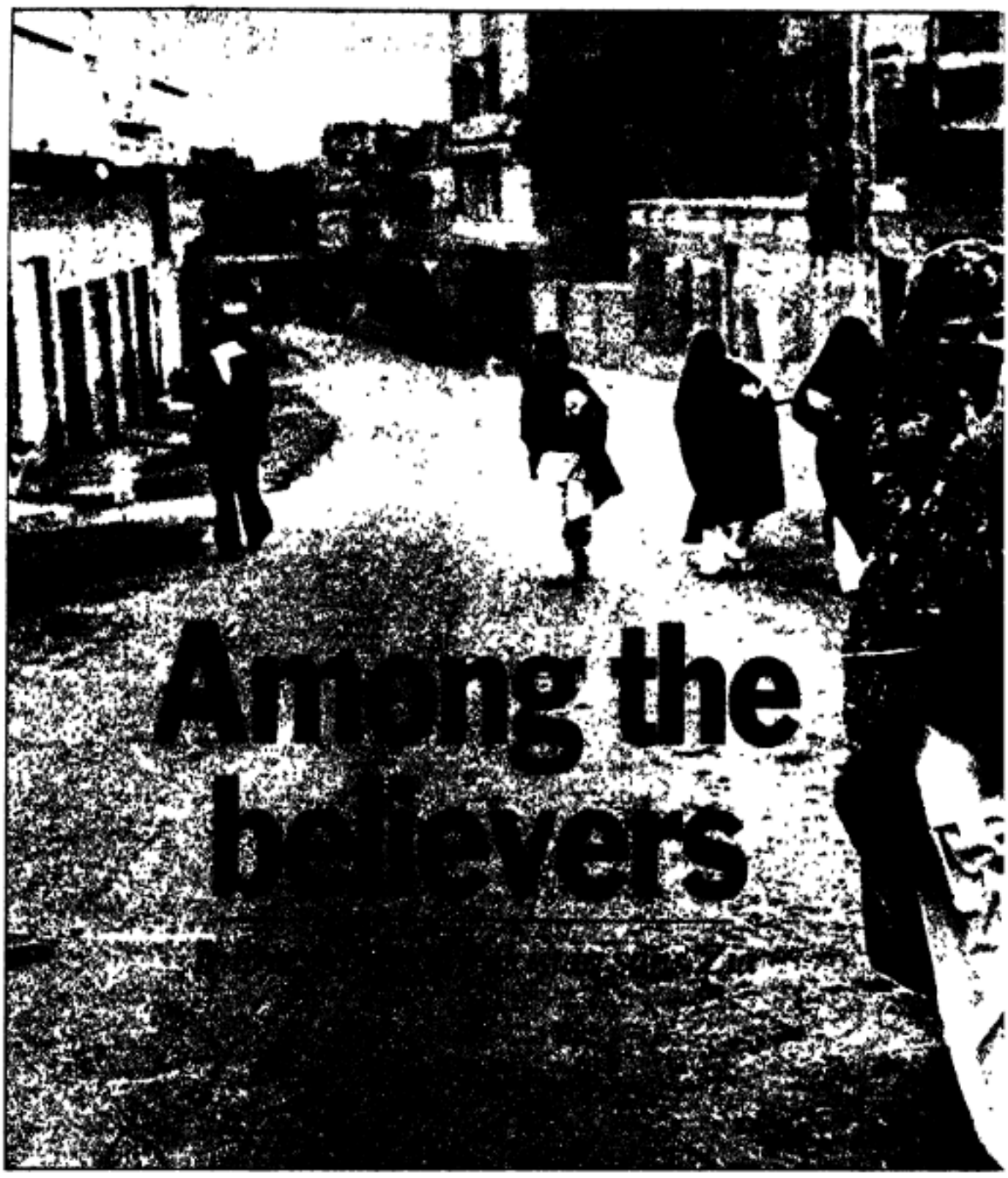
reported during 1986 and the first few months of 1987, followed by 151 cases in Madhya Pradesh and 73 in Bihar during the same period. But complaints about the rape of lower castes came from all over the country: a December 1986 report before the Rajya Sabha noted 4,400 reports of rape registered by such women in the four and half years between March 1982 and October 1986.

The conduct of the police during communal incidents has also been questioned. Said the Amnesty report on the Meerut riots between 22 and 23 May, 1987: "On 22 May several hundred men from the Hashimpura area of Meerut were seen being taken away in several trucks by members of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC). Witnesses said most were taken to local police stations, but several dozen in the first two or three trucks were reportedly taken to the banks of the Upper Ganga Canal near Muradnagar, shot and then bodies thrown in the water. By the last week of May, over 50 bodies had reportedly been found in the canal. Eighteen more were officially admitted to have been recovered from the nearby Hindon Canal at Ghaziabad, although Indian journalists visiting Muradnagar and neighbouring places said that at least twice that number had been recovered. Eyewitnesses said bodies had been thrown in the canal by armed men in uniform. Two of the five survivors of that incident have testified that they were taken to the canal at Muradnagar by uniformed men who they identified as PAC personnel who shot them and threw them in the canal. It is now believed all the bodies found in the water were of men taken away from Hashimpura although initial reports had indicated the bodies found in the Hindon Canal were of victims of the killings which subsequently took place in Maliana."

In conclusion, the Amnesty report on Meerut said: "Those guilty of abuses should invariably, and speedily, be brought to justice and that, pending current investigations involving allegations against PAC, those named in substantiated allegations of human rights violations should, at least temporarily, be removed from responsible positions." Any guesses as to what the government plans to do about the 32 persons who have recently been chargesheeted for their role in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots?

Nirmal Mitra/New Delhi

Uttarpara Jaykrishna Public Library



Among the beavers

For a country which has only recently lost its "iron man" (as General Zia-ul Haq was popularly known), Pakistan appeared remarkably unperturbed. Security during the funeral and after was lax and the absence of the army on the roads and at the airports came as a complete surprise. Lahore and Islamabad airports, for instance, were manned only by policemen in blue bearing a slovenly similarity to the Indian cops. In Islamabad one did not see a single army vehicle on the roads after the funeral or an officer in uniform outside the cantonment area. Except for the police on routine duty at traffic intersections, there was no security worth the name in the capital, which was full of visiting dignitaries. To a casual visitor, New Delhi would probably seem more like the capital of a police state than Islamabad.

Contrary to exceptions, one felt pretty much at home within minutes of landing in Lahore. The immigration officer on duty assured you that the Pakistanis did not look upon Indians as foreigners and papers were cleared within seconds. The customs waved one through after a cursory look at the hand baggage. The man behind the PIA (Pakistan International Airlines) counter checking in passengers for the connecting flight to Islamabad asked for ten Pakistani rupees by way of airport tax and pocketed the US currency bill handed to him without even making a pretence of returning the change. It felt just like home.

The only encounter with what one might call security was while boarding the shabby Boeing for Islamabad. The man checking the boarding cards was obviously from the intelligence wing, his crew cut and manner giving him away. Fully aware that I was from India, he asked, "You have come from Delhi?" and then realising that he had blundered into revealing that he knew more about my travel schedule than he should, hastily added, "You live in Islamabad?" I replied that I was a visiting Indian journalist.

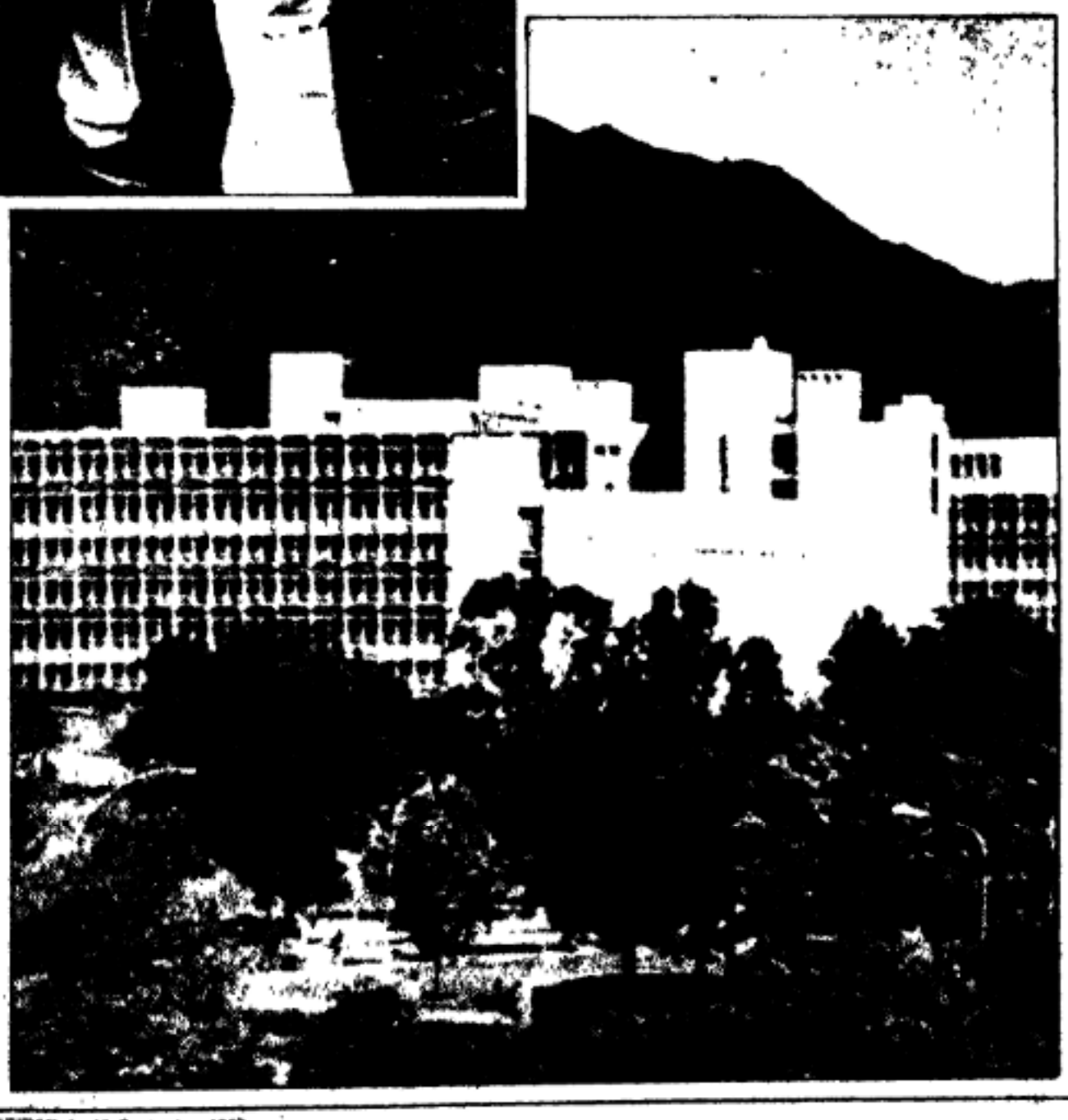
Where would I be staying in Islamabad and when would I be returning were his next questions. Obviously my replies were not satisfactory for he followed me into the aircraft a little later and whispered something into my ear about taking me around Lahore on my return. He then asked when I would be leaving Islamabad and whether I planned to stay in Lahore. Finally, he left, looking very unsatisfied; as if he would have liked to repeat the same questions a few more times. By this time all my apprehensions had disappeared; for, what can be more comforting than to be confronted with an intelligence man with no more intelligence or finesse than his counterpart back home.

The PIA flights begin with a recitation from the *Koran*. The air-hostesses are as attractive, or should one say as unattractive, as the ones with Indian Airlines. The service, however, is a little more cheerful and warm. The announcements made in chaste Urdu, sound like poetry to the untrained ear and the captains of the PIA flights are rather garrulous, keeping the passengers constantly informed about the landscape and landing details.

Islamabad is beautiful. Surrounded by hills, it is extremely green. It is a rich man's city and poverty is hardly visible. People live in large private houses and flats are unheard of. It is a proud city. Former Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo was very offended when I suggested that the temperatures in Islamabad and New Delhi these days were comparable. "It cannot be," he said, "we have planted more trees in Islamabad than in the rest of the country." What could have become a crisis that threatened the interview he granted me was fortunately defused when a colleague from *India Today* intervened to assure Junejo that Islamabad was far cooler than New Delhi could ever hope to be. "Yes, that is what I would have thought," grunted Junejo, calming down.







There was no attempt to project Pakistan as a country of the pure. Everyone I spoke to took trouble to explain the political situation, to point out that society had been corrupted by army rule, that power and money were the only two things that carried weight today

The people are warm, friendly and very hospitable. But what was striking was their lack of concern about the future immediately after Zia's death. In fact, till the new President Ghulam Ishaq Khan held his first press conference (on 20 August), conversation in Islamabad's drawing-rooms revolved around who killed Zia. Various conspiracy theories were considered and it was with considerable reluctance that people turned away to entertain thoughts about what the future held in store for them and their country. It was only after Ghulam Ishaq Khan's meeting with the press that the conversation turned to: what now?

Secretariat complex, Islamabad: a restoration of democracy?

Everyone I spoke to– whether pro-establishment or anti—was in favour of democratic rule. Hopes run high now that the new President has made his views on many subjects known, with the army having decided to give Pakistan breathing space and the installation of a popular government being more than possible. The people are very frank and direct. Attitudes to Indian journalists are not hostile and everyone, including leading bureaucrats and politicians, were willing to offer a frank assessment of the situation. But with one condition: "Do not quote us."

The trust that the Pakistanis reposed in a journalist who they did not know, given that a single quote attributed to them would land them in grave trouble, was remarkable. Interestingly, the man on the street was willing to be quoted and spoke out loud and clear, whether on Zia, Benazir Bhutto, or the army. A taxi-driver observed: "*Asal mein yeh government bari zalil thi* (This government was very oppressive), they would not give us visas to visit India." And then he laughed: "Don't write only this, say that we are good people and we like India very much."

There was no attempt to project Pakistan as a country of the pure. Everyone I spoke to took trouble to explain the political situation, to point out that society had been corrupted by army rule, that power and money were the only two things that carried weight today, and that it was now upto the politicians to prove that they could manage the country's affairs.

Islamicisation is a question that engages the Pakistani. Views on this are divided. While the common man hails the late President as one who did a lot for religion and earned Pakistan a distinct place in the Islamic world, the intelligentsia feels that a change in the tone and focus of Islamicisation would be more than welcome. Women newsreaders and announcers over Pakistan television have their heads covered; their *kurtas* are also covered with *dupattas*, usually pristine white. They use minimal make-up and wear no ornaments.

However, many women go out to work and some occupy positions of responsibility. In fact, one of the correspondents to ask more than one question at Ghulam Ishaq Khan's press conference was a woman journalist of a leading Pakistani newspaper, *Dawn*. Interestingly, any women seen in *burkhas* at the airports *en route* turned out to be



Islamabad street scene: a warm people

visitors from India and not Pakistani nationals who saw no reason to hide their gaudy synthetics under austere cloaks.

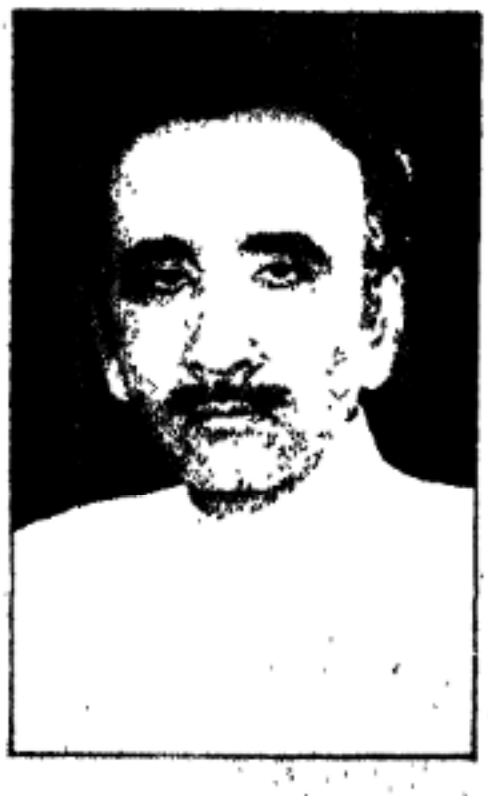
A strong cultural identity knits the people together. They prefer to speak in Urdu and wear *salwars* and *kurtas*, the dress prescribed by the government. It is very popular with the men and is worn my most, both rich and poor—the only difference lying in the quality of the material used. Very few men wear trousers and very few women saris.

The interiors of the houses are beautifully furnished, drawing freely on Western designs and furnishings. The crockery is usually imported, like most other things in this country which is far from being self-sufficient. The Pakistanis are fond of their liquor but unfortunately prohibition has made things difficult for them. A lucky few frequent the residences of their foreign friends to slake their thirst. But for most, it means missing out.

The interest in India is genuine. The regret that the governments of both countries have made it difficult for the people to meet and trade is pronounced. Everyone wanted to know if India would extend a hand in friendship to the new government. But many answered their own question with the observation that it did not suit Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to normalise relations at present. "We would like nothing better than for us to come together, but we do not see it happening," was the general observation.

There is also a great deal of interest in

Former Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo was very offended when I suggested that the temperatures in Islamabad and Delhi these days were comparable. "It cannot be," he said, "we have planted more trees in Islamabad than in the rest of the country"



Indian Muslims and their reaction to Zia's death. In fact, everyone I met did not fail to ask: "What do Indian Muslims feel?" And their hurt was palpable when told that by and large, Indian Muslims did not "feel" so strongly one way or the other. "But how can that be?" exclaimed an interior designer placing a hand on his heart. "We feel so much for our Muslim brothers there, why don't they care for us?" I tried to explain that 40 years was a long time and that a new generation had been born for whom Pakistan was just another foreign country. But I soon realised I was not making much sense, at least not to this young man from Karachi. He persisted: "What about the people in Kashmir? Surely, they are very upset." It was futile to explain that the trouble in the state after Zia's death was started by a few political leaders, who were using the Pakistan card to further their own petty ends.

At the same time, they are overtly hostile to people from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar who settled in Pakistan at the time of Independence. Emigrants from these regions claim that they are discriminated against and most of them express real surprise that Aslam Beg, who originally hails from UP, has been appointed chief of army staff. A whisper camaign charging Beg with a hand in Zia's killing has already begun. But most reject this theory as ridiculous and counter that one of the reasons for the army maintaining a low profile is the presence of Aslam Beg as its chief.

People originally from these two states claim that they have never really been accepted by the Punjabis, who they describe as the ruling clan, and the Sindhis. A Punjabi contractor was of the view that these people insisted on maintaining their own identities and culture (of superior Avadh) and "looked down upon us. We welcomed them but they did not accept that welcome." Whatever the truth, there is no doubt that considerable discord exists between the communities and it will be difficult for anyone outside the Punjab and Sindh region to rule Pakistan.

America is perceived as the benefactor and Russia the villain. No one believes that the USA could have had a hand in Zia's death and reject the suggestion as preposterous. Those who believe that Russia was involved throw in the Afghan intelligence agency, Khad, and India to complete the nexus.

One leaves Pakistan with memories of a simple, warm people who want peace and freedom but, like those on all sides of their borders, are pawns in a sordid political game.

Seema Mustafa / *Islamabad*

THOSE WHOM YOU RELY ON, **RELY ON THE JEEP.**



To be a keeper
of the law, is no easy task
Help someone out, one minute;
chase a dangerous criminal, the next
Which is why those whom you – and the
nation – rely on, have always trusted the Mahindra Jeep.
Safe and sturdy, with amazingly low fuel and maintenance costs
And that unique Jeep styling which has set an ageless trend. Worldwide.
The Mahindra Jeep.
For you, it's performance
you can rely on.



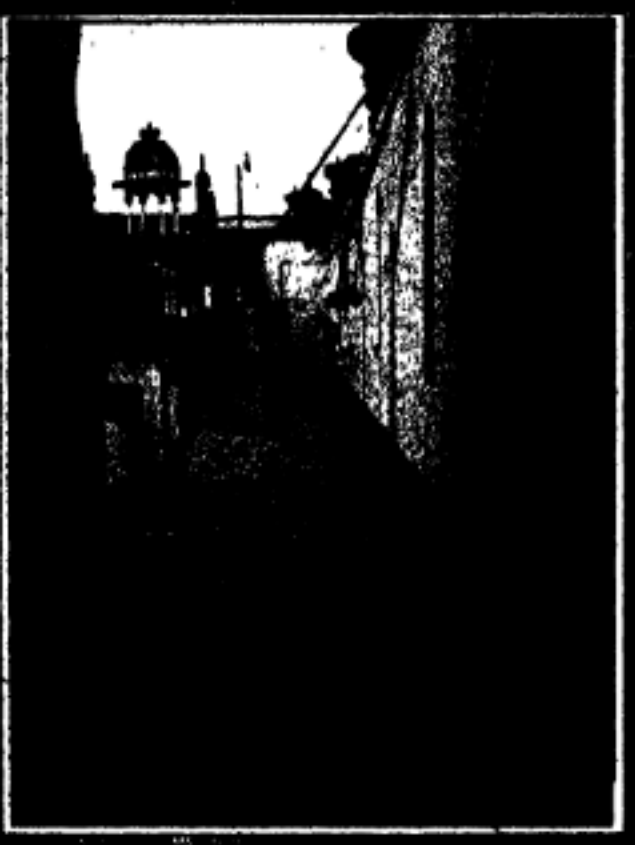
Mahindra Jeep®

Performance you can rely on.

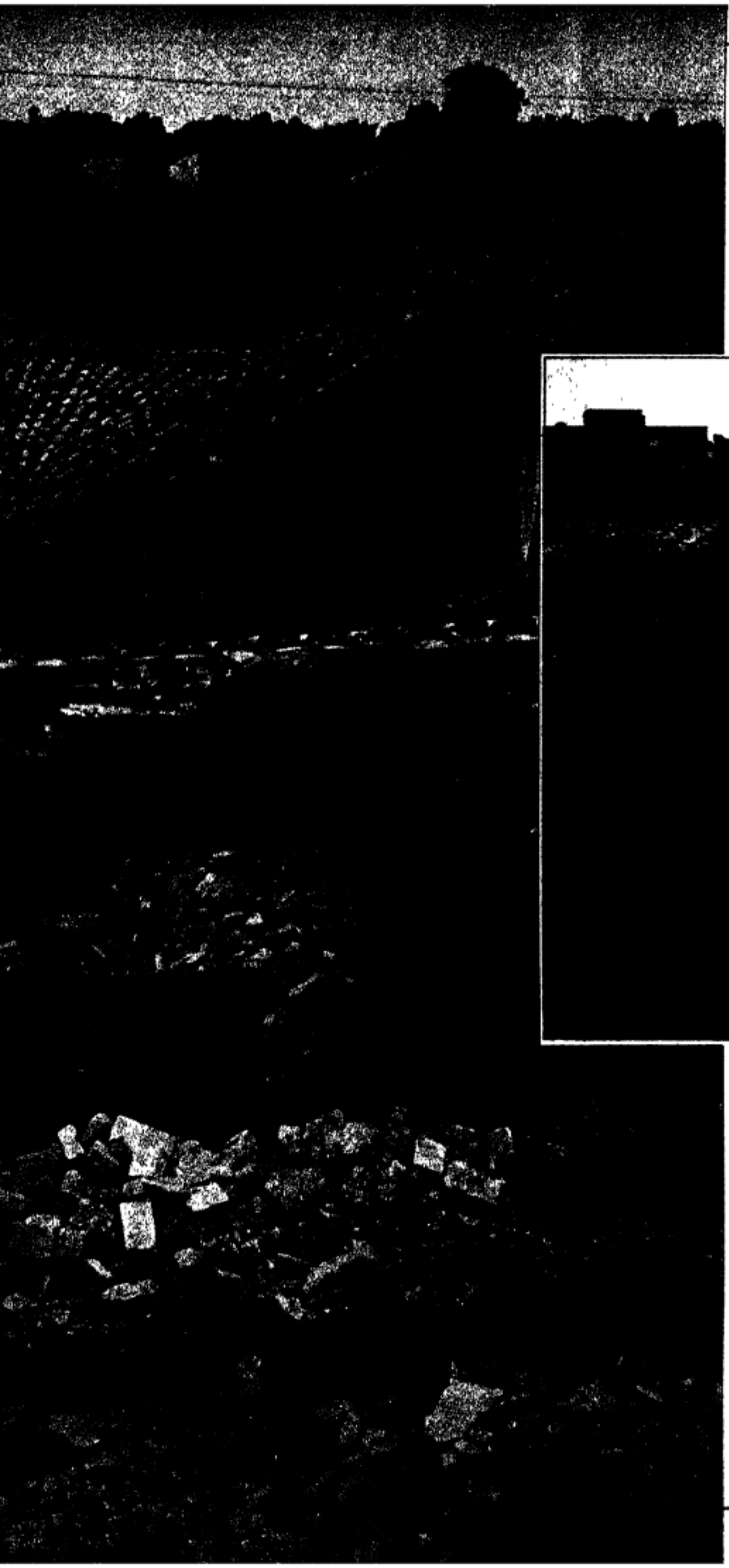
THERE IS NO OTHER JEEP MADE IN INDIA

Forty seconds that shook Bihar



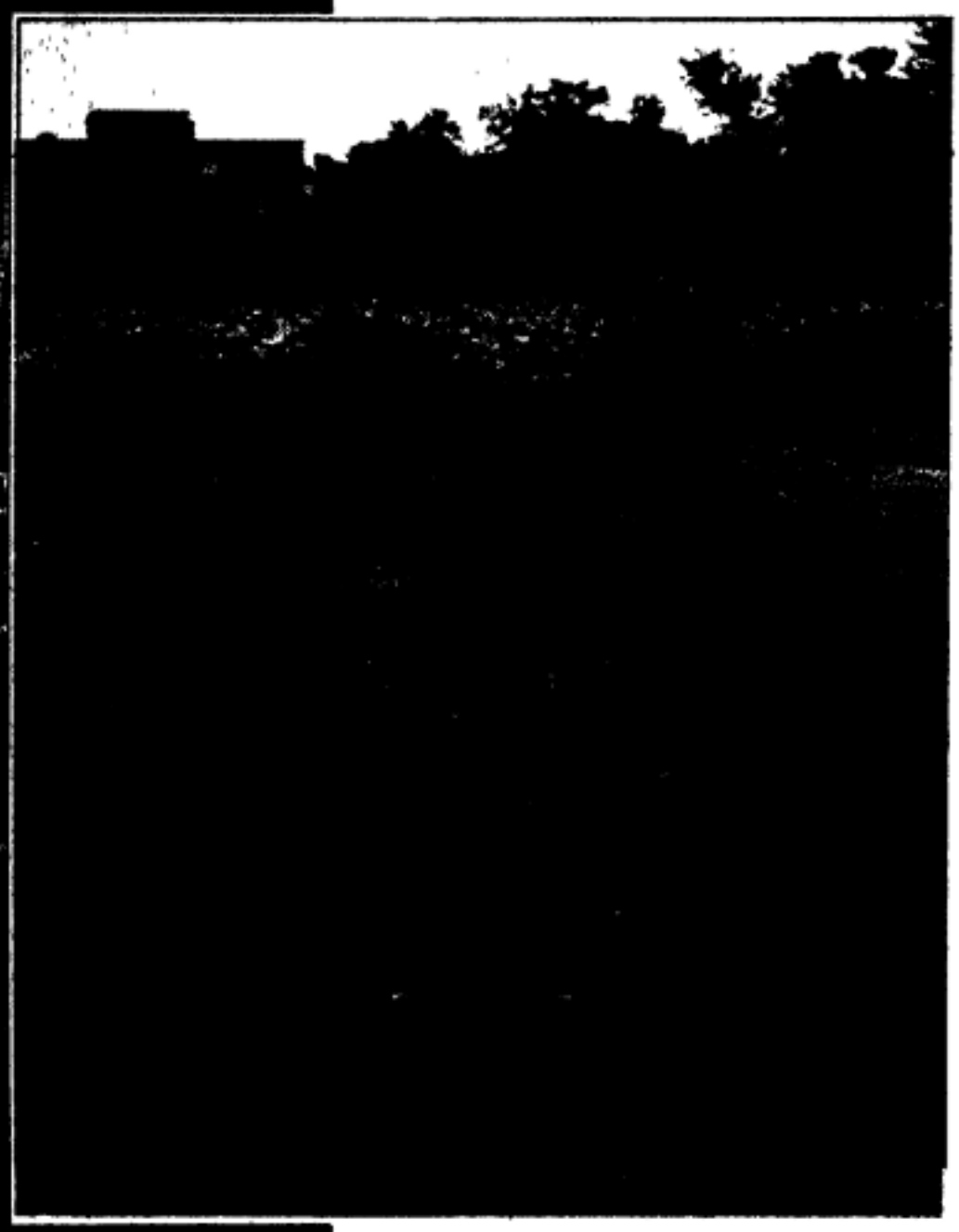






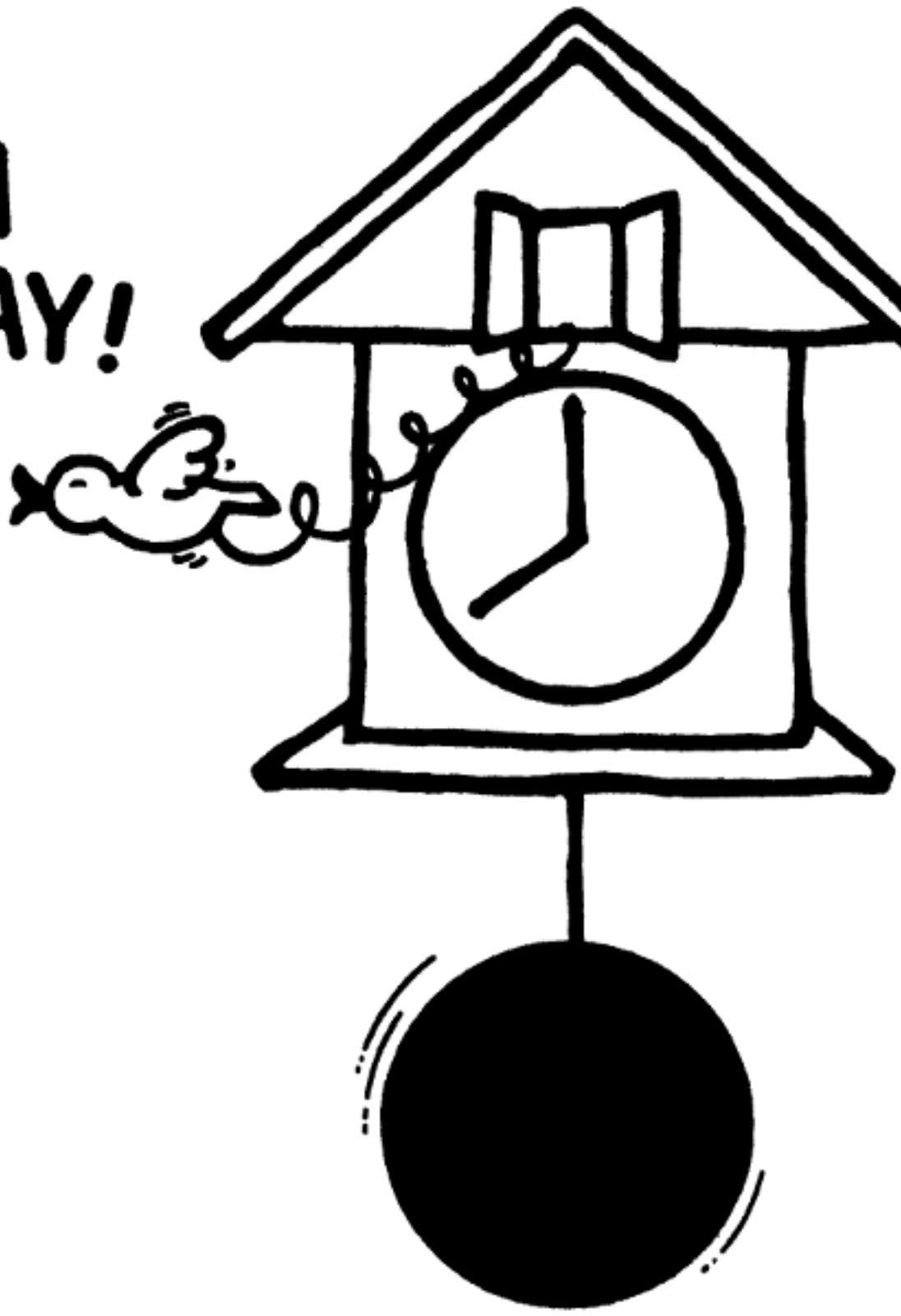
A scene of devastation in Mahrail village, Madhubani district

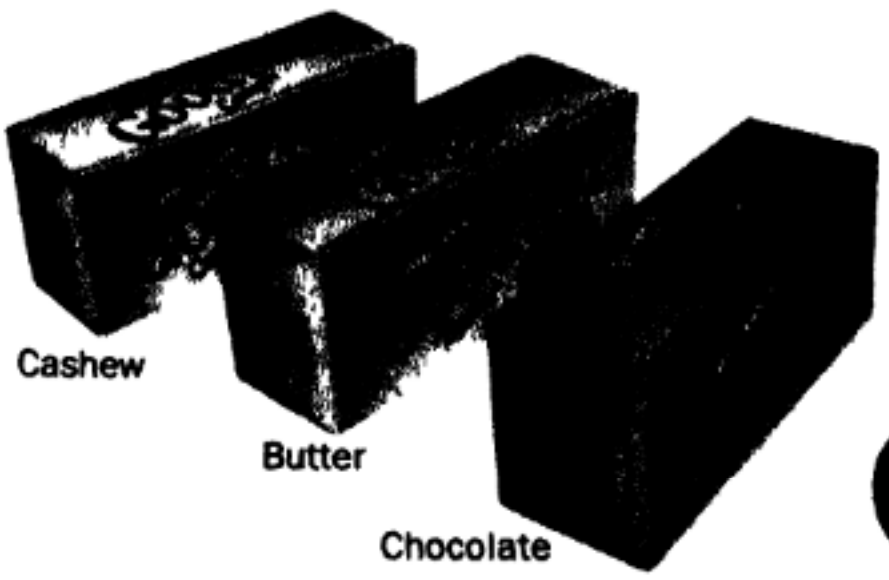
The most devastating earthquake after 1934 shattered an already problem-ridden state, leaving in its wake death, destruction and fear



Holidays are precious to both teachers and pupils of Darbhanga's oldest residential Muslim school, the Madrassa Hamidia, Quilaghat, even when they come in trickles. And when the institution was closed for Mohurrum on 20 August, everybody seemed relieved. Bags were packed and rooms vacated. Only 20 of the 65 hostelites stayed back, among them the principal, Maulana Mohibbey Rasool Mujibi, and his two sons. With most of the pupils gone, the local Mohurrum committee took over the school quadrangle, rehearsing in the open all night, till 2 am the next morning. The "*tamasha*" over, the outsiders left and the teachers and children went to sleep on a row of beds in the verandah.

HAVE A
GOOD DAY!





The wholesome goodness
of the best ingredients,
mixed with love and baked
with care, for that special
'Mummy's-made-them' taste.

BRITANNIA

Good Day™

That special home-made taste!

LINTAS BIN GY P 9 2417

At about 4.40 am, they were woken by a violent rumbling sound that seemed to come from under the earth. They could feel the whole school building moving a foot up and down. Some of them screamed *"bhago, bhago, zalzalla ho gaya* (run for your lives, it's an earthquake)" and ran out on to the playfield. But the antiquated, mildewed structure had already started collapsing. In seconds, an entire wing of the single-storeyed structure had come down with a crash, burying eight persons—the principal, his two sons Qais Raza (18) and Akhzal Hussain (8), and five other children, Mohiuddin (16), Uzaid Ahmed (12), Inamul Haque (10), Sabi (8) and Jabir Hussain (8). All of them died. Seven others were wounded, two of them, Ajmal (12) and Ashraf Raza (8), in a serious state, were rushed to hospital. If there was anything the school prayed for on Mohurrum, it was their lives.

The 40-second earthquake jolted the whole of north-eastern Bihar, particularly the sprawling Darbhanga division (population: eight lakhs), out of its sleep. Windows rattled, roofs, buildings and boundary walls collapsed, the pillars of Darbhanga's precarious Jama Masjid tower developed cracks and everyone who could wake up in time ran for dear life. "My house swung like a pendulum," exclaimed a second year B.Sc student, Rajesh Chaudhury, who lives in a rooftop room in Laheria Sarai, near Darbhanga. "I could hear my family call out to me from the lawns in front of our house, but I couldn't decide whether to jump off the terrace or take the stairs." Rumours that more powerful tremors would follow caused panic. Nobody dared to enter their houses. Even the commissioner of Darbhanga, Ajay Kumar Mishra, was afraid to go indoors, "I believe that just before an earthquake, birds and animals suddenly go calm. So I waited for them to come to life before going inside my bungalow with my family again."

Few in Darbhanga realised at that moment that they were barely 70 kms south-west of the epicentre of India's most devastating earthquake after 1934, which measured 6.5 on the Richter scale. (The epicentre of the earlier earthquake was in Munger , some 100 kms south of this year's epiccentre, on the India-Nepal border.) At the end of the brief nightmare, 167 men, women and children lay dead, buried under piles of brick and concrete, thousands injured and a large number of settlements in Darbhanga, Madhubani, Saharsa, Munger , Darjeeling, and nearby Nepal, reduced to rubble.





The 40-second earthquake jolted the whole of north-eastern Bihar out of its sleep. Windows rattled, roofs, buildings and boundary walls collapsed, the pillars of Darbhanga's Jama Masjid developed cracks. Everyone who could wake up ran for dear life. "My house swung like a pendulum," exclaimed Rajesh Chaudhury

(Top to bottom) All that remains of houses in Darbhanga; the scramble for relief

Like most natural calamities that visit Bihar annually, the earthquake this year chose its victims—women, children and the poor. And even though Rajiv Gandhi, after a hurricane tour, admitted that no more than 167 people had died and most of the houses he saw from his helicopter were "intact" before he announced a grant of Rs 30 lakhs from his relief fund for the state, the situation on the ground was worse than he had imagined: many of the houses and structures he had "inspected" might have developed cracks and were in danger of collapsing with another strong tremor, or probably, a flood. And by commissioner Mishra's own admission, the full extent of the tragedy in the interior was still unknown. Explained Mishra: "Sixty per cent of my division is flood-prone

and access to the interior rural areas is difficult. This is why it is going to take time to reach any figures which are cent per cent reliable."

The war of facts and figures between the government and the media created confusion. Rajiv Gandhi and the Bihar CM, Bhagwat Jha Azad, accused newspapers of grossly exaggerating the death toll, but the press only reacted by raising the figure from 700 to 900 dead overnight. "More than 25,000 houses damaged" screamed a headline in Delhi's *Indian Express*. The report said that the number of injured could run into "tens of thousands" and whole villages in Darbhanga and Madhubani lay in ruins. A tour of the rural areas of these districts showed that this was far from the truth: villages were devastated but not on such a large scale. One village in Madhubani, Mahrail (population: 10,000), took the brunt of the tremor, along with parts of Munger and the region along the India-Nepal border.

One fact the administration was willing to concede, however, is that a large number of people had been injured: even after the Bihar government had sent out medical teams to the districts to assess the damage and treat the wounded, patients kept pouring into the Darbhanga Medical College Hospital (DCMH). On the day of the tragedy, the hospital had 248 patients with head injuries and fractures. Three days later, 125 more were admitted, and the next day, 65 patients with similar complaints were admitted. Most of them had been brought from far-flung rural areas for better treatment in the town. But the facilities at the hospital were for from adequate. Moreover, there was an acute shortage of doctors as several of them were injured after their hostel collapsed due to the earthquake.

This is the third major tragedy to strike Bihar in the past two years. Last year, floods had ravaged the same areas which suffered due to the earthquake—Darbhanga, Munger and Madhubani—washing away roads, trees and entire villages, destroying acres of paddy and sugarcane. Large areas are still under water now. On 6 August 1988, more than 400 people drowned in the Ganga when an overloaded ferry boat carrying them capsized some distance from Maniharighat in Katihar district. The steamer had 529 passengers on board, although it was licensed to carry only 160 people. Combined search operations launched by the army and navy authorities for survivors yielded no results: the bodies were swept away by strong currents, and the boat sunk to the river bed.



The Madrasa in Darbhanga collapsed killing several children

The earthquake on 21 August was the third in the last three months, the first two being mild tremors. And the tragedy seemed especially poignant in a state plagued by a series of man-made travails—lawlessness, communalism and caste wars between powerful and entrenched rural mafias. "Time and again we have been visited by tragedy," said Rajeshwar Singh, a teacher in Madhubani, "and I am not sure if we will overcome."

The war of facts and figures between the government and the media created confusion. Rajiv Gandhi and the Bihar CM accused newspapers of grossly exaggerating the death toll. A tour of the rural areas revealed that the media played up the havoc

The earthquake made a hero of Arun Bapat, a Pune-based seismologist, who had predicted the disaster three years ago. Bapat, known among earthquake buffs as a prophet of doom, had developed a new technique of predicting such events—the "seismic grid method". In a note he sent to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development in October 1985, he wrote: "I shall be happy to hear from you, especially in view of the fact that I have predicted an earthquake in



Nepal in the area 27.0 to 28.0 N latitude and 85.0 to 86.0 E longitude with a probable magnitude of 6.5 to 0.25 (on the Richter scale)." The 21 August earthquake measured 6.5 on the Richter scale and had its epicentre at 26.4 N latitude and 86.6 E longitude—which was astonishingly close. But even if the government had taken him seriously, was there anything it could have done to prevent the catastrophe?

As news of the disaster spread, politicians from both the Congress(I) and the Opposition airdashed to Bihar. Rajiv Gandhi's visit was followed by a procession of leaders- H.N. Bahuguna, Chandra Shekhar and V.P. Singh. The Prime Minister declared a grant of Rs 30 lakhs for the state and directed the state government to pay Rs 10,000 to the families of each of the persons who had died. The amount that remained after compensating each of the victims was to be used for providing relief to the injured. Other state governments too announced relief packages: Uttar Pradesh's N.D. Tiwari offered Rs 15 lakhs, Jammu and Kashmir's Farooq Abdullah Rs nine lakhs, West Bengal's Jyoti Basu Rs five lakhs, Haryana's Devi Lal Rs five lakhs, Madhya Pradesh's Arjun Singh Rs five lakhs and Meghalaya's Purno A. Sangma a modest Rs 50,000. Andhra Pradesh's N.T. Rama Rao also promised to help the Bihar government. Initially, the central government had decided to rush the army for relief operations. But three days after the disaster, the Bihar government decided it could cope with the crisis alone.

The earthquake has caused more damage than most people thought: it cracked *bunds* along rivers that are often in spate, split the earth in Darbhanga and Munger, shook the foundations of tall buildings, and even damaged the Raj Bhavan and secretariat in Patna. "Wells that once had water have now gone completely dry," said Shamim Ahmed (50) of Bakarganj, Darbhanga. At places where the earth had split—in paddy fields, roads and open spaces—sand and water gushed out with force. Said commissioner Mishra: "There was a fissure

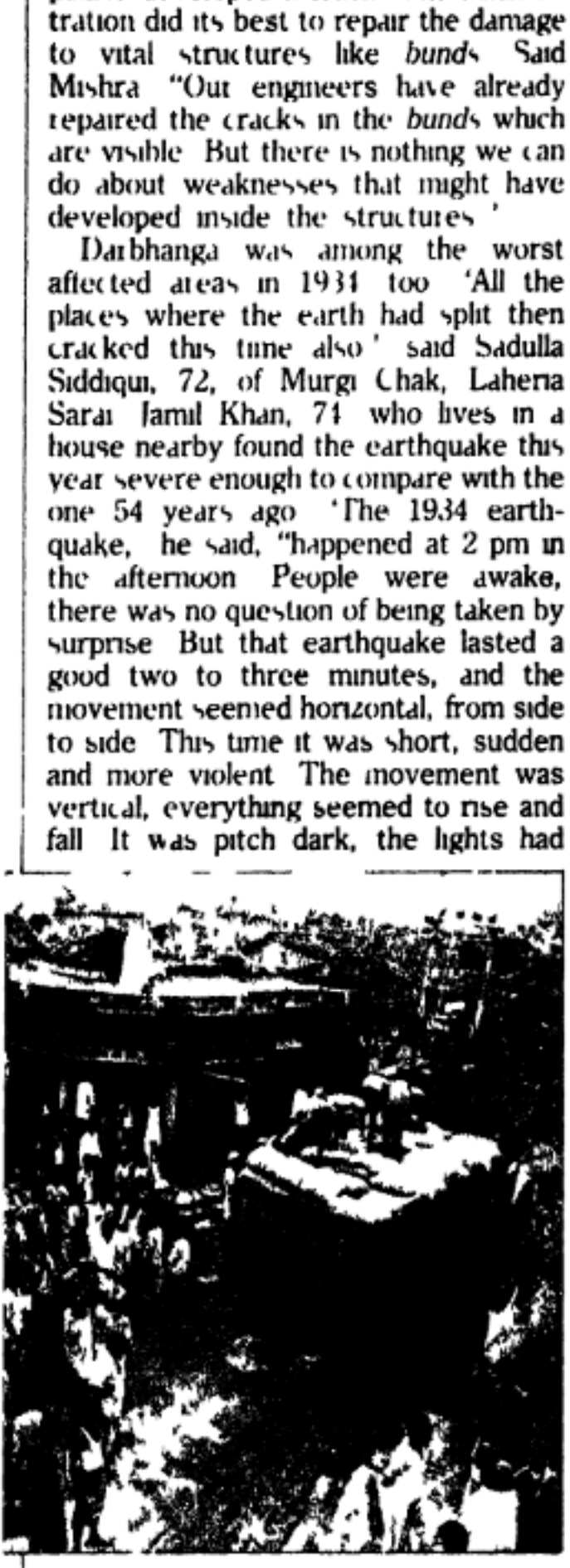


(Above) A student being treated in hospital; (below) Rajiv Gandhi in Darbhanga



in my backyard, too I saw sand and water sprouting out " One of the walls on the eastern side of the Darbhanga palace developed a crack The administration did its best to repair the damage to vital structures like *bunds* Said Mishra "Our engineers have already repaired the cracks in the *bunds* which are visible But there is nothing we can do about weaknesses that might have developed inside the structures '

Darbhanga was among the worst affected areas in 1934 too 'All the places where the earth had split then cracked this time also ' said Sadulla Siddiqui, 72, of Murgi Chak, Laheria Sarai Jamil Khan, 71 who lives in a house nearby found the earthquake this year severe enough to compare with the one 54 years ago 'The 1934 earthquake, he said, "happened at 2 pm in the afternoon People were awake, there was no question of being taken by surprise But that earthquake lasted a good two to three minutes, and the movement seemed horizontal, from side to side This time it was short, sudden and more violent The movement was vertical, everything seemed to rise and fall It was pitch dark, the lights had gone out, and it happened when everyone was fast asleep "



Relief operations in Munger Inadequate

For those who experienced the earthquake in its full fury, it was a nightmare One old woman in Mahrail village, Madhubani district, Mahalaxmi (65) fell unconscious as the tremors began Her neighbour, Budhiar Devi (60) said that her first reaction was to grab her two year old grandchild and run But even as I ran, we were hit by falling bricks and I had to go to the *ojha* for treatment " she said Akaniya Lal Jha lost his 18-year-old wife Hira, and Ravanti Jha lost her mother, Pratima (62) Both the women were buried under heaps of brick and wood

The scenes in Darbhanga s 1,100 bed government hospital were pathetic and most of the patients were still in a daze The rush for admissions was most on the four days after the disaster Anxious people thronged emergency wards and the superintendent's office to get their relatives admitted Parents looked on helplessly as their injured children were accommodated in beds on which other

The earthquake caused more damage than most people thought: it cracked *bunds* along rivers that are often in spate, split the earth in several places, shook the foundations of tall buildings and even damaged the Raj Bhavan in Patna

Predicting tremors

Is it possible to predict an earthquake? Yes, if your name is Rover. Experience shows that dogs and some other animals, whose ears receive sound frequencies that human beings cannot hear, sense earthquakes because of the sounds that precede them. For the rest of us, however, it is not so easy. Humans have no way of sensing earthquakes and the methods offered by science don't always work.

In the past, earthquake prediction was not considered a priority: man assumed that all natural calamities were a consequence of god's anger against him. But what was traditionally attributed to their vengeance is now regarded as a sudden dislocation of segments of the earth's crust as a result of the release of energy from within or immediately below it. For example, the energy release in an earthquake of 8.5 magnitude (the 1934 Bihar quake attained a magnitude of 8.3) is equivalent to about 10,000 atomic bombs of the Hiroshima type.

Geologists say that the earth's crust is divided into eight major segments or plates, which are in continuous motion either towards or away from each other. When they move towards each other, one of them submerges or dips allowing the other to rise over it—a process called subduction. The movement of plates away from each other is known as spreading. The process is known as 'plate tectonics' in scientific jargon.

Why is Bihar, which was recently ravaged by a massive earthquake, so prone to them? The answer lies in the Himalayan and Arakan Yomas hill ranges which fall in the northern and north-eastern leading edge of the Indian plate which collided with the Eurasian plate about 65 million years ago. Accretion or addition of crust along the trailing edge of the Indian plate pushes India towards the north and north-east, creating faults and thrusts along the Himalayan and Arakan Yomas fronts This is responsible for generating earthquakes in the belt. And so, the entire north-east region, which lies so close to the active plate margin, has been hit time and again

Predicting an earthquake is not an easy task and work in the area is still in the nascent phase of research and experiment Some scientists like Dr S.N. Saha of the Geological Survey of India (GSI) believe that considerable progress is being made Says the organisation's deputy director general: "With the knowledge of the internal mechanism becoming clearer and clearer, the signals prior to a great rupture have now been identified." For instance, changes in the properties of rocks, a fall in the electrical resistivity of the earth and a drastic fall in the shock wave velocity in the region are indicators of earthquakes.

While scientists grapple with the task of predicting earthquakes, laymen in earthquake prone regions are usually aware of the warning signals. They are a sudden drop in the level of water in wells, a change in its colour and a marked difference in the way animals behave. Yet, successful scientific predictions of earthquakes are rare. For instance, the United States Geological Survey maintains a file which evaluates the success of

patients were asleep. The paediatric ward, barely ten feet by seven feet with six beds, presented the most deplorable sight. As Dr Rajeshwar Thakur, casualty officer of the DCMH, pointed out: "Cases of children with head injuries are very often fatal."

The effects of the earthquake were probably accentuated because of widespread floods in north-eastern Bihar last year. The swollen Bhuti Balan river in Madhubani had caused enormous suffering in the district. Constant waterlogging in the towns and cities had also weakened the foundations of several structures and heavy rainfall had damaged old monuments and buildings. All they needed was a tremor to collapse.

The Darbhanga administration were at a loss to decide how to repair the cracks in the pillars which support the tower of the Jama Masjid and for lack of technical knowledge has prohibited entry into the holy place and barricaded the road in front so that vibrations are not caused by passing vehicles. Said commissioner Mishra: "We had two alternatives: to set up a scaffolding and start repairs. But the latter would take at least ten days, and we could only get a crane from Patna. The best thing to do was to block the road to traffic, declare the mosque out of bounds, and wait for the crane to arive."

Said a local journalist, Tantra Nath Mishra, of Madhubani: "After 1934 no one had known what an earthquake could be like. This year they do." According to him, bodies had to be extricated from the debris in several villages in his district. "There have been instances when women have run out while the earthquake was on, and then returned to fetch their children, and died," he said. Rescuing trapped victims and recovering dead bodies was as exacting a task as it was in 1934. But there were no miracles to match the one which occurred that year. Shanim Ahmed of Darbhanga informed: "In 1934 volunteers pulled out a ten-year-old girl from under layers of rubble 17 days after the earthquake to find that she was still alive. She was put on oxygen and glucose and survived."

Scientists might have their their own theories as to why earthquakes occur. But the most impassioned explanation came from 74-year-old Jamil Ahmed Khan of Murgi Chak, Laheria Sarai, near Darbhanga: "Why do they take place? I don't know. *Bhagwan ki iccha* (God's will). All I know is *jab gunah ka bojh jamin utha nahi sakti, tab Allah ka azad hazir hota hai* (when the earth cannot bear the weight of man's sins any more, God's wrath takes over)." And there were plenty of reasons for the gods to be angry: "There are no morals in the family these days—father and son both watch blue video films," the old man complained, much to the amusement of young men around.

Nirmal Mitra/Darbhanga

predictions. The accuracy of the predictions are judged on the basis of factors like time, location and magnitude. About 170 predictions have been evaluated in this manner but none of them have achieved an accuracy to merit scientific consideration. Also, being correct on one occasion is no guarantee of future success. For example, the Chinese, who pride themselves on earthquake prediction, evacuated Haicheng in anticipation of the devastating quake that ravaged the city in 1975. But one year later, they failed to predict the quake in Tangshan.

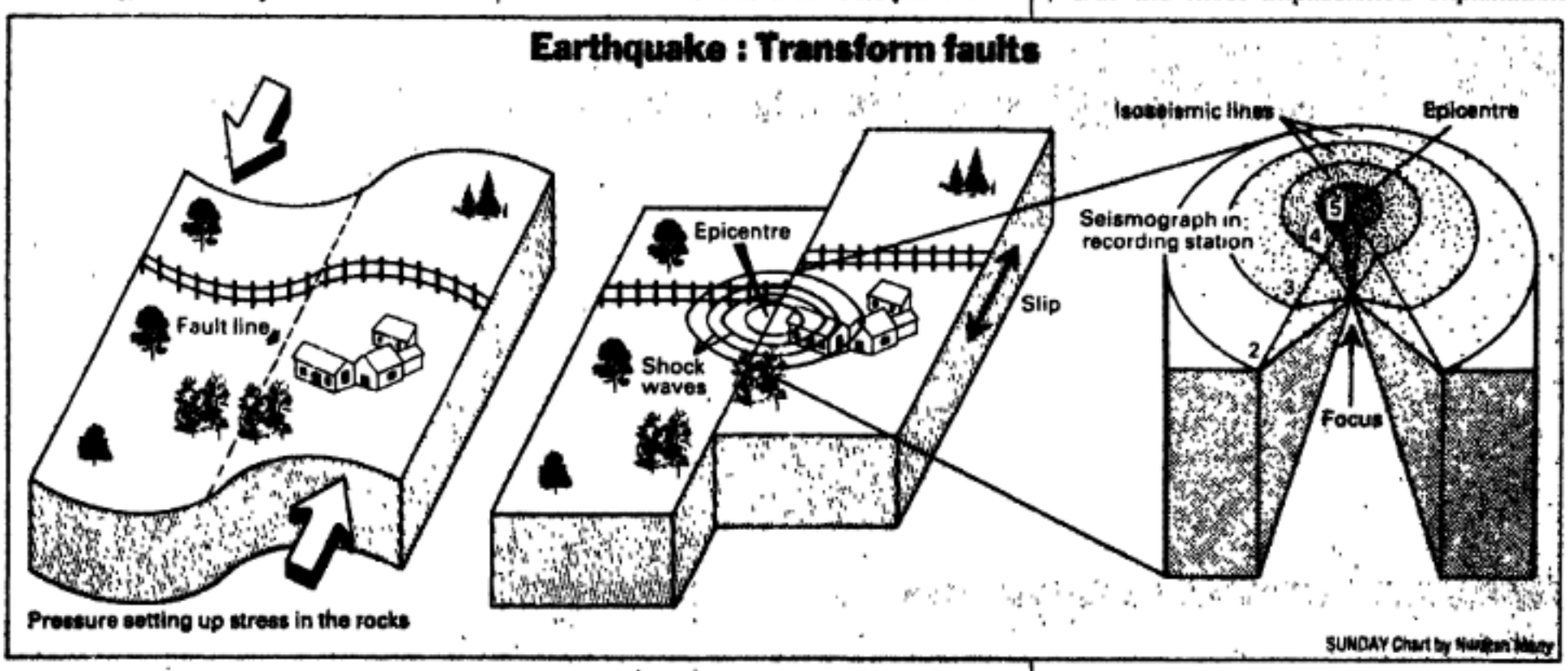
Sometimes scientific cassandras are not taken seriously enough. For example, Arun Bapat, who works at the Earthquake Engineering Division of the Central Water and Power Research Station, Pune, had predicted in 1985 that an earthquake would occur in north-eastern India in 1987. Now that an earthquake has occurred a year later, there have been angry questions about why the prediction was not taken seriously.

According to Dr D.R. Nandy, director of the GSI, a vague prediction of a quake in a region of high seismicity, unaccompanied by precise details, cannot be termed a prediction. He feels a scientific and socially useful prediction of earthquakes should locate its epicentre within an area of 500 sq kms, forecast its occurence within a timeframe of two months and identify its magnitude.

The earthquake which shook Bihar on 21 August is frighteningly similar to the one that took place in 1934. Darbhanga, Munger and Madhubani were all badly affected in the '34 quake too; similarly the same areas of Nepal were ravaged this time around.

Only when science discovers the key to make accurate predictions, will damage be contained or minimised. Till then, the people of Bihar, Assam and other areas in the 'killer belt' (as also others in earthquake prone regions all over the world) will have to resign themselves to nature's cruel whimsy.

Sreemita Das/Calcutta



Colour photographs: Nirmal Mitra
Black & White photographs: K.M. Kishan

FREE PRESS



Ashok Mitra



Nikhil Chakravartty



S. Nihal Singh



M.V. Kamath



Khushwant Singh



S. Sahay

The best columnists in the country. Tough, uncompromising, scathing. Read them on the editorial pages of

The Telegraph

THE POLITICS OF MURDER

Did Jan Morcha leader Sanjay Singh arrange to have Syed Modi murdered? Or is he being framed by the Congress(I)?

They were badminton's golden couple. Syed Modi was shy, introverted and awkward off the court. But put a racquet in his hand and he was transformed. Recalls Pradeep Gandhe, secretary of the Maharashtra Badminton Association: "He was a real natural. He made the game look so easy. He had marvellous footwork, quick movements and proved to the world of badminton that backhand could be an offensive stroke." Amita Kulkarni lacked Modi's sporting excellence but became a national-level badminton player nevertheless. Says Maureen Mathias, a former national badminton doubles champion: "Syed was basically lazy but Amita was hard-working and ambitious. She pushed him and made him what he became. She was very concerned about him hitting it big and saw to it that he practised regularly."







(Clockwise from top left) Sanjay Singh, Syed Modi and Amita Modi: a love triangle?

It was a marriage made—if not in heaven—then certainly on the court. Their badminton careers trailing to a close, the couple shifted to Lucknow where Modi worked for the railways and Amita for a UP government undertaking. Remembers former national tennis champion Nirupama Mankad, "I met Amita for a few hours in Lucknow last December. She was pregnant and glowed with happiness and expectation. She seemed very in love with Syed and had big plans for the both of them."

And so it seemed all the more shocking when on the evening of 28 July, as Syed Modi was coming out of a stadium having played a game of badminton, he was set upon by two armed men. They fired five bullets from a .38 revolver. Three hit Modi's body, wounding him fatally. Their murder committed, the assailants sped away in a waiting Maruti van.

It seemed a crime without motive, without sense. Who would want to kill a shy, soft-spoken badminton champion? As Amita told the press the following day: "My husband was a man without an enemy in the world."

And yet, somebody had hated him enough to organise a gangland-style 'hit', complete with armed professionals and a getaway car. It made no sense. Even the local police said they were foxed.

Though nobody said so openly in those first few sad days after Modi's murder, there were some theories about the murder. These first broke into the open when Uttar Pradesh chief minister N.D. Tiwari publicly declared that his government would bring Modi's killers to justice "no matter how highly placed they may be". "Highly placed"? Why would any highly-placed person care about a mild-mannered sportsman performing a low-level job in the railways?

When the case was taken out of the hands of Lucknow police and handed over to the elite Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on 2 August, the whispers got louder. Off the record the CBI investigators told newsmen that they had a suspicion that a love triangle was at the root of the murder.

The CBI's innuendoes were picked up by the national press and when they reached Amita's hometown of Bombay, there was widespread bewilderment. Said Nirupama Mankad: "But she was so much in love with Syed! I don't believe any of the shabby things that are now being said." Agreed a neighbour of the



Kulkarnis in the Bombay suburb of Andheri: "All these insinuations are bullshit. Amita is one of the sweetest people I know. She really loved Syed."

In Lucknow, however, everybody knew what the CBI was getting at. Says Mrs Arvind Verma who lives in the flat just above the Modis' in the Park Road colony, "Sanjay Singh was in and out of the Modi house. Because he was a minister, his frequent visits attracted a lot of attention. And, of course, tongues wagged out of pure jealousy."

This was precisely the CBI's point. From the day they took over the investigation they sought to investigate the stories that Amita Modi was having an affair with Sanjay Singh, the Jan Morcha leader and MLA for Amethi. Another of the Modis' neighbours was Bhola Pande, a loud, boorish, former Congress MLA whose chief claim to fame is that he once hijacked an aeroplane to protest Indira Gandhi's arrest during the Janata period. ("Oh, a little prank," Mrs Gandhi had cooed forgivingly of the incident.) Pande hated Sanjay Singh from their days together in the Youth Congress and whenever he saw the minister, he would begin yelling—frequently in an advanced stage of inebriation—"Go back. Don't come here."

If the likes of Pande had initiated the rumour-mongering, the people of Lucknow had happily joined in. The situation was perfect for wagging tongues. Modi was a celebrity but he was also very much the small-town boy who did not speak much English. He had married out of his community, to a Bombay girl who was smart, attractive and extroverted. Sanjay Singh was a minister, a national figure, and had a reputation as a womaniser. Given the small-town mentality, it was inevitable that the trio would become the subject of gossip.

Initially, when the love-triangle stories first leaked, Amita was appalled. "Dr Sanjay Singh," she maintained, "was a good friend of both me and my husband. The stories are false and motivated." Singh himself was dismissive, alleging that the government was trying to make political capital out of the murder but confident that it wouldn't work.

The CBI, however, were dead serious. They needed first to establish that there was an affair and to then demonstrate this relationship led Sanjay Singh to order a hit on Modi. As it turned out, things worked out in reverse order.

The only clue to the murder was offered to the investigating officers by a rickshaw-puller, who claimed to have been present at the scene of the crime. He said that he had noted the number of the getaway car and that it was UYG 1959. The problem was the UP transport department had issued no such number. "We had two options," says one of the investigators. "Either it was a false number plate or the witness had misread it. When he told us that it was made of brass, we rejected the first option, as false plates are rarely made of brass because this increases the chances of detection. So we considered the possibility that it was HYG and not UYG because H can look like U."

The CBI traced HYG 1959 to a Muslim contractor based in Haryana who said that he had sold the car to Akhilesh Singh, a Jan Morcha activist and one of Sanjay Singh's most trusted

lieutenants. On 17 August, just over two weeks after Modi's murder, the CBI arrested four persons: Amar Bahadur Singh and Bhagwati Singh, both Jan Morcha activists; Akhilesh Singh himself; and Jitendra Singh alias Tikku, Akhilesh's driver. The CBI claimed also to have recovered a .38 bore revolver from information provided by Amar Bahadur Singh.

According to the bureau, confessions had been secured from the arrested men. Akhilesh Singh, it said, was a small-time politician from Rae Bareli with a criminal background who used Amar Bahadur Singh and Bhagwati Singh as bodyguards. Apparently, he had initially denied any involvement in the crime by claiming he had left for Delhi on 27 July, a day before the murder. But he later broke down and told his interrogators: "If you really mean business and are willing to go for Sanjay Singh, then I'll help you."

It seemed like a crime without motive, without sense. Who would want to kill a shy, soft-spoken badminton champion? As Amita Modi told the press, "My husband was a man without an enemy in the world"

In his confession, Akhilesh claimed that Sanjay Singh had been pressurising him to kill Modi for months. Finally, he was given a 29 July deadline. He issued instructions to his driver and his security guards and then left town, making sure that the murder would be committed when Modi was alone. (Sanjay Singh had left orders that nothing was to be done when Amita was around.)



Syed Modi: tragic end

Akhilesh's version was backed up by his bodyguards who also confessed to having fired the actual shots that killed Modi.

The CBI used these confessions to claim that they had proved that the crime was committed at Sanjay Singh's behest.

Now all it needed to do was to establish the motive.

The way the CBI tell it, the investigating officers were convinced that Amita had something to hide when they visited her house to examine Syed's personal papers. She was reluctant to let them do so and after much persuasion handed over only one or two papers. "Why should a woman whose husband has been killed be unwilling to let us look at his personal papers especially if there is even a one per cent chance of the documents providing some clue to the identity of the assailants?" a CBI officer asked rhetorically.

Suspecting that something was amiss, the investigators forcibly rummaged through her papers, seized two diaries (one belonging to Modi, the other to Amita) and a few personal letters. They spent the next few days examining the diaries.

Then on 18 August, a day after Akhilesh Singh and his aides had been arrested, the CBI simultaneously leaked the contents of the diaries to both *The Times of India* and *The Hindustan Times*, which obligingly frontpaged them the following day. Said *The Hindustan Times*: "The Central Bureau of Investigation has got hold of clinching evidence pointing to the involvement of former Uttar Pradesh minister Sanjay Singh in the murder of Syed Modi...The entries in Mrs Modi's diary allegedly revealed that she was having an intimate sexual relationship with Sanjay Singh." The paper added that one of the entries in the diary related to a New Year's party celebration at a Bombay hotel where Sanjay Singh was also present. "Syed Modi was called out by someone. When he returned, he reportedly found his wife in an intimate position with Sanjay Singh. He then beat his wife." And so on.

Both the *Times* and the *Hindustan Times* had clearly been briefed by somebody in the upper echelons of the CBI and they bought the bureau's line that Modi had found out that Amita was involved in a torrid relationship with Sanjay Singh (called S-2 in the diaries) and had pleaded with her to call off the affair. When she had refused, he had beaten her up. Amita had told Sanjay Singh about this and angered, Singh had

ordered the hit on Modi.

With Akhilesh's 'confession', the CBI had 'proof' of Sanjay Singh's involvement in the murder; and now, with Amita's diary, they had motive too.

The publication in two national newspapers of the CBI's edited highlights of Amita's diary gave the bureau the kind of boost it needed to act against Singh. That very day, a crack CBI team arrived at the MLA's house in Lucknow's up-market Vikramaditya Marg colony only to be kept at bay by Singh's three German Shepherds and his security guards. The MLA, they were told, was away in his constituency. The CBI officers hung around till the afternoon till Singh's brother-in-law let them in. They searched the house but obviously found nothing because there were no leaks to the press the following day.

Though he now denies it, all of this obviously terrified Sanjay Singh because he disappeared. Two Jan Morcha minions were sent to the Hazratganj police station in Lucknow to register a complaint about Singh's disappearance and to suggest that Rajiv Gandhi's men had kidnapped him. The idea was obviously to stave off any suggestion that he was absconding.

The following day, Singh seems to have realised that this strategy was a mistake because he surfaced at a press conference held at Jan Morcha colleague V.C. Shukla's New Delhi residence. Why had he been reported missing, he was asked. He had no idea, he said. He had gone to Allahabad for ceremonies connected with his father's death. But surely, his minions would have known that? Well, added Arun Nehru helpfully, perhaps they had been mistaken.

By any standards, Singh's press conference was an impressive affair. He was flanked by such Jan Morcha colleagues as Shukla, Arif Mohammad Khan and Arun Nehru and by some of the Opposition's most articulate leaders, including the BJP's Jaswant Singh and the Congress(S)'s K.P. Unnikrishnan. The MLA's stand was clear. He had been a friend of both Syed and Amita. It was nonsense to suggest that there had been any kind of love triangle. ("I have three beautiful children," he kept re-

"Anyone who can murder the country can do anything"

Sanjay Singh on the political plot to malign him

SUNDAY: The diaries of Amita and Syed Modi which the CBI have seized have references to one 'S-2', apparently you. The CBI claim that the contents of Amita's diary indicate that she was having an affair with you—something she has been strenuously denying. Do you think the CBI would go to the extent of 'faking' a diary?

Sanjay Singh: You have no idea to what extent they can go. When the CBI can forge Bofors papers and concoct the Fairfax documents and can go to extremes to cover up the fact that thousands of crores of rupees are being siphoned out of the country, forging two or three lines is not a big job.

But this is not two or three lines. The CBI claim they have diaries consisting of hundreds of pages. Would the investigators go so far as to fabricate entire diaries?

I don't know anything about diaries, but anything is possible for the CBI.

Are you saying the CBI are faking the documents?

I can't say.

You have been a close friend of the Modis. Was the relationship between Amita and Syed strained?

Nonsense. There was absolutely no strain in the relationship. Small tiffs must have taken place. There is not a single couple in this country who have not had a tiff in the course of a day. These things happen. Does this mean they want to murder each other? Take my example. I am a political man. I might tell my wife I will return at 4 pm and turn up eventually at 6 pm. She may get angry and grumble. But what is unusual about this in a husband-wife relationship? Does this mean a wife wants to shoot her husband? You must understand that I have not committed a crime nor do I have a criminal background. Anyone who thinks I could have killed my best friend is the biggest criminal. I helped Modi establish himself. I got him a plot, a house and gave him all the help I could in his sport. No Rajiv Gandhi could have done as much.



The CBI had 15 days to extort a confession (from Akhilesh Singh). Give me Rajiv Gandhi for one day and I will get a signed statement from him saying that he committed his mother's murder

Who do you think is masterminding the conspiracy to malign you, as you put it?

All those who are handling the Bofors case. *(Angrily)* Rajiv does not have the guts to fight me politically. He is scared *Darpok aadmi*. I have been told that Satish Sharma was planning to organise something which would finish me politically. There is no other motive apart from this.

Did it ever strike you that Modi might have resented your friendship with Amita, even if you two were not having an affair?

Never, never. Such a thing never occurred. We used to be together all the time. We have sat whole nights together, eaten together, we have played together. I would have understood if he did not like me. After all, I am not a bloody fool. Anyone would catch on if there was tension between husband and wife. I never felt that.

It is also being suggested that your relationship with your wife



Sanjay Singh on the way to CBI office for interrogation: a frame-up?

was strained because of your philandering. The CBI claim to have seized a letter written to you by your wife in which she threatens to commit suicide unless you mend your ways.

Documentary evidence. Documents which are unsigned and undated. I have been married for 13 years. Garima and I have three beautiful children. If our relations were so bad, wouldn't we have got divorced by now? If my wife could have stayed with me for 13 years, why should she be contemplating suicide now?

What do you have to say about the confession of Akhilesh Singh that you asked him to do away with Modi?

I'll tell you the real story of Akhilesh Singh. Akhilesh's father was Dhunni Singh, who is now referred to as a 'mafia don'. When V.P. Singh resigned and formed the Jan Morcha, Akhilesh switched over to the Raja's camp. Veer Bahadur Singh, then chief minister of UP, started harassing him. Akhilesh Singh is from Rae Bareli and every man in Rae Bareli knows how Veer Bahadur Singh and Satish Sharma started harassing Akhilesh Singh. When his father, Dhunni Singh, died, they tried to implicate Akhilesh. Akhilesh and his boys had helped me during the Allahabad elections and, after that, three attempts were made to kill him.

Coming back to Akhilesh's confession that you asked him to murder Syed Modi, why should such a statement have been made at all?

The CBI had 15 days to extort a confession. Give me Rajiv Gandhi for one day and I will get a signed statement from him saying he has committed his mother's murder. Somebody was telling me that Akhilesh does not even know what statement he is supposed to have made. These confessions will not stand up in a court of law.

Why do you think Amita has been arrested?

Imagine, she has a small baby and they are doing this to her in the hope that she will ultimately break down and say, "I have doubts about Sanjay Singh." That is what they want her to say. But why don't they arrest me?

You were V.P. Singh's campaign manager in Allahabad. He is also related to you. Isn't it very surprising that he should be maintaining a complete silence on the issue? While other Opposition leaders addressed a press conference with you, the Raja was conspicuously absent. Why?

That was a press conference, not a *panchayat*. There was no need for everyone to be present. For the record, Ram Dhan and Satpal Malik were also not there during the press conference.

So what do you propose to do now?

I'll fight politically. The public will decide who is guilty. Yesterday I had gone to the Central Hall in Parliament and everyone came up to me and said, "We did not know Rajiv would sink so low." The coming elections will be my reply.

Who do you think murdered Syed Modi?

Anyone who can murder the country can do anything.

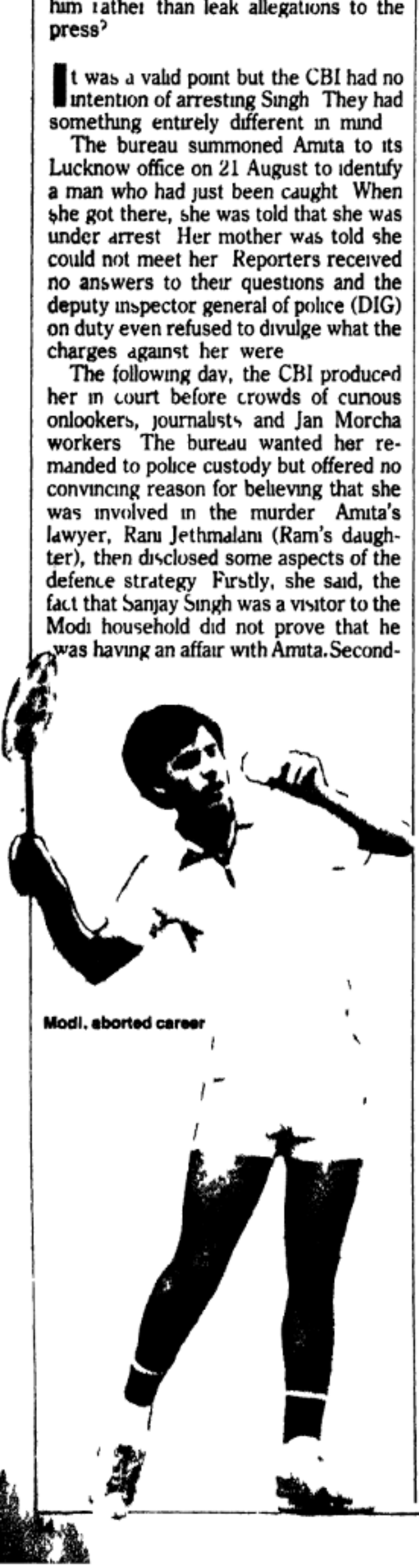
Interviewed by Patralekha Chatterjee

as they claimed, he asked, with some justification, then why didn t they arrest him rather than leak allegations to the press?

It was a valid point but the CBI had no intention of arresting Singh They had something entirely different in mind

The bureau summoned Amita to its Lucknow office on 21 August to identify a man who had just been caught When she got there, she was told that she was under arrest Her mother was told she could not meet her Reporters received no answers to their questions and the deputy inspector general of police (DIG) on duty even refused to divulge what the charges against her were

The following day, the CBI produced her in court before crowds of curious onlookers, journalists and Jan Morcha workers The bureau wanted her remanded to police custody but offered no convincing reason for believing that she was involved in the murder Amita's lawyer, Rani Jethmalani (Ram's daughter), then disclosed some aspects of the defence strategy Firstly, she said, the fact that Sanjay Singh was a visitor to the Modi household did not prove that he was having an affair with Amita. Secondly, there was no proof that Singh was S-2 And thirdly, even if the two were having an affair, this was not proof of murder



Modi, aborted career

With characteristic ineptitude, the CBI's counsel argued that Amita had to be handed over to the police because "only a *daroga* knows how to get confessions" As this more or less confirmed the defence hypothesis that she had been arrested so that she could be tortured into implicating Sanjay Singh, the judge had no alternative but to refuse to place her in police custody

Nevertheless, the following day, Amita filed a complaint through the jail superintendent alleging that the CBI had told her that if she confessed to an affair with Singh, she would be let off Otherwise, the witnesses would be tutored to claim that she was present when Sanjay Singh ordered Modi's murder A few days later, she was released on bail

The CBI have no problem, or so they feel—in establishing Singh's involvement in the murder Though the confessions they have extracted from Akhilesh and his cohorts are inadmissible in court, they say it is certain that their witnesses will repeat their stories at the trial

Their concern is chiefly with showing motive Sanjay's reputation of being a womaniser is an asset to their case but is clearly not enough Therefore, they are relying on letters and documents to establish the love triangle Last week, their officers raided the Kulkarnis' Bombay residence and took away letters allegedly written by Amita to Sanjay Why letters she had written to Singh should be at her parents' house was not explained and the Kulkarnis said that these were letters written by another girl to Amita's brother whose name is also Sanjay Officers also claim to have procured a letter written to Singh by his wife in which she threatens to kill herself



V P Singh (left) with Sanjay Singh sitting on the fence?



So far, V.P. Singh has deflected all questions about the murder with: "This is not the right time to speak." But he has not divulged when this "right time" will be. One view is that he is sitting on the fence till he can ascertain how strong the case against Sanjay Singh is



Dilip Banerjee

and her children unless he gives up his philandering. The letter does not mention Amita, all it does—if it is genuine—is confirm Singh's reputation as a womaniser. So essentially, the love triangle hypothesis rests on two things: Lucknow gossip and Amita's diary.

Amita's supporters believe that the gossip was inevitable. A smart Bombay girl in a small town is bound to attract that sort of attention. Subroto Roy, a local industrialist who is the managing director of Sahara India—and whose name was also linked with Amita's by gossips—says that much of the feeling against her stems from the fact that she is not the north Indian male's idea of the archetypal *Bharatiya nari*. He recalls how, when he was interviewed by a local reporter, he told him that the CBI had given him Amita's jewellery for safekeeping when they took her away for interrogation. "But," asked the reporter, "she is a widow, so why was she wearing jewellery?"

There is something to be said for Roy's view. When Amita arrived in court to oppose her police remand, the Lucknow crowd got needlessly self-righteous, began calling her an "adulteress" and condemned her for wearing a *bindi* even though she was a widow.

Certainly, those who knew the Modis well deny any knowledge of an affair. Roy says it is "nonsense" and their neighbour, Mrs Arvind Verma, dismisses the possibility. "Yes," she says, "Sanjay Singh did come here but often he came with his wife and children. And usually when he came, Modi was also at home. Even when Modi was out of town, Amita was rarely alone because her mother would come and stay with her."

The CBI claim that the Modis' maid, Usha, has testified to the tensions between her employers and said that Syed often beat up Amita. But according to what Usha told reporters, she had only been with the family for 20 days before the murder and had not seen any assaults. Further, she said, she had worked for the couple six months ago when their daughter was born but then, she had been employed on a part-time basis and had hardly spent any time in the house. This was all very different from the version trotted out by the CBI.

That left the diary. It now seems clear that both sides have told lies about the diary entries. Much of what the CBI told *The Hindustan Times* was either exaggerated or distorted. And Amita's original claim that she was "not in the habit of keeping a diary" (suggesting that it had been forged) has now been withdrawn.

The CBI told the press that Modi found Singh and Amita in either "an intimate position" (*The Hindustan Times*) or a "compromising position" (*The Times of India*) at a New Year's eve party. The obvious implication is that he caught them in bed.

In fact, what the entry actually says is quite different. According to the diary, Amita and Sanjay Singh danced close together on the dance floor at a party; Modi saw them, got upset and hit her. The close dance is what the CBI calls "an intimate position".

It could well be that for a modern girl like Amita, dancing with another man is not immoral. But to somebody from Modi's background, it may have seemed shocking. Either way, it's hardly the sexual clinch the CBI have made it out to be.

Further, the bureau has also picked on references to abortions in the diary and used them to suggest that Amita was getting rid of illegitimate (Sanjay Singh's?) children. In fact, the CBI have deliberately seized on the fact that doctors refer to miscarriages as abortions and tried to make out that these were medical terminations of pregnancy. That Amita had two miscarriages was well known to her friends and there was never any question of illegitimacy.

Equally, Amita's original claim that the

The Amita Modi diary

Some extracts from Amita Modi's diary which the CBI say proves that she was having an affair with Sanjay Singh and that relations between her and Syed were at breaking point:

December 1985: "It was a torture because Modi was insistent on me going. Eventually, I flew back to Bombay on 26 December. It was a great mistake on my part. S-2 was in Bombay already and Modi insisted that I flew back to Bombay just for him. S-2 was aware of the tension."
(This refers to a coaching trip at Hyderabad which Modi insisted she attend.)

January 1986: "On the whole, the last year (1985) saw lots of moments of strain. S-2...reason alone. I was trying to make Modi accept S-2 and the men in my life."
(The entry goes on to recall a slow dance with S-2 at a New Year's eve



party.)

"Modi saw it and hit me. He did not let me sleep. For the first time, I saw a very bleak future before me."

January 1986: "S-2 came to me at 9 am and then again. I failed to live up to my pledges...The only difference was that I was doing things unwillingly."

March 1986: "S-2 came. Exhausted. He looked tired. He just wanted to hold me."

Undated, 1986: "Time and again, I think of how life would be without S-2. Sometimes, I think life would be alone."

There are also references to her miscarriage in March 1986, and many of the entries are critical of S-2 whom she calls, at one point, "selfish". Amita now says that the diary should not be taken seriously because it contains "fantasies".

diary is forged is plainly false. No CBI officer could, in two days, concoct an entire diary of a year, in which all the details (trips to Bombay, etc.) seem to fit. Further, the CBI claim that when they seized the diary, they made her sign on every page.

The diary entries show that she is not the c:'lous, loose woman the bureau make her out to be (having sex with Sanja Singh at parties, aborting illegitimate babies with impunity, etc.); but they do make it clear that she had a close relatic ship with the man she refers to as S- And though Rani Jethmalani argue- hat S-2 need not be Singh, from the o er details ("I am glad he is a minist ", etc.), this seems beyond disput It is also clear that Modi disapp oved of their relationship.

But this does not mean that Singh murdered Modi. He has claimed from the start that the entire case against him is a political conspiracy and that he has nothing to hide. The CBI, too, have behaved strangely by refusing to arrest him. On 25 August, after his Delhi press conference, Singh turned up at the bureau's Lucknow office to be interrogated.

Afterwards, he was uncharacteristically reticent about what had transpired. He claimed that he had not been asked to identify any documents and that the interrogation had revolved around "shuttlecocks and badminton". The CBI, he added, had wanted to know why he stayed in New Delhi's Karnataka Bhavan (with his friend, the former Janata minister Raghupathy) and not in UP Bhavan.

If Singh was telling the truth, then all the CBI did was submit him to a cursory examination. Obviously, the bureau is not proceeding further till it gets more evidence or till Amita Modi makes a statement implicating Sanjay Singh.

It is easy to see what the government would gain by framing Singh. He is the Jan Morcha's single most important MLA in UP and his undoubted skill at ensuring suspiciously high electoral margins has always been an asset. As V.P. Singh's campaign manager, he worked hard and well in Allahabad and helped engineer that victory.

There's also the Amethi factor. For some months now, Singh has been challenging Rajiv Gandhi to contest from Amethi. As the local princeling and MLA, he has undeniable clout there and this could well be used against the Prime Minister at the next election. In fact, there have been stories to the effect that Rajiv is looking for another constituency (denied by Satish Sharma after Modi's murder); but with Singh in disgrace, his influence is certain to be curtailed.

It was this kind of hypothesis that the government had in mind when it issued a statement strongly denying Singh's charges that he was a victim of a political conspiracy. Said one high official: "The fellow's debauchery has got him into trouble and now he has the nerve to blame us!"

If Singh's allegations about a frame-up are difficult to sustain, then the CBI, too, have their hands full trying to establish motive. Assuming for a moment that their view of Amita is correct—a smart, Bombay girl, trapped in a marriage to a boring, small-town boy, who was attracted to Singh's glamour—it still does not provide grounds for murder. If he was already having an affair with Amita, then why on earth would Singh have Modi killed?

The CBI offer various explanations. Firstly, that he was angry that Modi had beaten up Amita and wanted to take revenge. Secondly, that Modi wanted to shift to Bombay and that this would have taken Amita away from Singh. And thirdly, that Modi had been so upset about the affair that he had threatened to

"No shred of evidence"

Amita Modi's counsel, Rani Jethmalani, on the strength of the CBI's case



Rajendra Kumar

Rani Jethmalani (left) with Amita's mother, Pushpa Kulkarni: "Amita is innocent"

hold a press conference and denounce Singh

None of these is terribly convincing The diary entries that refer to Modi's slapping Amita date to 1986 Why would Singh wait till July 1988 to kill him? If Modi was leaving town and Amita had to follow, then surely there were easier ways of preventing this divorce, for instance And as for the press conference allegation, there is no evidence that Modi ever threatened to do this

Confronted with these objections CBI officers resort to such explanations as 'Love knows no logic 'He is a

SUNDAY: What made you take up Amita Modi's case?

Rani Jethmalani You must be aware I had taken up Raj Rani's case recently (the marriage between a Hindu girl and a Muslim boy in the town of Palwal in Haryana which triggered communal tension) So many people in the Supreme Court were telling me that I should defend Amita I was initially reluctant because I was busy and, after all, there are so many women lawyers Then, some women's organisations approached me

I am the legal secretary of the Asia-Pacific Forum for Women, Law and Development and the Mahila Dakshata Samiti, of which Pramila Dandavate is the chairperson But I wanted to be personally convinced that she was genuinely innocent, so I sent word through some reporter-friends of mine in Lucknow that I would like to meet her. Fifteenth of August was a holiday and I went down to Lucknow. I met Amita's mother, Mrs Pushpa Kulkarni, and as we got talking, I discovered that the Kulkarnis stayed in an area which was part of my father's constituency. I also became convinced that Amita was innocent.

What do you think of the CBI's style of investigation with respect to this case?

It is preposterous The normal practice is to collect evidence and then deduce the motive. The CBI have started with a motive and are desperately looking around for evidence to back it up. They are blowing out of all proportion Amita's friendship with Sanjay Singh. For argument's sake, even if you assume that there was an illicit relationship between the two, how on earth does this prove that Amita was part of a murder conspiracy? There is not a shred of evidence to suggest that.



Friends comfort Amita Modi (centre) on her way to the funeral visible grief



Rajendra Kumar

Sanjay Singh (second from right) with (left to right) Arif, V C Shukla and Arun Nehru support from Jan Morcha colleagues



It could well be that to a modern girl like Amita, dancing with another man is not immoral. But to somebody from Syed Modi's background, it may have seemed shocking. Either way, it is hardly the sexual clinch that the CBI have it to be

Thakur—they think nothing of murder' or "This is a crime of passion—where is the question of motive?" Needless to say, these are even less convincing

There are other problems with the CBI case, too If Akhilesh Singh did commit the murder, then would he not have had the brains to use false number plates? Anybody who organised a gangland style hit would, surely, take that elementary precaution The whole business of the car is also suspicious Originally, the police claimed a red Maruti had been used, this later became a white van And doubts are being cast on the veracity of the rickshaw-puller who so conveniently happened to be on the spot

Finally, there's the problem of Sanjay Singh himself He is now at the most critical juncture of his career The last



Amita Modi with child after release on bail: a marriage that went wrong?



Sanjay Singh (centre) with supporters: spirited denial

thing he needs is to be accused of murder. He must have known that all of Lucknow was gossiping about Amita and him. Would he risk murdering Modi at such a time? Besides, the CBI portrait of him as a debauch and philanderer (though possibly quite accurate) suggests a man who goes from woman to woman and not a passionate lover who risks everything for his girl-friend.

As things stand, the CBI appear to have the upper hand. While the only evidence linking Singh to the murder consists of the confessions, the bureau has successfully awakened public interest in the case by leaking (and distorting) entries from Amita's diary. It knows that for many Indians, the fact that a woman was having an affair is enough to strip her of all dignity and moral character. Once Amita is smeared in this manner, then the CBI's case seems stronger.

Sanjay Singh has tried to politicise the issue but has met with little success. His portrait of Suman Dubey as an intrepid diary forger has been greeted with general hilarity and the suggestion that Satish Sharma did it all has met with incredulity. Now, some of his supporters are claiming that the Congress(I) heard that he was having an affair with Amita and then had Modi killed to finish Singh's political career. This theory, too, has yet to find wide acceptance.

Worse still, from Singh's point of view, is that the Opposition has not rushed to his aid. No important member of either the Janata or the Lok Dal has weighed in on his side and the BJP's Jaswant Singh has only made procedural criticisms of the CBI. Sanjay Singh's principal supporters are still his three Jan Morcha cohorts—Arif, Arun Nehru and V.C. Shukla; but questions are being asked about V.P. Singh's silence. The Raja is related to Sanjay and owes him a great deal. So far, V.P. Singh has deflected all questions about the murder with: "This is not the right time to speak." But he has not divulged what this 'right time' will be. One view is that—aware of Singh's complicated romantic arrangements—he is sitting on the fence till he can ascertain how strong the case against him is.

In all of this, unfortunately, Syed Modi is being forgotten. From all accounts, he was a gentle, decent man who would have done as well as say, Prakash Padukone, had he not lacked a killer instinct. Amita, say friends, was good for him because she gave him that much-needed push and helped him overcome his natural diffidence. And he, in turn, seems to have been a little in awe of her.

So what happened to badminton's golden couple? Did their relationship really go so wrong that she got involved with another man? The CBI would have us believe that love and badminton weren't enough; that infidelity entered the picture and led eventually to murder. If they are right, then it is a tragedy that it all went so awry.

But if they are wrong; if the entire case is no more than a means of 'getting' Sanjay Singh; or of ensuring the succession once Mohan Katre, the current CBI director, retires; then history will not forget what they have done to Amita and to Syed's memory.

Patralekha Chatterjee/*Lucknow* and *New Delhi*. Additional reporting by Olga Tellis/*Bombay*



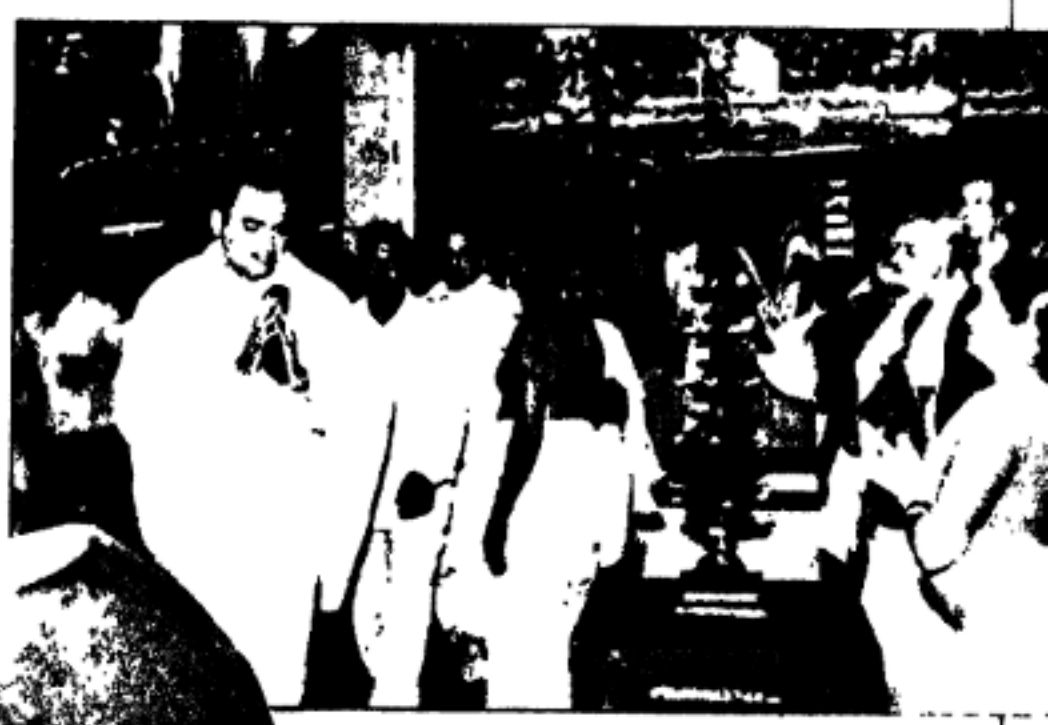
If Sanjay Singh's allegations about a frame-up are difficult to sustain, then the CBI, too, have their hands full in establishing a motive. If Singh was already having an affair with Amita, then why on earth would he have Modi killed?

The everyday Rajiv

The PM takes time off from affairs of state to discuss his diet and other weighty matters



(Left) Rajiv Gandhi takes time off during a hectic day: refreshing break; (below) at the Guruvayoor Temple in Kerala: "I respect all religions"



Rajiv Gandhi has come a long way—the Avro pilot who never forgot to bring back samosas for his children whenever he flew to Agra, as Prime Minister cannot even manage to reserve his Sundays for his family. The man who always showed veteran Congress leaders to the door has become impatient enough to sack his foreign secretary in a televised press conference. But could the man whose first act as Prime Minister was signing a file sanctioning financial help for the ailing son of a Kanpur press photographer be all wrong?

Regardless of his many public faults, there is a human side—he is human enough to get upset at being told that a party legislator was hitting the bottle once too often and reprimand him during the morning darshan; *simple enough to subsist on* idli-sambar, *eaten on banana leaves, during his recent Tamil Nadu tour; courteous enough to knock before entering his personal assistant's room; trusting enough to eat whatever villagers offer him while on tour.* ***Rajiv Shukla's*** *interview shows us Rajiv Gandhi, the man, with his guard down.*

SUNDAY: How interested are you in reading and what do you read?

Rajiv Gandhi: Nowadays I read very little. I used to read a lot before. These days the only things I read are files. But recently I read Iyer's book on Gan-

dhi—*Gandhi and Politics*. It's a very good book.

Do you read a lot of books on engineering, particularly electronics?

One has to read them to get any work done. If one has to operate one's small machine one has to read them.

Do you read literature?

I used to before, but now the work load does not allow me to do so.

How many hours do you work?

As far as work goes, I get up at 6.30 in the morning and look through files for an hour and a half. Then I rest for a while and then resume work, which lasts till 2-2.30 in the afternoon. I then work from 4 in the evening till 10 at night. After that I am in meetings till about one or two at night.

So you only manage to sleep around four hours every day. Doesn't this affect your health?

Even if it does, the work still has to be done. All the things that crop up have to be dealt with, or else they pile up. Though I must say that my health has not been affected as yet.

What sort of music do you like?

I like two kinds of music: one, classical vocal and the other Western classical.

What do you prefer in Indian classical?

I like the Dagar brothers' music and among the oldies, Onkarnath Thakur and Pandit Jasraj are my favourites.

I saw you visiting some temples in Tamil Nadu recently. The way you stood, with hands folded in front of the idols, indicated that you were not merely making a show of religiosity. Are you really spiritually inclined?

There is no question of putting on an act. But this much at least is true that I am not a believer of any one religion and nor do I let any one religion affect me. I respect all religions. I have faith in the essence of religion. I imbibe its good qualities and try to live by them. So you can call me spiritual.

Okay, tell us, what games do you like?

I like almost every game. But I don't get time to play games. While I was in Lakshadweep, I had gone scuba diving. However, I manage to cycle a bit or play badminton at night.

Whom do you play badminton with?

With my children, who else could I play with? Around nine or ten o'clock at night I play with my children and exercise on the exercise bike. I have only recently learnt scuba diving. But I don't get time to do all this.

Do you exercise every day?

No, no! Where is the time. I only manage to do it once or twice every week. But certainly on Sundays.

Rahul and Priyanka have great problems (since they are cooped up the whole day for reasons of security). Often when the police announce a red alert they are totally barred from leaving home. Both of them have shown great courage



How do you keep fit then? Do you diet?

Yes, I eat very little. You have seen me on my tours. That's exactly how much I eat everyday, if not even less. There we have state banquets with officials making elaborate arrangements, so I have to eat. Otherwise I do not eat even that much.

What exactly do you eat?

I don't breakfast at all...

So what happens at these breakfast meetings you have?

On those days I have to breakfast, but then I don't have lunch after that. Generally I do not breakfast at all. Sometimes, though, I eat an apple.

What do you eat for lunch?

I have a very light lunch.

Vegetarian or non-vegetarian?

Mostly vegetarian. I am not a strict vegetarian, but I eat meat very rarely. Lunch generally consists of *chapati, dal* and a *sabzi*. Sometimes egg.

To change the topic, why do people always seem to betray you?

(Laughs, then turns serious) This is a difficult question. But a few days ago, somebody told me something which keeps coming back to me. This is a Sanskrit *shloka:* Someone was once told that a certain person was annoyed with him. "That is not possible," he replied, "I have never done anything for him."

In that lies the answer to your question. But I can tell you one thing: whoever I have tried to help has let me down.

Opposition leaders have never attacked your personal life. They have always fought a political battle. But those who have left you, those who have taken advantage of you, are the ones who are making the most vicious personal attacks on you. Why?

These were the people who benefited the most and these are the ones who ruined everything. But I have decided on principle not to speak against these people.

It has been seen that people have not taken your proposals seriously until the benefits inherent in them become obvious. For instance, your computer policy came in for a lot of criticism. You were even called the "computer boy" by some. But now that computerisation has been



Sandeep Bhatia

My situation is explained by a Sanskrit *shloka:* Someone was once told that a certain person was annoyed with him. "That is not possible," he replied, "I have never done anything for him"...Whoever I have tried to help has let me down



adopted in railway reservations, for example, the people are happy with the results. Does this show that your views are not explained properly to the people?

Maybe that is true. But as far as computers are concerned, the criticism was politically motivated. Leave alone railway reservations, even in other areas people have derived benefits from them. Amul has a big computer which helps the farmers a great deal. Even their wives are benefited because they are the ones who milk the cattle. Cattlefeed is cheaper and milk from Anand can be marketed even in places as distant as Delhi and Calcutta. How does all this happen? Only with the help of computers, which are operated by the farmers themselves.

The PM listens to an aggrieved petitioner during morning *darshan*: the humane touch



Don't you ever feel sorry for your children? They are cooped up the whole day for reasons of security. They spend their time bicycling around your house, without meeting or speaking to anyone.

The children certainly have great problems. Next year, they will have to join college, so I will have to think of something. But right now they have grave difficulties. Often when the police announce a red alert they are totally barred from leaving home. That creates problems.

Don't the children ever object to the security arrangements?

(Becoming very serious) What can they do, poor things? But really, both of them have shown great courage. My family, of course, has to make sacrifices.

How do the children study?

Tutors come to teach them at home.

From which schools?

Rahul is registered in Saint Columba's and Priyanka in the Convent of Jesus and Mary. Their tutors come from these schools.

Where do they take their exams?

They take their exams in school

How come both of them are in the same class?

Only one year separates them. And with all the shifting, they came to be in the same class. But that has one advantage: they can be taught each subject by the same tutor. Now, we can't possibly keep separate tutors for each of them, that would be too expensive.

Is either of them interested in politics?

Priyanka is slightly interested but right now I'd rather keep her out of it (laughs).

We've been told that both children watch television a lot and then point out its defects to you.

They don't tell me, but yes, they do watch television.

How does Sonia spend her day?

She works at restoration in a museum on Rajpath, near India Gate.

Can she cook? Does she cook Indian food?

She cooks occasionally. Yes, even Indian food. She can even cook Kashmiri dishes. Sonia loves highly spiced and hot food.

Didn't Indiraji like spicy food too?

Not as much as Sonia.

Is Sonia very fond of shopping?

Absolutely wrong. She hasn't shopped for the past four years.

***From where do you buy* khadi *for your* kurta-pyjamas?**

I don't know. Sonia buys it from somewhere.

***Does she buy it from the Gandhi Ashram in Connaught Place? One variety of* khadi *available there is called* PMwali khadi.**

I don't know from where she buys it. But I hear the *khadi* there is very thin. And do they really call the *khadi* that?

You used to visit a temple near your farmhouse very often.

I had gone there on a couple of occasions. There are two temples there. One towards Chattarpur and the other in a different direction. I go there sometimes.

Do you visit your farmhouse every Sunday?

Not every Sunday, but I do go there occasionally.

What arrangements are there to enable you to spend your day?

None. Even the house is not completely built. There is no furniture, etc. It is not habitable as yet.

So, how do you spend the day there?

I never go there for the entire day. I only go for halt an hour or so to see that the plants and trees are being properly looked after. Having done that, I come away.

What do you like to eat? Do you prefer sweets?

I try not to eat too many sweets, but yes, I do love eating them.

Which sweet do you prefer?

I like *firni* and *kheer*. I also like ice-cream.

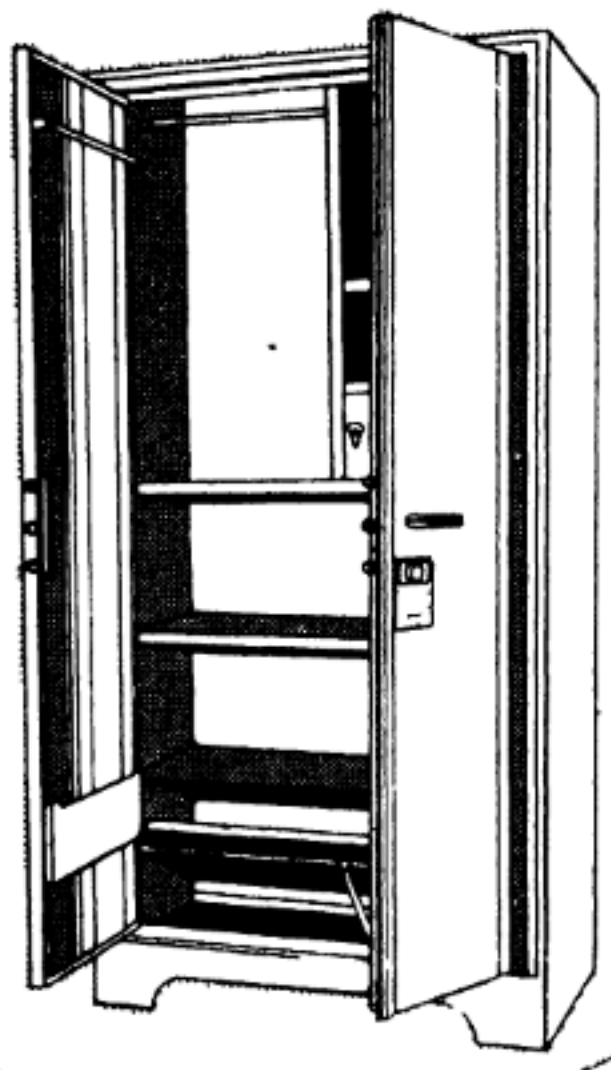
Do you get* firni *made at home?

Yes, I get this made at home.

When you think of
SECURITY
of valuables at your home

Remember

Safe-Deposit Almirah



Each of our Safe-Deposit Almirah is extra strong, built to last longer and made with meticulous care to meet your particular size, requirement and budget. The same care goes behind every other furniture.

Guaranteed for **5** Years

Visit our spacious air-conditioned showroom at Poddar Court

RAJ & RAJ

Associates

18, Rabindra Sarani (Poddar Court), Calcutta-700 001. Phone :26-9443, 26-1408

- 7, Camac Street (Azimganj House), Calcutta-700 017 Phone 44-3392 43-5221
- P-24, Manicktala Main Road (Near Manicktala Rly Bridge) Calcutta-700 054 Phone 37-9066 37-8117
- 28/3A, Gariahat Road (Near Dhakuria Bridge), Calcutta-700 029 Phone 46-9539

IAA 3568

A crony's cronies

Rajiv's buddy Satish Sharma is in trouble over his own businessmen buddies

Cronyism has its hazards. And crony capitalism can backfire all too suddenly. For two years there has been speculation that by allowing Captain Satish Sharma, an old Indian Airlines crony of his, to occupy an office in the Prime Minister's house, Rajiv Gandhi is leaving himself vulnerable to attack. And there have been fears that Sharma's friendship with various businessmen, including New Delhi politico-entrepreneur Lalit Suri, could rebound on Rajiv. Last month as Suri's Sumitomo deal (see SUNDAY 14—20 August) rocked Parliament, both fears seemed rooted in reality. And Sharma—at the best of times, an aviator with severe intellectual limitations—found himself fighting to retain the Prime Minister's confidence, if not his ear.

But, said Sharma's friends, the former pilot survived a similar scandal last year when New Delhi's *Sunday Mail* revealed that he had imported expensive marble tiles. While Rajiv actively considered exiling the Captain to Amitabh Bachchan's old office at 2A Motilal Nehru Marg, Sharma was soon able to convince him of his indispensability, rail against "yellow journalism" and hang on in by his fingernails. This time, too, as such prime ministerial aides as M.L. Fotedar urged that Sharma move out of Race Course Road, the aviator was expected to use his strong friendship with Rajiv and Sonia to retain his position in the Prime Minister's residence.

And, indeed, last week Sharma was much in evidence at Rajiv Gandhi's morning *darshans*, receiving callers and instructing Rajiv's special assistant, V. George, about who should be allowed to meet the Prime Minister. But to show that the allegations against the Captain were not being taken lightly, Sharma went on the offensive. He filed suit against *The Statesman*, which had first broken the Suri-Sumitomo scandal, took the trouble to deny, in writing, any allegations made against him (last week's SUNDAY carried a letter from the Captain denying a *Delhi Diary* item which said he had gone to Jordan), and made it clear that he would fight to clear his name.



The big mystery is: why did Rajiv find it necessary for Sharma to give up Indian Airlines and join him? What is there about this intellectually-limited pilot that makes him so indispensable?

In a sense what Sharma is going through is no different from what anybody else in a similar position would face. It is now accepted that when members of the Gandhi family run India, they preserve the institutional power structure but subvert it from within by handing effective authority to a motley collection of factotums, sidekicks and fixers. During Mrs Gandhi's second reign, Arun Nehru and K.K. Dhawan filled this role. And Rajiv Gandhi seems to have picked Satish Sharma for the same position.

By now, the story of Sharma's friendship with Rajiv Gandhi is well-known. Sharma himself has often told the tale of how Rajiv once gave him a ride when they were gliding together and how that ride eventually led to a close friendship. Less well-known is why Sharma left Indian Airlines in 1982 to join politics. The version he offers is: "My friend needed me," but why Rajiv Gandhi, then being groomed for the prime ministership of India, should regard a man with no political background as indispensable to this endeavour has never been satisfactorily explained. One theory is that the young Rajiv, diffident about politics, propped up his confidence by bringing along lots of friends: Vijay Dhar, Arun Singh, Satish Sharma, etc.

Certainly, in the early days Sharma was very much a low-level factotum. While Vijay Dhar was soon sidelined by Arun Nehru, it was Arun Singh who emerged as Rajiv's principal adviser and looked after his Amethi constituency. Sharma had virtually no executive role but because his wife, Stera, was a friend of Sonia's, kept up a social relationship with the Gandhis. Those who knew him in 1982-86, remember a low-key, semi-articulate, *kurta*-clad presence, eager to do Rajiv's bidding but short on original ideas.

NOW

Horlicks
WITH EXTRA CALCIUM



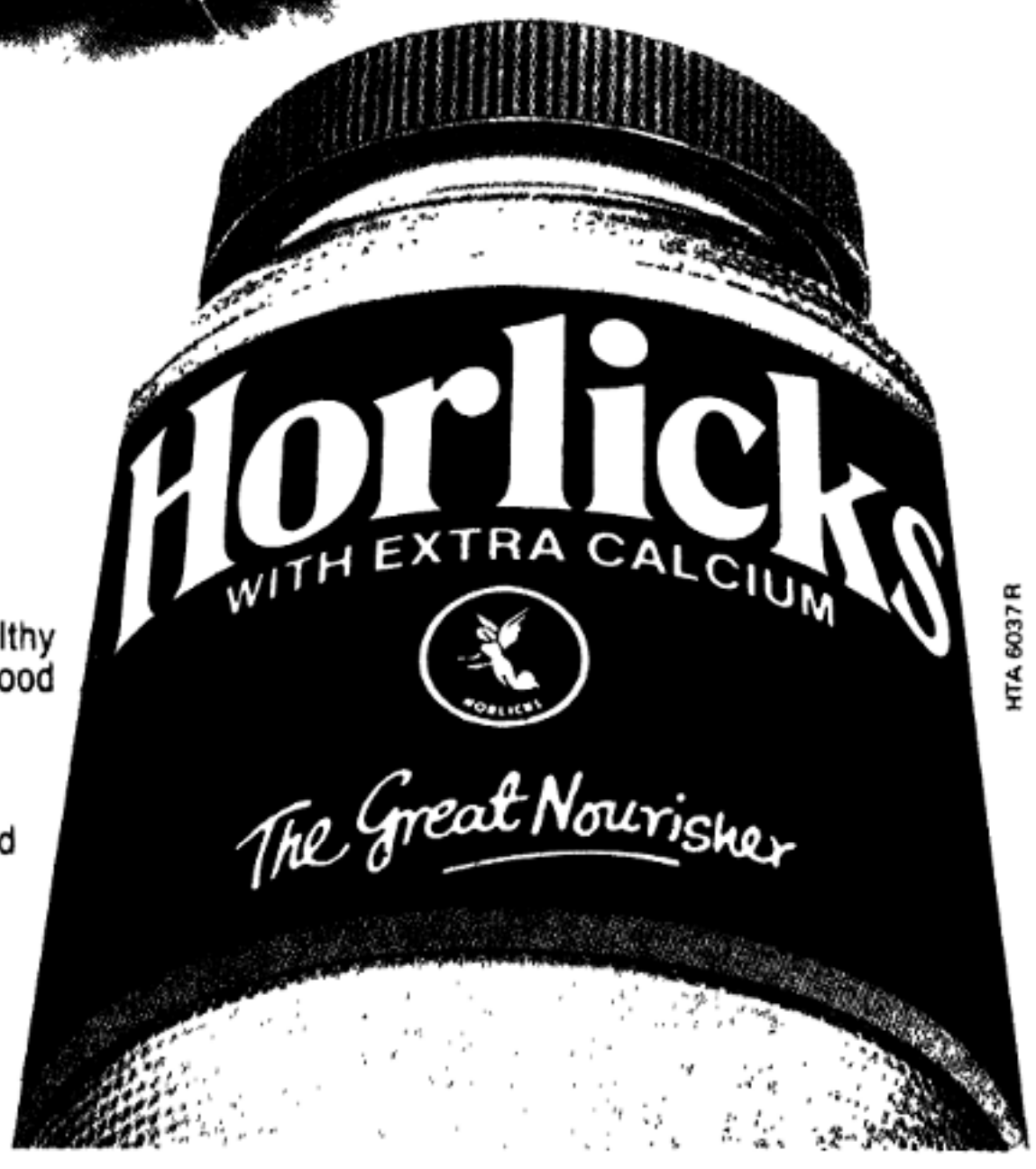


"Growing children need extra Calcium."

Horlicks is now enriched with extra Calcium—vital for strong teeth and healthy bones in growing children and for the good health of the entire family.

Horlicks is full of natural nutrients—protein, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates—that provide energy and vitality. And now, extra Calcium means extra health.

The Great Nourisher



HTA 6037 R

His fortunes sky-rocketed after Arun Singh moved to the defence ministry. This meant that Sharma was entirely in charge of Amethi and, with Singh out of the way, became the only 'old friend' with unlimited access to the Prime Minister. After the Singhs and the Gandhis fell out socially, the Sharmas further rose in influence. And when Singh resigned, Satish Sharma became the only one of the friends that Rajiv had brought into politics to have survived. As a prime ministerial aide puts it: "The prime ministership is a lonely job. Rajiv feels that all the bright friends he helped, ended up letting him down. Satish is not the world's brightest man but, at least, he is entirely loyal."

Those who know Sharma say that he changed as his power grew. The early diffidence gave way to a swaggering confidence. Once restricted to Amethi, he began interfering in the aviation ministry. Then, as demands on Rajiv's time grew, he took to meeting influential callers on behalf of the Prime Minister and promising to act upon their recommendations.

As Rajiv's clever friends have all left him, Satish's clout has grown. Once he was a low-level factotum. Now he has unlimited access to the PM and functions in his name

At this stage, his friendship with Lalit Suri flowered. The Suris epitomise the new bourgeoisie that the Gandhis have created through adroit manipulation of the licence-quota-permit raj. Lalit's brother, Sagar, was Sanjay Gandhi's crony and Lalit himself served as bagman for the Congress(I) during Mrs Gandhi's second reign, hobnobbing first with R.K. Dhawan and then with Arun Nehru (at whose behest he bought Bombay's *The Daily*). But when Nehru fell, and Arun Singh froze him out, Suri found a new entrée into the Prime Minister's inner circle through Sharma.

Now, after the Sumitomo scandal has broken, Satish Sharma's friends try and play down his friendship with Suri. "Lalit Suri," they say, "is a name-dropper. He may have dropped Satish's name but how can Satish help that?" But there is a





(From top) Satish Sharma with Arjun Singh and former air chief La Fontaine: immense clout

Suri-Sharma nexus, however innocuous. The agent who cleared Sharma's marble tiles at customs was Suri's man (according to Sharma, they both *use* him but he is not Suri's man), and Suri was often to be found hanging around Sharma's office. Sharma has also not denied that the house he lives in is rented from Suri's Jyotsna Holdings and it is said (though not documented) that Sharma uses a Beachcraft aircraft belonging to Jyotsna Holdings but leased to the Delhi Flying Club.

Whether any of this is sufficient to prove Sharma's involvement in the Sumitomo deal, however, is a different matter. Sharma's supporters take the line that even if it can be established that Suri and Sharma are friends, it does not follow that Sharma is connected with the deal. As Sharma himself says, "At no stage was I involved in the deal or in the income-tax proceedings against Jyotsna Holdings or Lalit Suri."

Nevertheless, the scandal has focused attention on Sharma's role. Why, ask Congress(I) MPs, is he involved in Hindi-belt politics? In what capacity does he meet chief ministers? And, as the controversy has grown, Congressmen have been remarkably reticent to defend him. All AICC general secretary K.N. Singh would say about the case was: "Satish Sharma has already given his statement in Parliament and said that he is contemplating suing the paper which made the allegations. There is nothing more I have to add."

Questions are also being asked about the manner in which Sharma's aviation interests have flourished. The Aero Club, of which the Captain is president, has cornered a generous government grant of Rs 4 crores and a new building was completed in record time. The Delhi Flying Club, too, has benefited from Sharma's benevolence.

Satish Sharma with his family; (bottom) at the Aero Club in Delhi





Congressmen want to know on whose authority the Captain closets himself with chief ministers. It is alleged too that his friends have surfaced as millionaires in London and New York

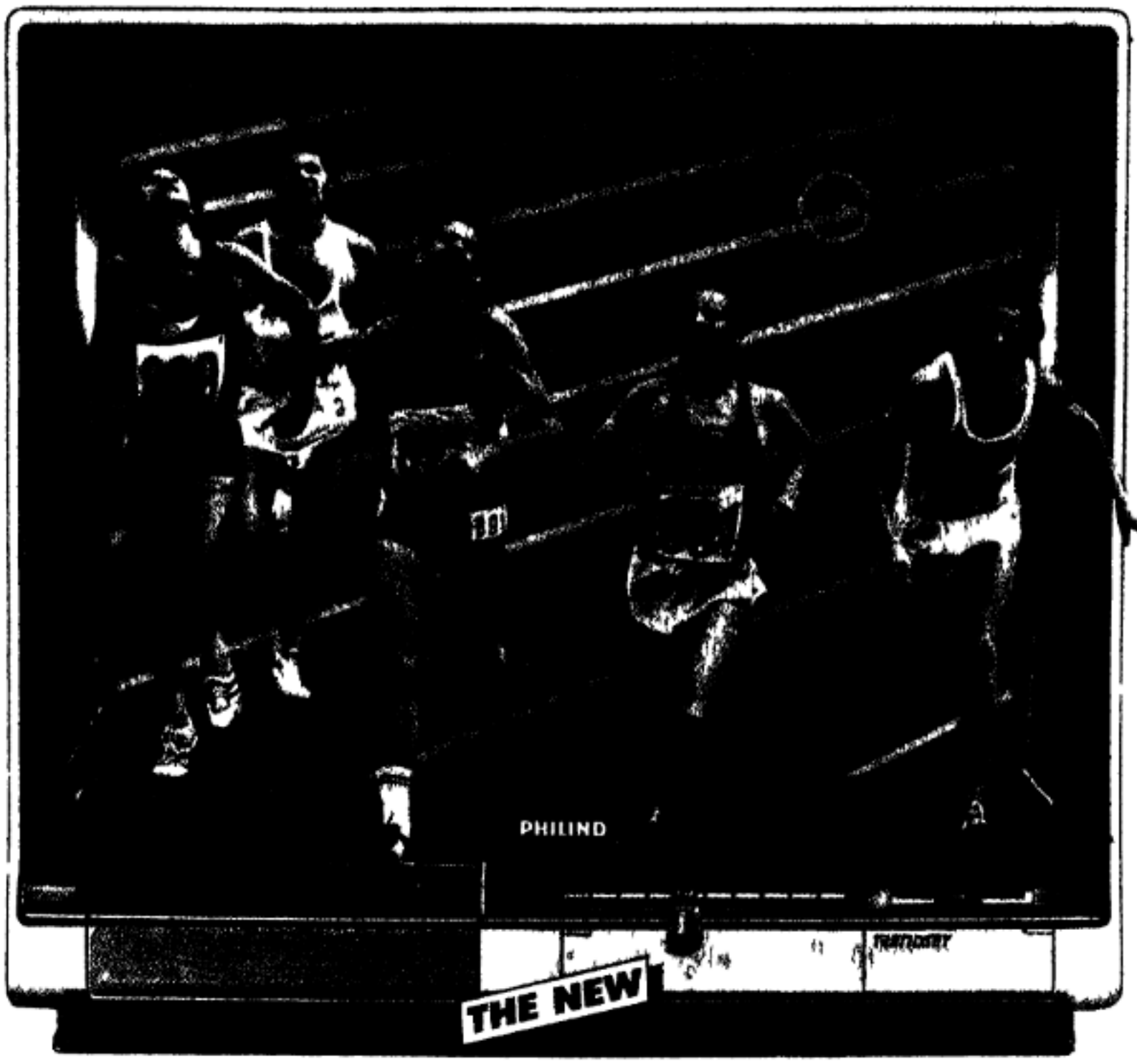
And then, there are allegations that all his old flying buddies have suddenly acquired enormous wealth and live in great style in New York and London and pass themselves off as friends of Rajiv's. Such allegations are yet to be substantiated and as Rajpal Singh Chowdhary, editor of the successful London-based glossy magazine, *Kohinoor*, says: "The press is actually playing the role of the Opposition. The attack, as in the case of Amitabh, is on the Prime Minister and not on Satish."

Despite the controversy, Rajiv appears to have decided to stick by Satish. It helps, apparently, that Sonia depends on the Captain to keep the household running and that Sharma has made it clear that he has functioned only for the benefit of the Prime Minister.

As an associate of Rajiv's says: "Every PM needs an odd-job man and you can't run a political party without bag-men. But what we have to decide is whether Satish is an effective odd-job man and whether we need to depend on bag-men like the Suris when the Birlas, Goenkas, etc. would happily play the role."

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*

Colour so natural, it's almost like being there



PHX TRENDSET

THE OLYMPIC STAR

Now, the best view of the Olympics outside Seoul is going to be in your very home On the sleek, new vertical PHX Trendset Take a closer look

Colours as nature made them

Inside the new PHX Trendset, we've put in the clever little chroma circuit to give you colours that stay permanently natural So if you're tempted to reach out and touch those faces on screen don't be surprised!

Wow! Listen to that sound

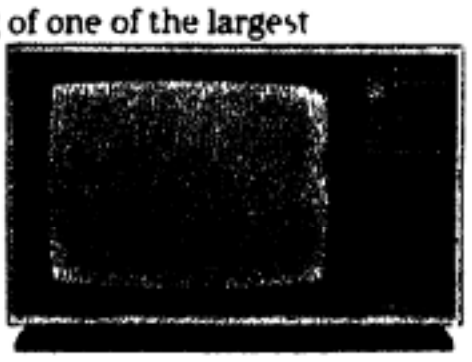
All 12 watts of it! And because the audio technology is also state-of-the-art, you get pure sound, even at peak output Why, you may even find yourself cheering with the crowds!

There's more to cheer about

An automatic sound muting system that cuts off the volume when there's no TV signal An automatic degaussing circuit automatic frequency control beam current limiter, line and frame synchronisation, current overload protection And one more reason to take home the new PHX Trendset

Complete after-sales service

You get the backing of one of the largest service networks in the country With an army of Philips trained technicians, virtually a phone call away, should you ever need them The new PHX Trendset **Take a closer look.**



The PHX 20C colour television is also available

From Peico Electronics and Electricals Limited

An affiliate of N.V. Philips, Holland – Official sponsors of the 1988 Olympics

OBM/2558

Krishna and the reds

ISKCON becomes the first religious sect to gain official recognition in the Soviet Union

Shaven heads, saffron robes, *mantras*, gilded chariots and sacred cities: the ingredients of a Spielberg fantasy? The traditional trappings of Hinduism turned into props? Not really. It is ISKCON, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, one of the fastest growing religious sects in the world. And this society of modern-day Krishna evangelists promises to grow even further.

Its latest success is the breakthrough behind the Iron Curtain. After 15 years of grim battle, ISKCON has finally got the Soviet Union to officially recognise its right to proselytise. This makes ISKCON the first religious sect in recent history to be officially established in an atheist state. The Soviet Union, in July this year, became the first socialist country to grant ISKCON permission to propagate its faith; and Poland followed shortly after. This ends years of repression of ISKCON behind the Iron Curtain and opens the door to the gangs of shaven-headed chanters seen haunting streets in cities as diverse as Calcutta, Cape Town, London and New York. The sound of "Hare Rama Hare Krishna" will soon be heard echoing down the streets of Moscow, Leningrad, Riga, Warsaw and Cracow.



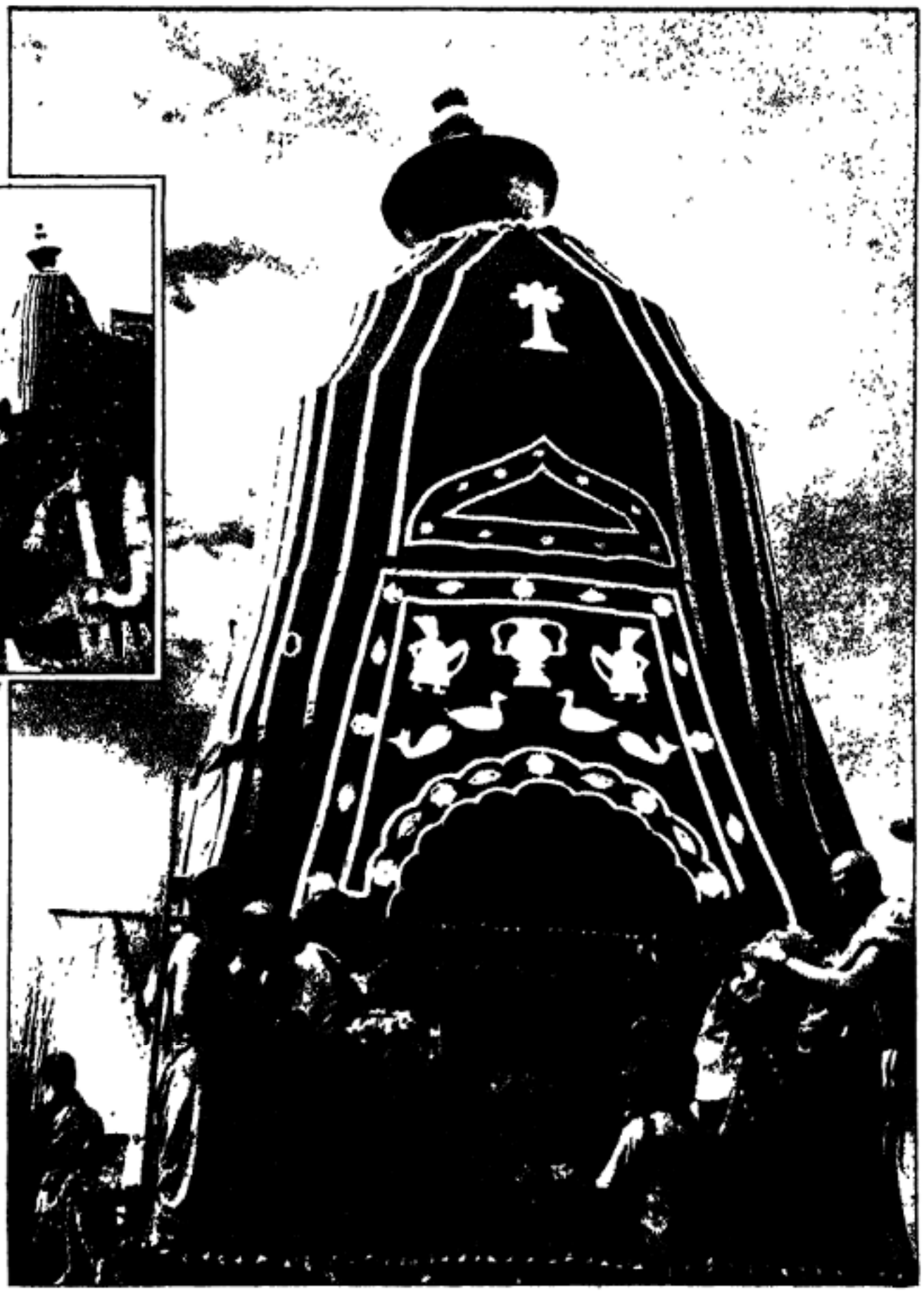
Anil Grover

Jubilant ISKCON followers dedicated this year's *rathyatra* (chariot festival) to their Soviet followers. More surprisingly, the Soviet consul-general in Calcutta, Alexander Vaulin, turned up to inaugurate the festival (held on 15 July, 1988). The consul-general kept photographers busy by participating in the ritual sweeping of the ground over which the *rath* would pass. Later, he and his wife, Irina Passentchouk, rode on the *rath* and waved to the crowds lined up to see the *rath*.

The consul-general's action was so unusual that even Soviet *glasnost* recoiled in amazement. Soviet TV ran a programme attacking ISKCON, projecting it as a "socially destructive" group which "indulged in mentally destructive prayers, consumed meagre supplies of unwholesome food, destroyed family life and did not perform socially useful work." The TV programme further insinuated that the sect was associated with drugs, arms and the underworld.

The recognition of ISKCON was interpreted as another sign of deviationist policy-making under the *glasnost* regime. Back in India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), condemned the consul-general episode and the changed Soviet attitude towards ISKCON. The CPI(M), which has been openly critical of Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms and his anti-Stalinism, suggested that the ISKCON issue showed how the

The ISKCON *rath* in Calcutta: unlikely presence of Alexander Vaulin; (inset) images of divinity



Soviet leadership was getting hooked on false ideas.

Far from bowing to its opponents, the Soviet government further clarified its position by asking Yevgeny Cherentsov, deputy departmental head of the Council for Religious Affairs, to defend its ISKCON policy. Two days after the *rath yatra*, Cherentsov called a special news conference in Moscow and disclosed that the Hare Krishna society had been thoroughly investigated after their application was received last year. Their representatives were interviewed and ecclesiastical literature studied. The investigations found:

- It is not true that ISKCON members destroy family life since their dogma forbids illicit sex and abortion.
- Council inspectors who tasted food prepared by the society concluded that their food was neither unwholesome or monotonous.
- Members did not drink tea, coffee or any such stimulating beverages, let alone alcohol and other types of intoxicants.
- It is not true that they indulged in eastern martial arts or that they supported a cult of violence.
- The Society's members prayed for 90 minutes to 2 hours everyday and hence the "talk of exhausting and mentally destructive prayers" was not true.
- Many ISKCON members in fact worked in factories and were socially productive.

In other words, Cherentsov made it clear that ISKCON was in the Soviet Union to stay.



The ISKCON *rath* begins its journey: foreign presence

The mood in Moscow marks the beginning of a new era for the ISKCON. New times and perhaps a newly acquired legitimacy. And legitimacy is something ISKCON desperately needs. Although the society has branches in dozens of countries, in most places it is treated with distrust if not outright loathing.

ISKCON typically and periodically has dust-ups with governments of host countries. The current controversy over an Iskcon manor in England illustrates the perennial ISKCON dilemma. George Harrison in 1973 had donated a 17-acre manor in the Greater London area to ISKCON. The manor was subsequently converted into a flourishing temple. Recently, however, the British government ordered ISKCON to surrender the manor on the ground that it wanted to stop a nuisance.

Likewise, in liberal America too, the ISKCON has routinely had to combat police investigations and ban orders. Recently, it was disclosed that the (FBI) chief, Swami Kirtanananda Bhaktipada claimed that these were attempts to discredit their sect.

But the Soviet Union beat all other countries in the matter of repression. For 15 long years, Soviet ISKCON members have been playing a cat and mouse game with their government. But the cat has been clobbering the mice on most occasions. There are an estimated 2,000 ISKCON members in the Soviet Union and many of them have been harassed, picked up by the police and some jailed. On 30 August last year, for example, police forcibly broke up an ISKCON demonstration in Moscow's Gorky Street and dragged 20 devotees into waiting police vans. The demonstrators were demanding official recognition.

(Federal Bureau of Investigation) is investigating ISKCON to check out charges of laundering of drug money, sexual abuse of children and the killing of disgruntled sect member. ISKCON's US

In July this year, the Soviet Union became the first socialist country to grant ISKCON permission to propagate its faith and Poland followed its lead shortly afterwards. The sound of "Hare Rama Hare Krishna" will soon be heard echoing down the streets of Moscow and Leningrad

As the instances of repression mounted, a Committee to Free Soviet Hare Krishnas was established at Stockholm by D.V. Jakupko to monitor the repression. The Committee got wide publicity in 1983 when it reported that two ISKCON members had been tried on charges of recruiting new members for the group and disseminating Krishna teachings. One of the accused, Vladimir Kritski, was sentenced four and a half years in a labour camp and an additional four and a half years when he continued to preach Krishna consciousness in jail.

With the Soviets now showing the way, the West will find it more difficult to crack down on ISKCON. The *swamis* are optimistic about spreading the word. Their next target is China. The saffron hordes are ready to take an ancient message to new lands.

Indranil Banerjie


OCM
SUITINGS
THE PERFECT FABRIC


Available at Mac SEMANAL



Jennifer Kapoor was a regular visitor. Govind Nihalani often turns up to look for odd pieces that can be converted into "interesting things". There are plenty of others—celebrities, filmstars, housewives in search of bargains who frequent the serpentine lanes. This is Chor Bazaar *nee* Mutton Street, an offshoot of the bustling Vallabh Bhai Patel Road (one of the dirtiest, narrowest and most overcrowded roads of Bombay). This is a street full of promise, selling brass and glass and things of class, that the discerning come in search of. The range is mind-boggling—chandeliers, Victorian oil lamps, Gujarat spice boxes, carved chests from Rajasthan, phonograms, scent, bottles, brass and China spread over 40 shops that sell specialised wares.

There are a number of stories about how the name of this street originated. Some say it dates back several 100 years to the time when Queen Victoria arrived at the Gateway of India. The Queen, it seems, had a violin among her baggage which got lost in the general confusion and excitement of disembarking. When Her Imperial Majesty found it missing a big hue and cry was raised and a search warranted. It was finally traced to the Vallabh Bhai Road *kabadi bazaar*. The queen believed that it had been stolen and hence conferred the name Chor Bazaar on the market. The shopkeepers petitioned that it be renamed and their wish was granted. But lacking originality perhaps, she called it Mutton Street after the mutton shops situated opposite the market. There is, of course, another story revolving around the queen and the *bazaar*. Her diamond ring, it seems, was stolen and sold for a song in the market, hence the name. Others talk of a lake that was situated in the area, Chor Bazaar being the name of the weekly market which assembled around the lake.

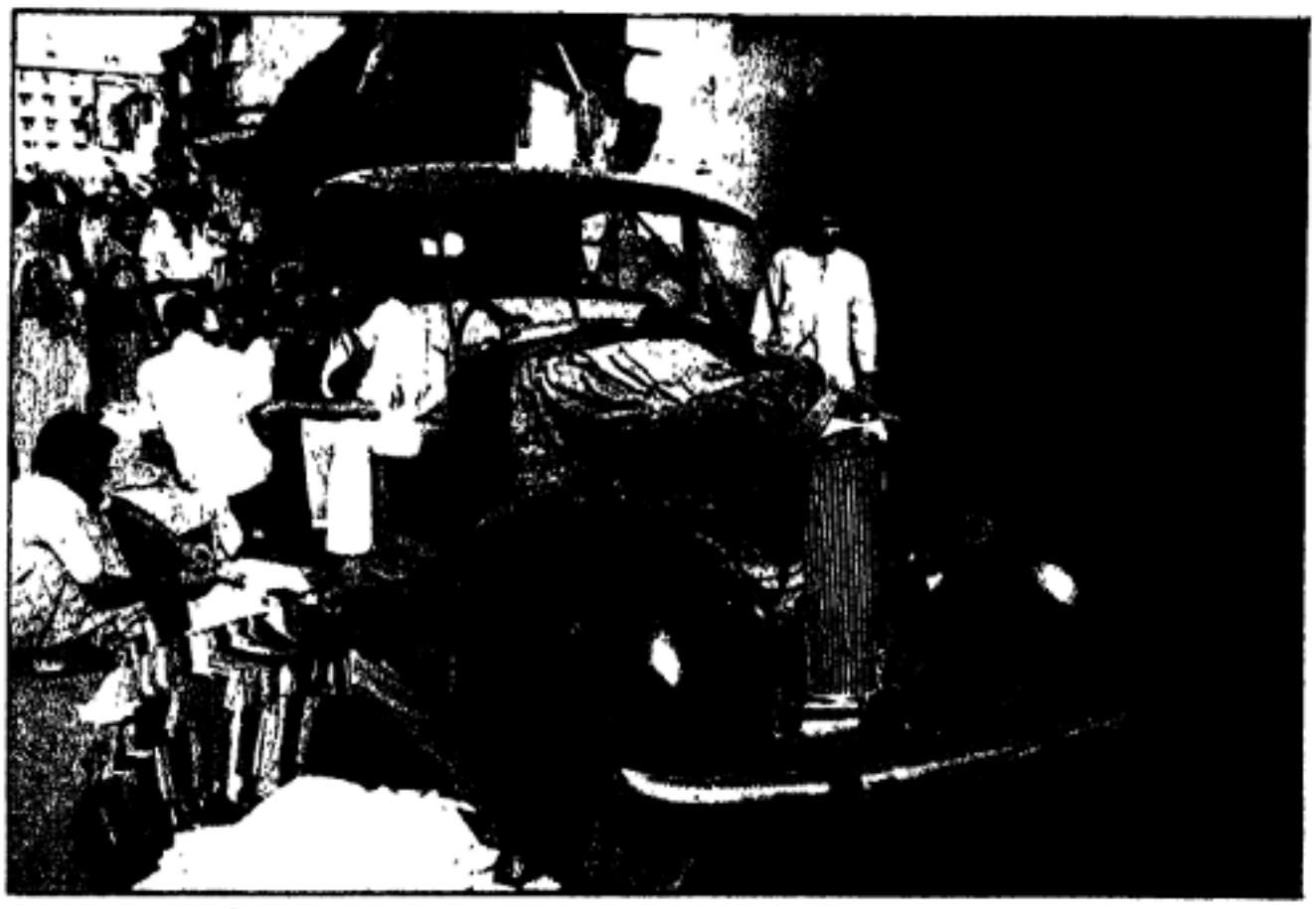
But whatever the origin of the name, the entrance to the market is not in the least impressive. In the first few hundred yards there are junk shops on either side where old locks, rusty chains, secondhand machine parts and other metallic junk is sold. But as one turns the corner it is a different world. There are rows of shops stacked with artefacts in gleaming brass as well as dull copper. The choice is limitless—old pots, planters, oil lamps, bird cages,



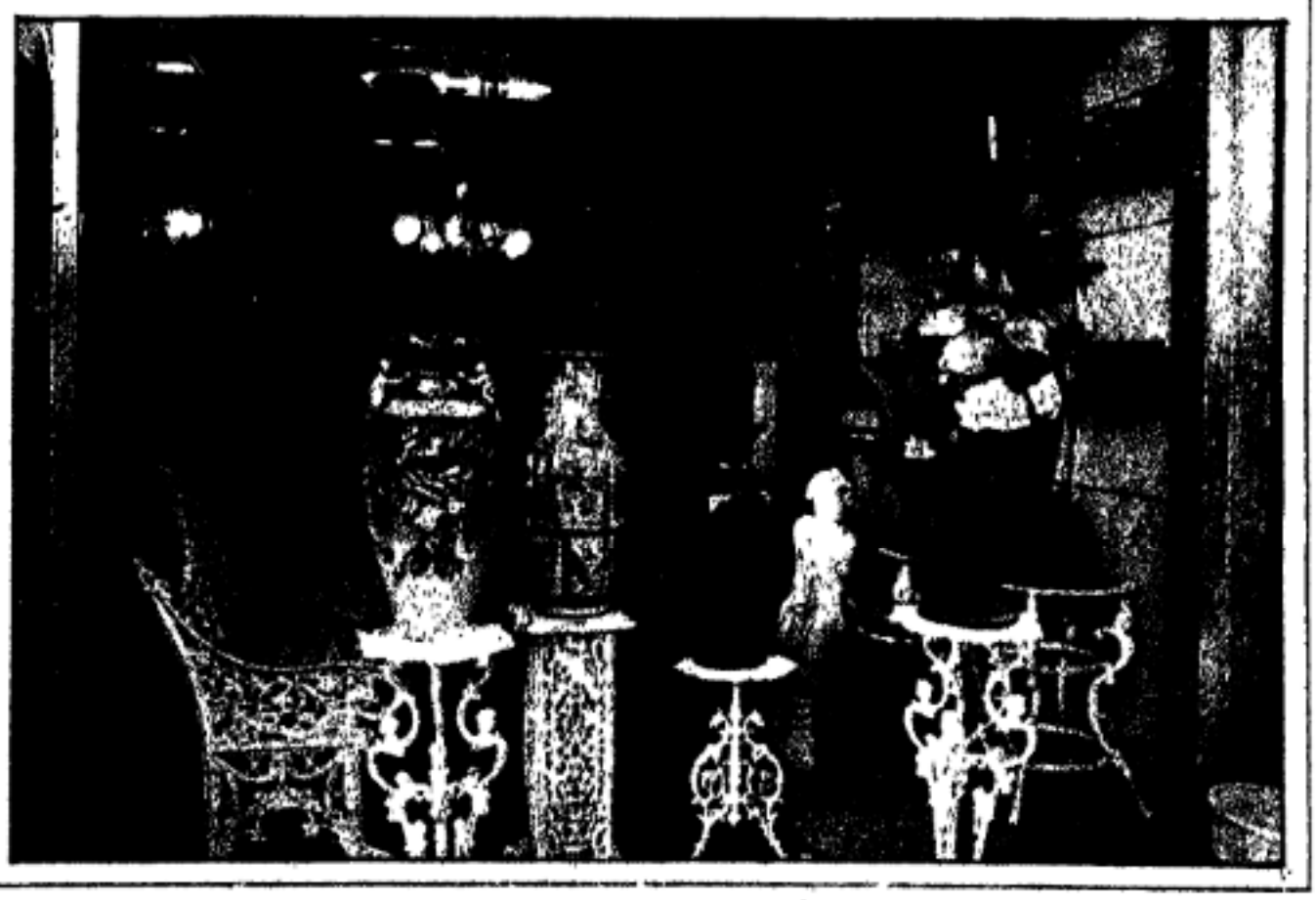
An antique phonogram: a wide range of artefacts



Furniture from the past: a collector's items



(Above) Peddling wares from a ramshackle jalopy and (below) lampshades and exotic pottery on display: it's a different world



cutlery. Then there are the lamp shops flaunting their wares—chandeliers, oil lamps, table lamps, bed lamps, all sorts of lamps to choose from. The furniture shops are of two kinds. Those that sell old furniture and *bric-à-brac* and those that sell modern functional furniture of wood, tubular aluminium and steel. For those who love pottering around, each trip could yield new surprises—each dust-laden object having a potential value that only a discerning eye could ascertain.

There was a time when shopkeepers were unaware of the true value of their stock. They were basically dealers in junk with low turnovers. But soon repaired and polished junk became the in thing among contemporary trendsetters and Chor Bazaar became their new hunting ground. Shopkeepers who clued in on this trend not only cashed in on their practically dead stock but also reorganised their business into a lucrative profession, now handed down from generation to generation. Soon learning all the tricks of the trade, such as the ability to recognise genuine pieces and repair them, they even began turning out look alike fakes. Which is why, perhaps, shopkeepers are now a little wary of prying strangers and too many questions lead to a curt brush-off: "If you don't want to buy anything then go—I don't know where these things come from or how old they are."

Shopkeepers maintain that there is no *chori ka mal* in the market. So a seller



Tourists at the marketplace each trip could yield new surprises



A view of Chor Bazaar a storehouse of invaluable goods

who arouses suspicion is usually requested to leave his name and address so that the dealer can get in touch with him If he demurs, a plainclothes policeman is put on him, on the off-chance that he may be a thief No one wants any trouble

The market, it is said is over 300 years old Sexagenarian Ebraim Tyabally owner of the oldest shop in the market, reminisces about the old days when Lord Wellington would stroll down the lane, in search of cutlery and *bric-à-brac* "In those days what we collected came from old Parsi families Today old means anything between 20 50 years old and the shopkeepers are also of a different class Old timers like us somehow manage to keep afloat There are others, the sharp young boys looking for quick money whose business turnovers add up to four figures "

Do they cheat their customers? "Yes they do—given the chance," says Javed Miya, another old-timer who has seen better days. "There are not many genuine antiques available any longer in the market. Most of the real stuff goes out of the country since it fetches a higher price abroad "

Do they cheat their customers? "Yes they do—given the chance," says Javed Miya, another old-timer who has seen better days "There are not many genuine antiques available any longer in the market Most of the real stuff goes out of the country since it fetches a much higher price abroad Besides, we have this rule that anything over a hundred years has to be registered with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) which wants to get involved in all these *lafdas*".

The clamp-down on illegal trafficking in artefacts across the international borders came in the mid-Seventies "According to the 1974 Antiquities Act anything over a 100 years old has to be evaluated and registered," explained A K Sharma of the Archaeological Survey of Bombay (ASB) "Consequently most of the furniture and artefacts in the market are not antiques—at best they are fakes They make these look old by burying them in the ground, treating them with chemicals or oxidising them In Mahabalipuram there is an art school which specialises in making duplicates "

Copying from old pieces has become a fine art, and indeed a lucrative business Often the original is preserved and owned by the shopkeeper himself while copies are given over to influential customers for a fee According to one shopkeeper, the Oberoi Grand Hotel in Calcutta had once paid Rs 300 to photograph a certain design for a canopy "A lot of furniture and garden chairs are being sold as antiques but they are really copies of old designs," he points out

For antiques the prices are sky high—there are chandeliers quoted at Rs 80,600 and study desks marked for Rs 4,000 Stained glass which used to lie around in godowns as dead stock has suddenly found a market and is quoted at prices as high as Rs 4,000 For a Kalamkari piece etched on glass and framed in brass a shopkeeper demands a whopping Rs 34,000 High priced stocks such as these lie around for an indefinite period Risks are high since one never knows when a particular piece will attract a buyer Hence the need to have an alternative business Occasionally shopkeepers have to make distress sales to meet their household and business expenses But such sales are seldom or never made to a customer They sell things to each other so that the market rates do not suffer.

Buyers, too, are not always small-timers Brisk business is conducted on

The magic of Chor Bazaar

The name, they all say, was given by someone else. Some believe it was the name given to Chindi Bazaar in the parallel street and some say it is because of the contiguous Jumma Bazaar.

For well over eighty years every Friday the main Chor Bazaar remains closed and sellers of junk from all over Maharashtra gather together to sell their collections of the past week. The legends surrounding the origin of the name are not at all complimentary. Senior citizens of Bombay point out that if one wants to trace down one's old shoe or a broken toy, Chor Bazaar on Friday is the place. But these junk dealers are offended by such remarks. "Actually it was known as Shor Bazar because of the noise," they say, "and this was distorted to Chor Bazaar."

What do they sell?

Anything from a broken hair clip to the chassis of an old car. Asif Miya very proudly claims, "I've been selling from this spot for the last forty years." And how's business? "*Allah ki den hai. Dal roti chal jati hai.*" He moves closer and with a mouthful of *paan*, says in a very confiding manner, *"Chche saat sau rupiye to aram se ban jate hain."*

One simple villager was contemplating buying a powder compact. He had four to choose from. He opened each and every one, checked the mirror, studied his reflection, studied the case, pretended to read the name, asked the seller if he had another one and finally started bargaining. He brought it down from Rs 8 to Rs 2, and pretending not to be happy with himself, went away scrutinising other wares. A well-to-do woman picked up ten picture frames for forty rupees. Another man bought two pram-wheels. A Sikh was selling hand-made locks. These caught the interest of a youngster because the Sikh loudly offered to give one lock free to anybody who could find the cleverly camouflaged key hole. The Sardarji sold two locks for Rs 25 to this youngster. Ten to 15 second-hand TVs are sold here every Friday ranging from Rs 1,200 to Rs 15,depending on the customer and his needs.

In this market customers buy from the sellers and the junk dealers also buy from each other. The poorest of hand-cart pullers is aware of the potential of his wares. One such man was selling a pair of old-fashioned bed heads probably made of valuable Burma teak. A shopkeeper offered him Rs 1,000 for the pair, at which he let forth a stream of angry words and moved on refusing to negotiate further.

Not all deals are clear and above board. An old man, hunched up, coughing incessantly, whispered something in the ears of a shopkeeper and pulled out a wristwatch from his pocket. A quick glance around made them conscious of being watched. The watch was quickly whisked away from sight. After some time both of them huddled over it trying to open its rear to check its machinery. They bargained surreptitiously, some money exchanged hands, and the man disappeared into the crowd. Was it stolen? The shopkeepers deny that they have stolen goods. Visiting cards are given to anybody who shows any interest. To prove their legitimacy the shopkeepers produce identity cards which say that they are members of "The Mutton Street Dealers Association."

By 11 am there is no place to move and one cannot even hear the person standing next to one above the din. Loudspeakers are blaring, sellers are advertising their wares at an incredible pitch and in all the confusion a *sherbet*-seller manoeuvres his cart deftly, coaxing buyers to take a refreshing break. Business is brisk. There is excitement and hope in the eyes of both the buyer and the seller. And the noise is deafening. It makes one pause and ponder. Shor Bazzar or Chor Bazaar?



Second-hand clothes for sale: no haggling

Sundays. Diplomats are regular customers though Arabs have superseded all other customers in importance and money power. Recently a Sheikh walked the full length of the market, armed guards *et al* and left with goods worth Rs 10-15 lakhs, while shopkeepers looked on in amazement.

The loser in this game is the poor seller who is compelled to sell his once prized possession. To salvage his shattered pride he prefers to remain anonymous and is consequently at the mercy of ruthless brokers to fetch him a good price. There is a network of brokers all over the country and the message spreads quick and fast. SUNDAY saw Rashid Khan, a well-known shopkeeper studying photographs of a three-foot-high statue of a mother and child in marble. There were about a dozen colour photographs so that the prospective buyer could see every detail. These photographs had been sent by a broker from Hyderabad.

Intimations of all such sales are first sent to Bombay -- the largest market and then follow-up enquiries are sent to Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Calcutta and Madras. The Bombay dealer judges the age and condition of the piece from the photographs and then makes a counter offer, leaving it to the broker to strike a good bargain. Brokerage charges vary depending on the quantum of money involved - for a small deal it could be ten per cent and for a larger deal it could be anything between two to five per cent depending on how hard one haggles.

Change is inevitable. Over the years, old shops have given way to new ones—a new generation of shopkeepers have come into their own. The jargon is peppy, the pace racy. But the mystique of Chor Bazaar continues and the promise of the old world continues to attract tourists and Bombayites whether they find their search worthwhile or not.

Debjani Sinha with Neeru Nanda/*Bombay*

ANALYSIS

Gubernatorial whims

The Governor's office has turned out to be a controversial one



Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi with General (Retired) K V Krishna Rao toeing the line

Sandeep Shankar

The framers of the Indian Constitution might have lived to rue this day of all the functionaries they created, the august office of the Governor has turned out to be the most controversial and unsavoury. With the enormous 'discretionary" powers at his disposal, a Governor today can make or mar democracy become an arbitrary judge an agent of the central government or alternatively, the 'conscience keeper of the politicians of a state as events in Nagaland have shown.

Were such possibilities foreseen? At one stage the members of the Constituent Assembly had thought of an elective Governor. But the idea was given up because a Governor elected by the people of a state would need to be vested with effective powers. At any rate, he would be inclined to assert himself in executive functions on grounds of popular accountability. This would run counter to the tenets of a parliamentary democracy. Hence, provision was made for nominated Governors. As is the case with the Supreme Court judges and other constitutional offices, the Governor is nominated by the President of India. Yet, ironically, he has never been above dispute as a nominee of the President he is a *de facto* nominee of the ruling party in Delhi and hardly an objective judge of politics in his state.

The framers had tried everything to ensure that the Governor respected the Constitution and everything it stands for. All constitutional functionaries are under oath to discharge their duties in conformity with the document. A Governor, before assuming office, takes an oath "to protect and defend the Constitution and the law", and devote himself to "the service and the well-being of the people" of his state. The Governor, therefore, is ultimately answerable to the Constitution, not the central government.

Consider what happened in Nagaland. The state went to the polls on 18 November, 1987. The Congress(I) won 34 seats in the 60 member Assembly, the Naga National Democratic Party (NNDP) had 16, the Naga People's Party (NPP) one, and independents eight (election to one seat was not held). A Congress(I) government was sworn in with Hokishe Sema as chief minister. On 31 July, 1988 when the CM was in Japan, 13 Congress(I) legislators including four ministers, left the party to form the Nagaland Regional Congress and join the newly-formed Joint Regional Legislature Party (JRLP) with Vamuze Phesao, the NNDP leader, as its head. The JRLP claimed a majority of 35 in the House which had an effective membership of 59—13 who had left the Congress(I), 17 from the NNDP (whose strength had

gone up by one since the election), one from the NPP and four independents who had withdrawn their support to the Congress(I).

Hokishe Sema insisted on continuing in office even after his government had been reduced to a minority of 21 on the plea that there was no genuine split in the party. The Governor, Gen K.V. Krishna Rao (Retd), decided to stay in the Manipur capital, Imphal, and shut himself off from Nagaland politics from the day the 13 MLAs resigned from the Congress(I). He is believed to have done this on the instructions of the central government. This was done only to enable the ruling party to "sort out" its differences and bring the dissidents back into their fold. As Union home minister Buta Singh kept telling reporters who spoke with him in Kohima, "This is an internal affair of the Congress(I), it will be sorted out soon."

But coax and cajole them as they might, the Congress(I) leaders including Oscar Fernandes and Buta Singh, failed to wean the legislators away. The Congress(I) ministry continued in office and the Governor refused to allow Vamuzo to form a new government by proving his majority on the floor of the House. Nor did he attempt to explore any possibility of forming an alternative government. Instead, he shot off a report to the President recommending President's Rule. The report cited as its reasons, the alleged greed and opportunism of the persons who had left the Congress(I) and that the new party they had floated had no plan or programme. Article 356 has mentioned: "A situation has arisen in which the government cannot be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution." And before anyone knew what had happened, President's Rule was clamped down on Nagaland, 18 months after the Assembly election.

Several points about this proclamation remain open to dispute. First, it is a clear violation of the Sarkaria Commission's recommendation that Article 356 should be resorted to only if all other possibilities of forming alternative governments have been exhausted. In this case, the Governor had made no effort to find out which group enjoyed the support of the majority in the Assembly. The whole intent and purpose of Article 356 is to provide an arrangement in the event of a breakdown of the constitutional machinery—not a collapse of the party in power which the central government might happen to support.

Said Soli Sorabjee: "President's rule cannot be imposed for helping the ruling party to buy time for realigning its party



Soli Sorabjee, eminent constitutional lawyer, said: "The history of President's Rule shows that the power of imposing the Rule should be entrusted to the President's judgement"

strength or sorting out party differences or for resolving a leadership crisis because that would be tantamount to exercise of power for an extraneous purpose, outside the ambit of Article 356 and hence would be unconstitutional." Neither could the provision be used to "punish" a group of Legislators considered "selfish or greedy". "That would be a case of irrelevant and impermissible considerations coming into play because Article 356 is not a punitive measure."

At any rate, call the Congress(I) dissidents what they might, they could hardly be described as defectors from a technical point of view: together they formed over a third of the total strength of the Congress(I) in the Assembly, four of them being ministers And under para three of the tenth Schedule to the Constitution, a split of more than a third of the party in a Legislature cannot be seen as a defection, so their membership of the Assembly remained intact.

The decision to impose President's Rule, ultimately, is the Prime Minister's. According to the director of the Indian Law Institute, Upendra Baxi, it is the ruling party at the Centre which holds the majority in Parliament that has to uphold the Constitution. Said he: "The imposition of President's Rule rests on presidential satisfaction, but the President (under Article 74) has to act according to the aid and advice of the council of ministers led by the PM." In reality, the decision is the PM's. "The ultimate requirement is a parliamentary majority, as long as the ruling party at the Centre has it, the task of implementing the Constitution belongs to it."

But Sorabji differs. He believes Article 74 does require the President to follow the aid and advice of the council of ministers save exceptional circumstances. Said the lawyer: "The Supreme Court has opined that the President is not bound to accept ministerial advice in exceptional situations in order to avoid peril to democracy. Would not peril to federalism, a basic feature of the Constitution, be another exceptional situation?" He went on: "Legal pundits will no doubt differ. But the history of President's Rule in the states clearly shows that the power of imposing President's Rule in a state should be entrusted to the President's individual judgment. He is the protector of the federation." But that, however, would need a constitutional amendment.

The Governor, for his part, does have certain "discretionary" powers. Ordinarily, he is a constitutional head acting on the advice of his council of ministers with the chief minister at the head. But the Constitution visualises situations where he has to act on his own discretion. Said S R Maheshwari of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, a constitutional expert who assisted the Sarkaria Commission: The most important function of the Governor is in regard to the appointment of the chief minister, but he hardly has any discretion in this



NTR after he was ousted by Governor Ram Lal

matter when a political party emerges with an absolute majority and elects a leader. The Governor has to exercise his discretion only when no single party enjoys an absolute majority. However, his discretion in the selection of a chief minister is final and is not subject to any review, including judicial."

The realisation, after 38 years of constitutional functioning, that they are above law, has often made Governors reckless and partisan. In 1965, the Governor of Kerala, V.V. Giri, did not invite the leader of the single largest party, the CPI, to form a government. In 1967, the Governor of Rajasthan, Dr Sampurnanad, invited the single largest party, the Congress, to form the ministry ignoring the claim of the United Front, a coalition of parties formed immediately after the announcement of the results, which claimed the support of 92 of 184 MLAs. And even when the Congress decided not to form a government, the Governor did not think fit to consider the rivals' claims, and instead brought the state under President's Rule.

The Constitution has allotted two roles for the ruling party at the Centre—first, protector and defender of the Constitution and a government with a mandate to rule. But controversies arise when the government in Delhi misunderstands its role in relation to states



Andhra's Nadendla Bhaskara Rao (right) being sworn in by Governor Ram Lal

The track record of Governors in the undoing of governments is equally notorious. A given set of democratic standards have hardly been adhered to. Governors have thought fit to use their own subjective judgment. Apparently, this is because the Constitution says that the council of ministers shall continue "during the pleasure of the Governor". Said S.R. Maheshwari: "The concept of pleasure in the context of a parliamentary democracy is much more subtle than may appear to less sophisticated minds." Several instances, according to him, prove that Governors have been acting according to their whims in the performance of their functions. The record of Homi J H. Taleyarkhan in Sikkim in May 1984, Jagmohan in Jammu and Kashmir in July 1984 and Ram Lal in Andhra Pradesh in August 1984 have gone down as slurs on the Constitution. They hardly followed any "refined" concept of pleasure. Said Maheshwari: "By toppling established governments they have not only posed a threat to democracy but also disgraced themselves."

In Jammu and Kashmir, 12 of Farooq Abdullah's National Conference (NC) MLAs defected on 2 June, 1984, and expressed their desire to Governor Jagmohan to support Gul Mohammad Shah. The Congress(I) also decided to support Shah. With the dissident Legislators seated in the Raj Bhavan, the Governor acted swiftly: he "satisfied himself" about Shah's majority, dismissed the Farooq Abdullah ministry and installed Shah as the new CM asking him to prove his majority on the floor of the House within a month.

Ram Lal in Andhra Pradesh was in a class apart. It was a repetition—though much more rude and ham-handed—of the same pattern. On 14 August, 1984, four of N.T. Rama Rao's ministers defected. They were joined by some others. The Congress(I) and a few other MLAs also joined hands. On the strength of this new group, N. Bhaskara Rao claimed a majority in the Assembly. On 16 August, the Governor dismissed the Rama Rao ministry and ignored the latter's plea to convene the state Assembly within 48 hours. Neither was he given a chance to prove his majority.

The syndrome is all too familiar: some ambitious MLAs belonging to the ruling party are first encouraged to defect and the move acclaimed as a "split." They are joined by MLAs from other parties and independents. Soon other defectors are attracted to the group because of an understanding that the Governor will help them to form the government.

Said Upendra Baxi: "In 40 years, we have not developed any conventions regarding the Governor's role. The Janata period was uneventful in this respect, and too short a time to evolve any code. There are no parallels for the Indian situation anywhere else in the world."

Nothing can be done about it, perhaps. The Constitution has allocated two roles for the ruling party at the Centre—first, protector and defender of the Constitution (in relation to governments of the states) and a government with a mandate to rule (in relation to the people of the country). But controversies arise when the government in Delhi misunderstands its role in relation to the states as a supra-governmental authority with the political mandate to dominate the states. Admitted S.R. Maheshwari: "True, the Government of India is also the government of the governments of the states. But in the latter capacity it has to use its objective judgment over the actions and decisions of the states." But objectivity was never the Congress(I) government's forte.

An example of its sense of "objectivity": the Prime Minister had argued in defence of the decision to impose President's Rule in Nagaland, that it is a sensitive border state. Said Upendra Baxi: "This statement worries me. Nagaland will always be on the border, and it will always be sensitive. But does this mean democracy is not meant for the border states, only the hinterland?"

Nirmal Mitra / *New Delhi*

Big trouble in 'Little England'

Passions are inflamed in a small hill town of Tamil Nadu over the alleged rape of a woman by the police

Thally is a small town in the hills of Dharmapuri district in north-western Tamil Nadu. A majority of the 15,000-odd people of Thally live by their farms. They are a peaceful lot and the salubrious climate helps them keep their cool even in trying times. "It is a lovely place, this town," chuckled an old-timer at the bazaar tea-shop. "They called it 'Little England' because of its pleasant weather."

However, 'Little England' is now in flames. Reason: the police force has been blamed for a rape. Following the incident, circle inspector Balasubramaniam, head constable Govindan, grade-one constable Selvaraj and constable Govindaswamy have been placed under suspension for their alleged involvement in the crime and their accomplice Lakshmi, a woman sweeper in the station, has been arrested. Though the case has been taken over by the state CID, the local residents are upset that the offenders have not yet been jailed

It all started on the evening of 20 July when Kalpana Sumathi, a 25-year-old frail school teacher and mother of a four-year-old girl, went to get water from a pump. The pump is in a 'safe' corridor sandwiched between the police station and a government school. Because of the pump's proximity to the police station, women of Thally have never hesitated to go with their pots, not even at night. However, that night, the story was different. Kalpana Sumathi went to get water, but did not return home. She was allegedly raped by the cops from the police station.

Tea-shop owner Krishnappa, when he went to relieve himself the next morning, heard someone moaning. On looking around he saw an almost naked woman, battered beyond recognition, lying in a dried-up *nullah*. It was Kalpana Sumathi. Krishnappa fled from the place screaming. And soon, the little town was agog.

The police station was barely a hundred metres away. On learning about the incident, the policemen arranged to remove the woman to the Hosur government hospital, 40 km away.

Venkatesamurthy, Kalpana's husband, went looking for her the previous evening when she did not return home from the water pump. He enquired at the houses of his relatives in Thally and finally landed up at the police station. The police eyed him with disinterest and simply promised they would look around for his missing wife. Little did Venkatesamurthy realise that his wife had been brutally raped in that building, barely a couple of hours ago.

"They pretended they had never seen her. They wanted me to describe how she looked. And then they told me they would look for her, and on my part I should report to them if she returned home," Murthy recalled, sitting by the bed on which his wife lay swathed in bandages, in the plastic-surgery ward on the fourth floor of Bangalore's St John's Hospital. He had removed Sumathi from the Hosur hospital after a day's treatment there because he was afraid that she was not safe there.

The policemen, in fact, did not even register the complaint that evening. The first information report (FIR) was filed eight days later. "The original form had been torn and destroyed and a cooked-up version written down in the station records," alleged Muniappa Lagumaiah, the state executive committee member of the Indian Communist Party (CP-

Kalpana Sumathi with her husband in St John's Hospital, Bangalore: will justice be meted out?

R Bhagwan Singh



Kalyanasundaram group). He has been in the forefront of an agitation in Thally to force the authorities to take action against the guilty policemen.

The local ICP secretary, Vadairappasetti Ravikumar, said he had gone to the police station two days after the victim was found and sought early action on Venkatesamurthy's complaint. He told the sub-inspector on duty that the public was enraged over the incident and there would be a bandh if the authorities continued to be complacent.

"The sub-inspector threatened he would beat me up and throw me in the lock-up for the same offence about which we had complained. He dared us to organise the bandh in Thally and drove me out," Ravikumar recalled, sitting in a tiny eating joint at the Thally bazaar junction. Ravikumar then went to his party's regional boss, Lagumaiah.

There was no response from the government even though it had become quite clear that the proximity of the police station to the *nullah* pointed to the culprits being the cops themselves. And when an uncle visiting Kalpana at the Bangalore hospital brought word that she had for the first time opened her mouth and told him that Lakshmi knew "everything there is to know", the public in Thally went mad with rage. They attacked the police station on the morning of 31 July when the same circle inspector identified by them as a suspect in the crime, took charge of crowd-management and ordered a *lathi*-charge even while his superior officers were conducting negotiations with prominent representatives of the agitators in a nearby marriage hall.

The Dharmapuri district collector and superintendent of police rushed to Thally on hearing about the serious developments. The two officials tried to pacify the locals with promises of necessary action in the matter.

Said the state inspector general of police (law and order), K.K. Rajasekaran Nair, "The intensity of that agitation made us suspect there must be truth in their allegation that policemen were involved in the rape. We recommended to the government at once that the case should be transferred to the CID for a thorough investigation. A *prima facie* finding led to the concerned policemen being suspended pending further enquiry. We are determined to bring the culprits to book, and the fact that they were policemen only made us act with a firmer hand and not try to push the matter under the carpet." The Vellore range deputy inspector-general of police, A.X. Alexander, who conducted the initial enquiry at Thally, is reported to have taken the cops at the police station to task when he realised they were trying to bluff their way out. He found bloodstains on the wall and the floor in the station's store-room and went into a rage when he was told that the bloodstains were from a lamb which had been sacrificed during a festival.

The lamb, Alexander discovered, was none other than the village school teacher, and that circle inspector Balasubramaniam had celebrated his 'festival' on the evening of 20 July. Promptly, the DIG recommended that the inspector and the staff present at that time of the incident should be placed under suspension. "The main problem in this investigation was that the victim refused to talk. She would not go beyond saying that Lakshmi the sweeper knew what had happened. It was only when we arrested Lakshmi and questioned her that we could piece together the tragic events," Alexander told SUNDAY.

R. Bhagwan Singh



The Thally police station: sordid episode

An interesting feature of the crime was that the doctor at the Hosur government hospital, where Kalpana was first taken, reportedly certified that there were only external injuries on her person and that no rape had been committed

Three weeks after the traumatic experience, Kalpana narrated the happenings of that evening to this correspondent. "First, the inspector violated me and then three others came in," she sobbed, sitting on the hospital bed. "After he finished, inspector Balasubramaniam called in his men and told them. 'Now, you too have it and then finish her off.' I had already lost a lot of blood and was too weak to put up effective resistance. I pleaded with them to let me go but they were like animals possessed. They smelt of liquor and they hit me...," she broke down crying. Her body was covered with bruises.

Kalpana Sumathi said that she had gone in the evening, as usual, to fetch water at the pump when Lakshmi accosted her and suggested she meet the inspector inside the police station. Kalpana told her she had to return home to finish her cooking. But Lakshmi would not listen. When she resisted, Kalpana received a hard knock with a stick and passed out. She next found herself inside a room in the police station. A couple of policemen were assaulting her and tearing up her clothes. She tried to rush out of the room but they pulled her back and slammed the door shut. "In the process, they crushed my fingers in the door and a hard push sent me flying across the room. I hit the wall and became unconscious," Kalpana recalled.

She said she was semi-conscious most of the time. But she remembers the faces of the offenders. "I thought of my husband and I thought of my little child. But I thought there was no more purpose in living after what was happening to me in that room," she said with remorse.

From what can be pieced together, Kalpana Sumathi, now presumed by her offenders to be dead, was dragged out for dumping. The policemen threw her into the dry *nullah*, about eight feet below, and pushed in a boulder. "Fortunately that boulder missed my wife," said Venkatesamurthy.

According to Ravikumar, the police wanted to put the blame on the local people as the victim was discovered in the *nullah*. "The inspector had some youths brought to the station and interrogated them after stripping them down. Even the brother-in-law of the victim, in his teens, was not spared," Ravikumar alleged.

Another interesting feature of this crime was that the doctor at the Hosur government hospital, where Kalpana was first taken, reportedly certified that there were only external injuries on her person and that no rape had been committed.

Meanwhile, the police inspector, one head constable and three constables of the Thally police station have been arrested on charges of rape. The district sub-collector who investigated the case found a *prime facie* case against them.

"I will do everything possible to help her out of this trauma," Kalpana's husband Venkatesamurthy said, bravely fighting back the tears welling up in his eyes. "After all, she is my wife and the mother of my child." Suddenly, his face hardened. "If the judge does not hang inspector Balasubramaniam, then the people of Thally will themselves deliver justice to the criminal who we all know has been terrorising the entire region for many months."

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Bangalore*

Countdown to capture

Will the detention of 150 LTTE men in Madras help the IPKF track down Prabhakaran in Sri Lanka?

TAMIL NADU

Yesterday's heroes have turned into today's villains. Not so long ago Velupillai Prabhakaran and his associates in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were being hailed in public and invited to conference tables. But all of a sudden they are being accused of "acting in a manner prejudicial to the security of India", prompting the Government of India to arrest 150 LTTE cadres in Tamil Nadu on 7-8 August under the National Security Act (NSA). Nor was the action restricted only to Tamil Nadu, but a simultaneous operation, under the name of Checkmate, was also mounted in Sri Lanka by the IPKF. On 15 August, an elite commando force spread out in the jungles of Mullaitivu, west of Alampil in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, to flush out the militants. According to IPKF sources, not only does the LTTE have well-fortified bases in the jungles, with at least a dozen underground bunkers stacked to the hilt with sophisticated weapons, but also maintain that somewhere out there, the elusive Prabhakaran has built his hideout.

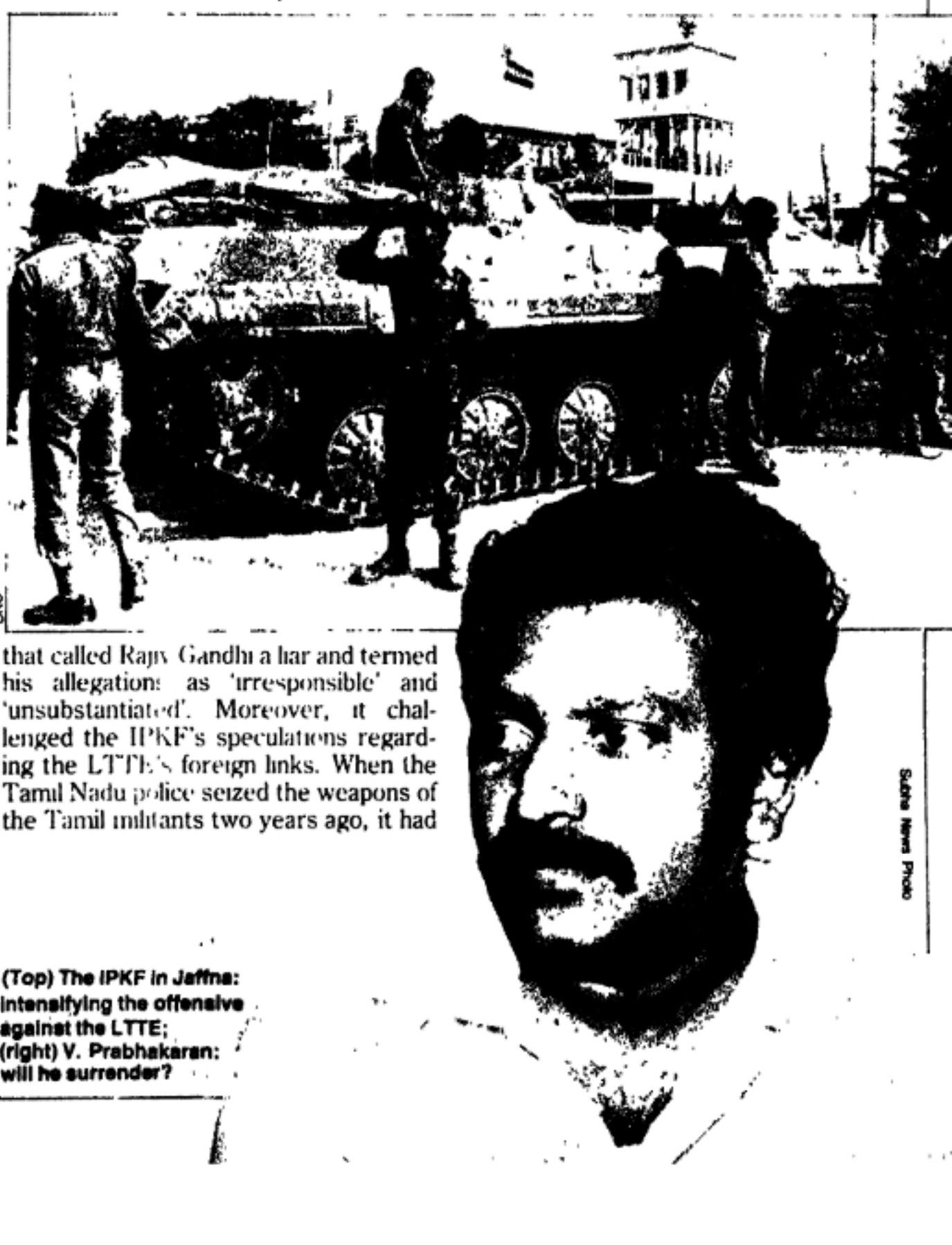
Things started snowballing with the LTTE's growing resistance against the IPKF action in Lanka. While the Tigers believed that New Delhi was propping up rival militant Tamil groups to annihilate Prabhakaran, the dossier detailing the LTTE's alleged links with Western countries, from whom they are said to have acquired hardware inputs, kept getting bulkier in New Delhi. Eventually, the mutual suspicion resulted in a cessation of the 'informal' talks that were being held between the Research and Wing Analysis (RAW) and the LTTE representative, Sadasivam Krishnakumar, better known as Kittu.

The LTTE office in Madras too played on the sympathies of the local media for the Tamil militants and supplied gory details of the alleged excesses committed by the IPKF soldiers against Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka. Often, these were splashed across the front pages in the local newspapers causing great embarrassment to the Congress(I) in the state but the government studiously ignored the allegations.

And then Rajiv Gandhi turned up in the state and in between touring the countryside, he expressed his disappointment with the LTTE. In a gesture of despair, the Prime Minister declared that "India is getting a little tired" of the LTTE's negative behaviour. Around the same time, the IPKF issued a statement which claimed that a recent seizure of SAM-7 missiles from an LTTE camp in Lanka demonstrated that the Tigers were getting help from some foreign agency.

The LTTE retort was not long in coming. The outfit's Madras office issued a strongly-worded press release that called Rajiv Gandhi a liar and termed his allegations as 'irresponsible' and 'unsubstantiated'. Moreover, it challenged the IPKF's speculations regarding the LTTE's foreign links. When the Tamil Nadu police seized the weapons of the Tamil militants two years ago, it had recovered SAM-7 missiles from the LTTE, the press statement pointed out. And added that India not only knew that the Tigers had these missiles but had even trained the militants in their use. Why then was the 'foreign involvement' issue being raised after all this time?

The Prime Minister's office was obviously annoyed at this open accusation aimed at the Government of India and Rajiv Gandhi. The orders to round up all the Tigers who are now based in Tamil Nadu and seal their propaganda office in Indira Nagar in East Madras came soon after. And evidently, the euphoria generated by the July 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan accord has all but vanished. Said secretary general of the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front, (EPRLF), K. Padmanabha: "Unfortunately, the implementation of what was agreed upon in the peace accord has not



CNS

Sobha News Photo

(Top) The IPKF in Jaffna: intensifying the offensive against the LTTE; (right) V. Prabhakaran: will he surrender?

come about."

But the Tigers are not the only ones who are agitated about the government's action of rounding up all the Tamil militants in Madras. The present swoop on the LTTE which appears to have been a hasty and ill-planned affair, intended to twist the Tigers' arm, is however, capable of triggering public unrest on a massive scale this side of the Palk Straits. Already the DMK president, M. Karunanidhi, has threatened to launch a massive agitation if the detained Tigers are not released soon. Said DMK Rajya Sabha member, V.A.I. Gopalaswamy, "These detentions under the NSA of the LTTE cadres who are never known to have violated Indian laws is an unpardonable crime and the Tamils all over the world will never forgive Rajiv Gandhi for this atrocious action."

The Tigers were initially detained on the grounds that they had been staying in the state without valid documents. But when bail applications were moved in Madras principal sessions court on behalf of 31 members citing medical reasons, the government decided to book them under the NSA. Now, the LTTE men need not be produced before a magistrate for three months and, subject to an approval by a review committee, could even be locked up for a whole year. But the LTTE supporters among the Tamil Nadu politicians are not disheartened. The Dravida Kazhagam (DK) headquarters' secretary Kali Poongundran has filed a *habeas corpus* petition in the Madras High Court.

The LTTE, the petitioner charged, has been singled out for harsh treatment by the Government of India because the group refused to endorse the Indo-Sri Lankan accord and also refuted the charges levelled against it by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi who consequently ordered their detention. How could these men be detained for not possessing valid documents when they were allowed to stay here for the last five years, Poongundran queried.

The NSA detention of the LTTE cadres may have its political fallout in Madras but Prabhakaran now finds himself in a tight spot. Now that his men are under detention, the intelligence agencies will do their best to extract information about the Tigers' foreign links and the whereabouts of their supremo. And if the IPKF is provided with the clues, it may not be long before it succeeds in bagging its prize catch: Velupillai Prabhakaran.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

The language of contention

A save Urdu movement launched in Hyderabad threatens to become a major agitation

ANDHRA PRADESH

N.T. Rama Rao would do well to take a few tips from Jyoti Basu. While the Marxist chief minister of West Bengal can take it easy now that the vexatious Gorkhaland issue has been resolved to everyone's satisfaction, NTR faces the threat of a Gorkhaland-like agitation erupting right in Hyderabad. The warning came from MP Sultan Salauddin **Owaisi** of the Majlis Ittehadul-e-Muslimeen (MIM).

The MIM launched a save Urdu movement (SUM) three months ago to protest against, what it calls, the "deliberate neglect of Urdu by the NTR government". Initially the response to the movement was low-key but on 1 August when a massive rally was undertaken from the Charminar to the state Assembly in Hyderabad, it drew a tremendous response. It was then that the movement's leaders issued an ultimatum to the NTR government to "recognise Urdu as the second official language or face an **intensified** agitation". The government, they charged, has

N.T. Rama Rao: under fire





adopted an "anti-Muslim and anti-Urdu" stand aimed at "destroying the identity of Muslims".

Soon the Urdu movement was drawing flak from every political party except the Congress(I). Said Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) M. Venkaiah Naidu, "There is no substance to this demand." And about the tacit support that former home minister K. Prabhakar Reddy of the Congress has extended to the movement, he asked, what had the Congress done to promote Urdu during its regime?

But the MIM is determined to intensify its agitation in this month when the Ganesh Festival will be celebrated. As part of its 'save Urdu' programme, the leaders have decided to submit all petitions, applications, and complaints to the police and other government establishments in Urdu. Moreover, they will demand all acknowledgements and attestations in Urdu.

And what's more, the Road Transport Corporation's (RTC) buses and official sign-boards in Hyderabad will have an additional line in Urdu, besides the customary Telugu and English signs, if the leaders carry out their threat of painting on Urdu **signs.** They also plan to meet the Prime Minister and Opposition leaders to apprise them of the problem.

The Muslims are agitated by the Telugu Desam Party's act of overriding the guarantees ensured to Urdu-speaking people in GO No. 472 of 4 July, 1977 through the promulgation of GO No. 273 on 5 May, 1988. The new order, the SUM leaders maintain, **is counter to the spirit of the 1977** GO. They also allege that the Official Language Commission's chairman, N. Krishnamacharya, has often declared



MIM leaders protesting against the 'deliberate neglect' of Urdu: grievances galore

that he is committed to promoting Telugu, at the cost of Urdu, with the ostensible motive of eliminating English totally.

Alarmed by the stance taken by the Muslim leaders, the NTR regime revoked the controversial GO No. 273 and issued a new order (No. 371) offering Urdu, besides Telugu, as a regional language to be used by the secretariat, judiciary and the administrative services. NTR later said in the Assembly, "One hundred primary schools with Urdu as the medium of education were sanctioned recently. Urdu is the second language used for the recruitment of gazetted and non-gazetted officers. It is also used in correspondence between district offices, in courts, apart from issuing tenders, and in notices issued by various government departments."

But the SUM leaders are unwilling to be appeased. Owaisi dismissed the order revoking GO No. 273 as a ploy to "weaken the Urdu agitation and mislead the public into believing that NTR is the saviour of the Urdu language." They are now demanding that an expert on the Urdu language be appointed as vice-chairman of the Official Language Commission. As for the demand of amending the Official Language Act, put forward by MIM MLA, Mohd Amanulla Khan, NTR declared that the issue will be examined. But at the same time he said, "My government believes that the three language formula is the best policy and has adopted Hindi, Telugu and English accordingly." Whether NTR will succumb to pressure and adopt a fourth language remains to be seen.

Mukundan C. Menon/*Hyderabad*

Monsoon blues

With the onset of the rains, the Congress' politics of drought is rendered irrelevant

RAJASTHAN

A good monsoon, especially after a spell of drought, is expected to bring cheer to the ruling party. Or so the political axiom goes. But the times and the axioms are fast changing. Even in the politically stodgy state of Rajasthan. This year's monsoon, coming after three consecutive years of drought, might have brought the smiles back to the state's farmers but it is generating no euphoria for the Rajasthan Congress(I).



The Rajasthan Canal: prosperity and the Congress(I) no longer go together

The Rajasthani peasants, Thakur and Rajput, seem to have begun to question the lack of logic involved in equating good times with the Congress(I). In fact, if anything, the events of the past 41 years have made indelible the party's association with the politics of disaster, drought and famine. Today, Rajasthan's younger voters and aspiring peasants want more than relief. Besides, says a middle-level Congress functionary, "This year's monsoons have almost made our party irrelevant."

And his statement could prove prophetic. For, in Rajasthan, as in most Hindi-speaking states, perhaps the most crucial segment of the political hierarchy is the middle-level functionary. He is the key, the critical liaison between the masses and the top-level conglomerate of party bosses. This extremely heterogenous middle-level group is composed of rural power brokers, middlemen of all types, rich farmers, traditional landlords, and the *khadi*-clad neo-Brahmins. They are the first to sense which way the masses might swing and they are the real kingmakers. And it is this segment which in Rajasthan is fast growing disenchanted with the ruling party.

The news has spread to the Opposition's highest echelons in the state and has strengthened the leaders' will to be united. "In Rajasthan every political party has realised that they can form the next government if they are united and there is no vote-splitting," says veteran BJP leader and former chief minister Bhairon Singh Sekhawat. "Whatever comes, seat adjustment in the next Assembly elections is a certainty." The fact that state leaders like Sekhawat have committed themselves to electoral adjustments even before the national level leadership of Opposition parties have finalised the issue is indicative of the extent of the Rajasthan Opposition's confidence.

Apart from acquiring confidence, the state's Opposition leaders have also learnt their political lessons. In December 1984, a divided Opposition fought the Congress(I) only to lose all of the

state's 25 Lok Sabha seats. Three months later, they hastily formed a sort of coalition and the results were dramatic. Even without an anti-Congress swing, the Opposition captured as many as 85 of the state's 200 Assembly seats. In July this year, the folly of fragmentation was again brought home. In the triangular contests—involving the Congress(I), BJP and the Janata-Lok Dal combine—for the Pali Lok Sabha and the Khetri Assembly seats, the Congress sailed through. Rather than pointing to good times for the Congress, the two byelections are more a pointer to the Opposition's strength.

Most Opposition leaders have seen the point and are in no mood to see their electoral chances wrecked by the power games of their bosses at the national level. Nathuram Mirdha, the Rajasthan Lok Dal leader, for instance, was squarely snubbed by his party legislators when he tried to prevent them from attending Devi Lal's unity convention held in New Delhi in August.

Every political indicator in Rajasthan is shifting in favour of the Opposition. In the recent *panchayat* elections, the success of the Opposition in wresting four out of the state's 27 districts is considered a remarkable feat. Since Independence, only once before—that too 15 years ago—had the Congress lost a single district council. Moreover, this time the Congress had coerced, cajoled and bribed the *sarpanchs* (village leaders), who have no official party affiliations, to vote for Congress candidates for higher level positions. Despite all this, the Opposition made history at the *panchayat* level.

Why the drift away from the Congress(I) is difficult to explain. Bofors and corruption is an issue only among the politically active Jat populations of northern Rajasthan. The majority of Rajasthani peasants do not appear to have developed a sudden antipathy for Rajiv Gandhi. The reasons lie elsewhere. Part of the answer is the new-found prosperity, and now the good monsoons, that are fast rendering the Congress irrelevant.

In the newly prosperous constituencies adjoining the Rajasthan Canal, starting from Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Suratgarh to Lunakaranagar, Falaudi and Jaisalmer, the electorate has swung away from the Congress. Similarly, in the agriculturally prosperous areas of Alwar, Bharatpur and Churu, the Congress has largely been written off and it seems that good times and the Congress(I) no longer go together. For the ruling party it truly never rains, it pours troubles.

Indranil Banerjie / *Jaipur*



Taking on the cooperative mafia

The government orders the supersession of three apex cooperative bodies

BIHAR

Rich, powerful and invincible. That was what the cooperative bosses of the three apex bodies in the state—Bihar Cooperative Marketing Union (BISCOMAUN), Land Development Bank (LDB) and Bihar State Cooperative Bank (BSCB)—were considered to be. And for years they preserved this image till on 31 July the government decided to supersede them and unmask their corrupt deeds. So, when CM Bhagwat Jha Azad announced the supersession order at a press conference, it came as a shock to the Congress politicians who headed the three organisations—Tapeshwar Singh of BISCOMAUN, N.K. Singh of BSCB and Rajo Singh of LDB.

The three apex bodies have been the source of many a scandal: Tapeshwar Singh has been accused of defrauding farmers; and all three institutions have degenerated into centres of mismanagement, corruption and nepotism. In fact, it was on the recommendation of the registrar of cooperative societies that Azad decided to act. Besides, Raj Kumar Singh—who later took over as the managing director of BISCOMAUN soon after the supersession order—had made some startling revelations about the extent of financial irregularities within the organisation. While BISCOMAUN's management allegedly juggled the account books to show a profit of Rs 40.25 lakhs during the financial years 1970-80, 80-81 and 81-82, the auditors found that the organisation had, in reality, incurred a net loss of Rs 26.31 crores. In the following two financial years, 1982-83 and 1983-84, the management had allegedly tampered with the records to scale down its losses from Rs 70.45 crores to Rs 41.51 crores.

The LDB's account books too reveal an intricate tale of lies: the bank which grants long-term loans to farmers had inflated its loan recovery rate from 22 per cent to 88 per cent. According to the auditors' report, the bank could recover only Rs 29 crores against its target of Rs 131 crores. And to celebrate this "achievement", it rewarded its functionaries with out-of-turn promotions. The bank also extended undue favours to a tractor agency by exceeding the prescribed credit limit of Rs 3.6 crores and charging an interest of only 12.5 per cent against the normal rate of 14 per cent.

The Bihar State Cooperative Bank (BSCB) too did not lag behind in manipulating figures and committing irregularities. This body turned around its loss of Rs 1.71 crores to show a profit of Rs 83.15 lakhs. Nepotism and corruption also reigned supreme here and Birender



(From left) N.K.Singh, Tapeshwar Singh and Rajo Singh: end of an era; (Inset) Bhagwat Jha Azad: stern action

Kumar Gautam, Tapeshwar Singh's nephew, who had been appointed as a clerk a few years ago, was given promotions and made deputy managing director.

The government's supersession order has been followed up by a series of remedial actions: R.K. Singh, who is the managing director of BISCOMAUN, forced G.D. Mishra to hand in his resignation. Mishra, who has retired as the additional district magistrate, is widely suspected to be responsible for covering up the bodies' financial irregularities. In another move, Singh ordered all officials who had been with the BISCOMAUN for more than three years to return to their parent cadres. P.K. Basu, who is at the helm now in LDB, has demanded that all documents related to the Rs 40-crore farm equipment supply scandal be examined. Many officials against whom there are charges of misappropriation of funds are likely to be suspended.

But once the cooperative mafia bosses got over the shock, they set about challenging the government's supersession order and when on 24 August their writ petitions were admitted by a division bench, there was jubilation in their camps. Meanwhile, Jagannath Mishra's supporters have written to the Prime Minister alleging that the state government had deliberately avoided serving a showcause notice before passing the supersession order. Tapeshwar Singh has vowed to make Bhagwat Jha Azad pay for his action. And it seems as if the dissidence activity in the state Congress(I) is likely to get a boost if Singh and his minions decide to join the dissidents in order to spite Azad.

Faizan Ahmad/ *Patna*

Charges, counter-charges

An IAS officer is accused, among other things, of abduction and attempted rape. Is he being framed?

ASSAM

Nothing sells like scandal. And nothing is as damaging for the reputation of an upright bureaucrat whose sterling track-record is the pride of his peers and subordinates alike. The news that Ramesh Bhattacharji, additional collector for customs and central excise, north-east India, had been charged of abduction and attempted rape and later accused of criminal trespass into a magistrate's chamber, was soon picked up by the newspapers in Guwahati and was the talk of the town in Shillong where he is based.

In a complaint filed on 27 May before the special judicial magistrate, Guwahati, G.K. Changmai, a student, Madhubala Baishya, alleged that on the evening of 17 May while she was waiting for a bus, a stranger offered her a lift. But instead of dropping her off at her destination, this man directed the jeep to a different location, asked his driver to get off and took the vehicle to a deserted spot where he attempted to rape her. Just then a truck, with its headlights on, came towards the car and he abandoned his intention of raping her, said Madhubala. Bhattacharji then directed his driver to drop her home and it was from him that she learnt about the stranger's identity.

On the basis of her complaint, Changmai, who was to play a crucial and controversial role in the ensuing drama, issued a non-bailable warrant of arrest against him but Bhattacharji was evidently tipped off by the police. He applied for anticipatory bail in Shillong. The case, he said, was "fabricated and designed to defame him". The court granted him bail on the condition that he appeared before the judicial magistrate on 6 June.

Bhattacharji maintained that on the day and at the time when he was supposed to have abducted Madhubala, he was conferring with two Calcutta-based lawyers, a senior joint secretary from the Union finance ministry and other customs officials at the Indian Oil guest house in Guwahati. All these people, incidentally, have confirmed Bhattacharji's alibi.

But evidently, there was more trouble in store for Bhattacharji. On 6 June, he appeared before the court where the second act of the drama took place. Changmai alleged that the government official forcibly entered his chamber, snatched a copy of the petition filed by Madhubala and threatened to assault him. Changmai then filed two cases against him and issued an arrest warrant against him. Again Bhattacharji secured anticipatory bail—this time from the Guwahati High Court. Changmai, in his official capacity, took cognisance of this



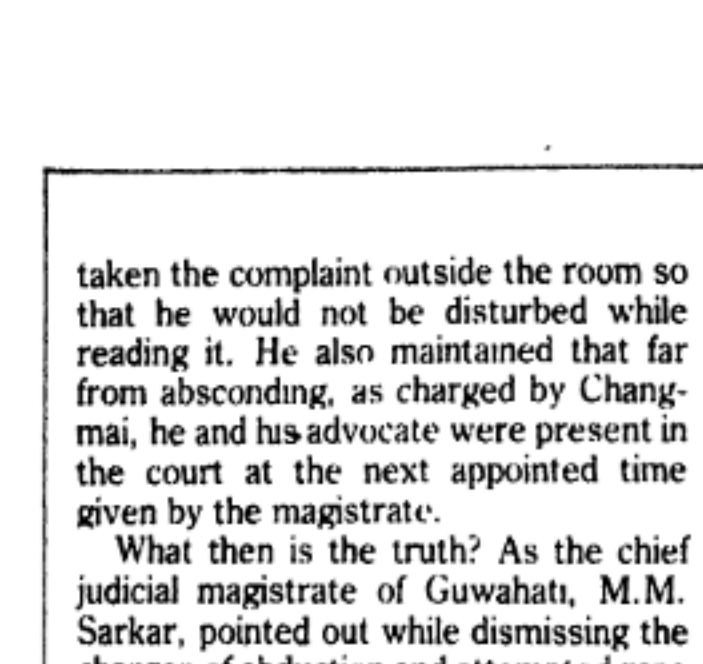
A raid being conducted by excise officials in Imphal; (inset) Bhattacharji: damaging charges

and sentenced him to two days' simple imprisonment for absconding from the court after committing the alleged crime.

Bhattacharji moved the sessions court against Changmai's order in which he maintained that the charge of snatching away the complaint was "false" as he had Changmai's permission to peruse it. His only "fault", he claimed, was that he had

taken the complaint outside the room so that he would not be disturbed while reading it. He also maintained that far from absconding, as charged by Changmai, he and his advocate were present in the court at the next appointed time given by the magistrate.

What then is the truth? As the chief judicial magistrate of Guwahati, M.M. Sarkar, pointed out while dismissing the charges of abduction and attempted rape levelled against Bhattacharji, "The case is shrouded in mystery besides being a device to harass a senior officer by some interested persons." And who are these "interested persons"? Could it be that Bhattacharji's long-standing feud with the Delhi-based cigarette giant, Golden Tobacco Company (GTC), had landed him in such a predicament? In November 1987, Bhattacharji had taken on the GTC when he exposed excise evasion by the company to the tune of Rs 1



Excise officials seize heroin in Dibrugarh under Bhattacharji's supervision

crore. GTC was served a showcause notice by Bhattacharji but when its officials did not heed his call on two occasions, he moved the Calcutta High Court. Last April, the court directed GTC to apear before Bhattacharji on 24, 25 or 26 May but GTC ignored it once again. It was soon after that Bhattacharji's own problems began.

The GTC's lawyers tried to capitalise on Bhattacharji's troubles and moved the Calcutta High Court for an adjournment of the contempt case. One of the grounds in their petition was that since Bhattacharji himself faced a series of criminal charges, the court should disregard any allegations made by such a person. The court dismissed the petition but the GTC has appealed to a division bench against the court's judgement and the legal tussle promises to take its long-winding course. As for Bhattacharji, an unfavourable verdict on the two other criminal cases against him could ruin his so far brilliant career.

Radhika Ramaseshan/*Guwahati*

Benevolence or interference?

Devi Lal's offer to help the government complete a road project irks state Congressmen

MADHYA PRADESH

What was the self-appointed messiah of Opposition unity, Devi Lal, doing in Raipur? If the Lok Dal is to be believed, he was only helping out the local administration by donating Rs 5 lakhs so that it could complete its Ring Road project. On the other hand, if the Congress(I) is to be believed, Devi Lal was bent on making trouble for the Congress(I) government by interfering in its affairs.

The genesis of the controversy lies in the non-completion of the Ring Road in Raipur. For nearly a decade now, the Ring Road project—which would on its completion divert heavy traffic from the main thoroughfares of the town and thereby prevent a lot of accidents—has been progressing at an abysmally slow pace. Congressmen complain that empty coffers have retarded the project's progress while residents take to the streets every time there is a death following a road accident. Only last month, the residents called a Raipur *bandh* and effigies of the local Congress leaders were burned while Keyur Bhushan, a Congress(I) MP, was manhandled by mobs after a road accident.

To placate the agitated people, PWD minister, B.R. Yadav, declared on 3 August that if the construction work was not speedily completed and other roads in the city repaired within 15 days, the concerned PWD officials would be suspended. He promised to return in 15 days and check up on the progress of work done. The deadline came and went but there was no sign of Yadav. The PWD too, was not perturbed by Yadav's threats and work continued at its usual lackadaisical pace.

When Devi Lal visited Raipur on 18 August, the Ring Road incident was still fresh in the minds of the people and not one to lose an opportunity the Chaudhary expressed his concern about the state of affairs at a public rally organised by the state unit of the Lok Dal. When someone in the audience demanded that Devi Lal donate Rs 2 lakhs for the project's completion, he was ready with his reply: the Haryana exchequer would contribute Rs 5 lakhs for the project but on the condition that the workers' daily wages were raised to Rs 19.25. He also used the opportunity to castigate the Madhya Pradesh government for not responding to his earlier offer of remitting Rs 1 lakh for the cleaning-up of the Sagar tank.

The Haryana chief minister who has



Devi Lal: an act of charity but Congressmen are not impressed



been touring the state extensively was presented with purses of Rs 1 lakh each at Bhind, Indore and Jabalpur and Rs 2 lakhs at Sagar. Devi Lal, in return, contributed equal amounts to the Lok Dal units in these cities so that they could increase the "people's awareness" before the elections. The Lok Dal units now propose to present Devi Lal with a sum of Rs 25 to 30 lakhs before the elections.

Evidently, the Congress(I) is not too happy about Devi Lal's gesture of donating for the Ring Road project and suspects that it is only a ploy to woo the electorate. Mohan Lal Choudhury, general-secretary, PCC(I), and Radhe Shyam Sharma, both trusted lieutenants of Arjun Singh have been the loudest critics of Devi Lal's populist gestures in MP. They have even charged Devi Lal of plotting to overthrow the Arjun Singh regime by recklessly spending money from the Haryana government's kitty.

The Haryana chief minister, on the other hand, feels that it is his duty to help people in other states especially as he has been able to amass a sum of Rs 1.5 crore, courtesy, the donations of the people of Haryana. Raghu Thakur, chief of the Lok Dal's state unit claimed that Devi Lal's contribution was a noble gesture and as for the fears of the Congress(I) that Devi Lal would overthrow the Arjun Singh regime, he said, "It is our duty to oust the government in this state."

M.V. Kher/*Raipur*



Arun Banerjee



Congress activists disrupt traffic in Calcutta: the politics of agitation

A tale of two agitations

The Congress(I) counters the Left Front's call for a rail roko *with a* rasta roko. *Result: chaos*

WEST BENGAL

The rivalry between the Left Front and Congress(I) took a bizarre turn on 25 August. *Bandhs, rail rokos* and *rasta rokos* being the favourite forms of protest of both parties in the state, the Front declared that it would organise a *rail roko* which would begin at 4 am and end at noon to protest against the "stepmotherly treatment meted out to West Bengal by the Centre". No sooner had the Front made the announcement than came another one, this time from the Congress leadership: a *rasta roko* would be organised by the Congress(I) to protest against the Front-sponsored *rail roko* on the same day!

Predictions of clashes and chaos in Calcutta and other parts of West Bengal were borne out as workers of both parties competed to disrupt the other's agitation. In fact, the Left Front's *rail roko* started four hours ahead of schedule as its supporters squatted on the tracks from midnight, throwing the railway authorities' plans out of gear. They had even been assured by the state chief secretary Rathin Sengupta that north Bihar-bound trains would be allowed to leave before 4 am but, as R.D. Kitson, general manager, Eastern Railway, said, "Obviously the writ of the state government did not run despite assurances." The result: services of the Eastern as well as South-Eastern Railways were widely affected.

Till 8 am, it was the Front's workers who managed to cause chaos and commotion and after that the Congress(I) supporters got in on the act. As they set up blockades and brought traffic to a halt on many of Calcutta's major thoroughfares, the Left Front's supporters tried every trick in the book to ensure that the Congress' *rasta roko* ended in failure.

In Jadavpur, the Congress(I) MP, Miss Mamata Banerjee was attacked along with Congress councillor, Sobhan Chatterjee, and nine others by CPI(M) activists. At Cossipore, Rashbehari Avenue and other places in the city, the police resorted to *lathi* charges to disperse the Congress workers. And they were ably assisted by the CPI(M) activists while in other places, the police looked on as rival party workers clashed. Altogether 550 Congressmen including Saugata Roy, MLA, and the state Youth Congress president Pradyut Guha were arrested.

But by noon it was all over as the Left Front's *rail roko* was abandoned, as per schedule, and there was, therefore, no reason for the Congress to continue with its *rasta roko*. The two parties had, however, in their zeal to outdo each other, left behind a trail of destruction: three buses were set on fire and the clashes that erupted between their supporters had disrupted traffic completely. But at the end of it all, the chief minister could only say, "It speaks of their (the Congressmen's) evil design and the political party's intent to create chaos in the name of agitation."

Adite Chatterjee/Calcutta

RAILWAY PROJECTS

On an international track

IRCON and RITES have made their presence strongly felt in foreign countries

It is an impressive track record to say the least A little over ten years ago the Indian Railways decided to branch out into the international marketplace Since then the Indian Railway Construction Company (IRCON) and Rail India Technical and Economic Services (RITES), the two companies set up by the railways, have made their presence felt across the globe in countries as far apart as Malaysia and Mexico IRCON has built high speed railway tracks in Iraq, rail workshops in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and bridges in Nepal RITES has run rail networks in Africa and the Middle East

Both companies have persevered against odds. IRCON was one of the few companies which did not pull out of Iraq despite the long-drawn-out war with Iran. In 1985 the company finished work on the Rs 40-crore Sanawa high-speed line bang on schedule Undeterred by the worsening conditions, the company took on a second contract worth Rs 133 crores Throughout, it had to put up with all kinds of natural and manmade adversities At one stage its camp was used by Iraq to house evacuees from the country's bombed-out cities

RITES has also weathered its storms It also stuck it out in Iraq and now has a giant $145 million contract for the operations management of the 600-km Baghdad-Hsaiba line. RITES has also made its mark in Africa—it helped the Zimbabweans to put their rail network back on the road again soon after independence It has also run rail networks in countries like Nigeria and Mozambique.

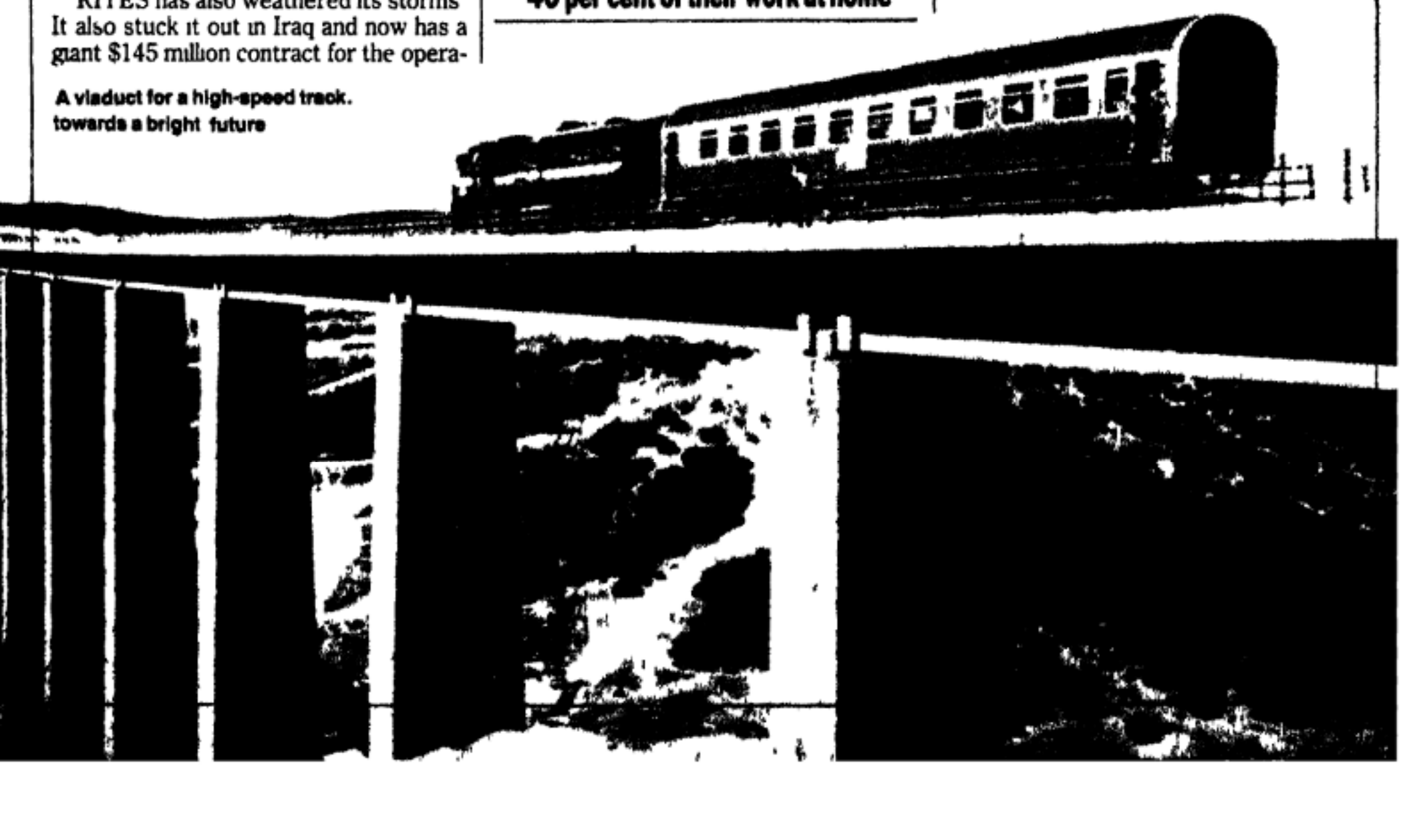
Both companies have a large order book and IRCON has projects in nine countries Amongst these are

- Construction of a high-speed branch line in Iraq The project, worth Rs 133 crores, was finished five days ahead of schedule
- A 22-km railway line at Benisaf in Algeria The project is worth Rs 81 crores and was one of the most difficult ones undertaken by IRCON as it involved the construction of six giant viaducts The biggest was 69 metres high.
- A rail maintenance workshop at Dammam, Saudi Arabia The project is worth Rs 20 crores IRCON is also building a railway maintenance workshop in Jordan worth Rs 5 crores
- Seven bridges in Nepal on the Birganj-Kathmandu highway The total project cost is Rs 3 1 crores
- A concrete sleeper plant in Bangladesh which will cost over Rs 27 crores Over the years it has executed 71 projects in 27 differen countries

RITES has also been striking out successfully Over the years it has executed 71 projects in 27 different countries This year it will almost double its turnover by taking on the giant Iraqi project Apart from that, it has earned almost $8 million each year from its consultancy work in Zimbabwe It has done similar work in Algeria, Nigeria and Mozambique

More important, both companies are steadily picking up new contracts and adding to their reputations as they go along IRCON is hoping to get the contract to build a thermal power station in Sudan It has recently clinched a Rs 35-crore railway electrification contract in Turkey. Says minister of state for

In India, too, both companies are becoming forces to reckon with. The domestic market is expanding steadily, and IRCON and RITES do 40 per cent of their work at home



A viaduct for a high-speed track. towards a bright future

railways Madhavrao Scindia: "It is particularly difficult to get a foothold in countries like Turkey which are westward looking."

RITES, meanwhile, is branching out into new areas. It has a turnkey contract in Mexico and may also execute a contract with the Mexicans in Guatemala. In India, too, it is involved in a series of new projects including the setting up of an electronic aerial ropeway in Gulmarg which will be ready by next year.

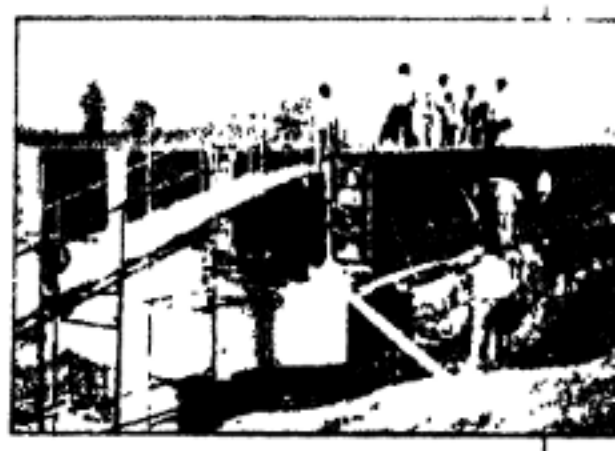
Both the companies are rare birds in the public sector in one sense at least—they have been growing steadily and have consistently shown profits. RITES started in 1974 with a turnover of Rs 1.64 crores. Its turnover stood at Rs 38 crores in 1987-88, and it is likely to double this year. Profits have also risen regularly from Rs 4.54 crores in 1983-84 to Rs 5.55 crores in 1987-88. IRCON as a construction company, inevitably shows even higher returns. Its turnover was Rs 198 crores in 1984-85 and it hopes to do even better this year. Says IRCON managing director K.J. Rane: "No construction company has such a big turnover. I am not using government money."

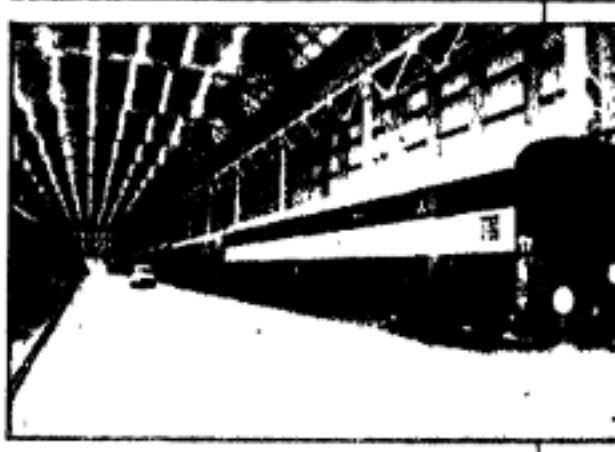
In many ways the growth of the two companies has been parallel though they have gone their separate ways, when bidding for projects abroad. RITES which was started in 1974, is now listed amongst the top 100 engineering construction companies in the world. IRCON has also survived in the face of stiff competition from other railway companies across the globe, including the Koreans, the Brazilians, the Chinese and the more technically advanced French and the Germans.

The constant growth chart has not come easily. Both IRCON and RITES have changed strategies rapidly to suit the needs of the hour. IRCON, for instance, was formed to take advantage of the Gulf boom. But by the time it won its first contract abroad in 1981, the Gulf boom was already beginning to peter out. RITES has also faced similar problems as its markets in Africa have dried up because most countries could not afford the foreign exchange for new projects.

The new situation has led to changed tactics. IRCON and RITES have both moved out from being exclusively railway consultants. RITES now styles itself as a transportation consultant. IRCON has recently changed its Memorandum of Association to enable it to undertake other projects besides railway work. One result of this has been its efforts to secure the contract for the construction of a power station in Sudan. Besides this, it is making bridges in Nepal and is doing the preliminary work of setting up facilities for a meteorological department project in Mauritius. It has also bid for a road building contract in Bangladesh.









(Clockwise from above) A high-speed electrified track in India; a pre-stressed concrete bridge in Nepal; the coach factory in Kapurthala, Punjab; the diesel loco workshop in Aqaba, Jordan: Impressive track record

Both companies are rare birds in the public sector, growing steadily and showing profits consistently. RITES is among the top 100 engineering construction firms in the world, while IRCON has survived stiff competition abroad

In India, too, both companies are becoming forces to reckon with. A few years ago most of their work was done abroad. But in recent years the Indian market has been growing steadily. Both companies now do about 40 per cent of their work in the country. Over the next few years this is likely to increase to a point where about 60 per cent of their work will be done in this country.

RITES, particularly, has been undertaking large and complicated projects in this country. When the Planning Commission wanted a survey done on transportation needs by 2000 AD it was RITES which did the study. In addition it has designed coal carrying systems for half a dozen National Thermal Power Corp. super thermal plants. It is now involved in designing similar systems for another 15 thermal power stations around the country and will take part in the planning work for 15 airports which are coming up. In addition it is even working with the state government for the construction of the new electronic aerial ropeway in Gulmarg. Says RITES managing director R. Partha Sarathy: "We are involved in the latest technologies."

IRCON too, has been making big inroads at home. It bagged the contract to build the Kapurthala coach factory which is being completed in a record 24 months. Besides this, it is also building loco sheds and electrification lines for the railways. It is building a rail line from Belapur to Panvel for CIDCO and roads in Punjab and Maharashtra.

What is the secret of success of the two companies? Inevitably, both of them have used the advantages offered by cheap manpower. Says Scindia: "We have highly technical manpower which is available for better prices. Moreover, they are prepared to work under any conditions."

But there is considerably more than that. RITES has developed an extremely strong reputation in the international market. IRCON, too, has succeeded where other Indian construction companies have foundered. Says Rane: "We are time-oriented in the railways. Also, we have let a commercial culture develop."

Whatever the secret of their success, there is little doubt that these two companies are growing in strength and they are likely to keep it that way in the foreseeable future.

Paran Balakrishnan/New Delhi

DALAL STREET

A bull is thrown out of the ring

The Bombay Stock Exchange expels a leading broker for excessive speculation

The governing board of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) took an unprecedented step on 10 August. They expelled Ghanshyam Biyani, a broker who is one of the biggest speculators on Dalal Street. The broking community is still reeling under what they think is a "bullish" act on the part of the authorities, and have sent a memorandum to the BSE board asking them to reconsider their decision. The board, however, is maintaining a dignified silence, indicating a finality about their "unanimous decision" to expel Biyani. At the same time, the action of the board is significant because, when it was elected, there was a general outcry that it was packed with speculators.

Says M.R. Mayya, the executive director of BSE, "It all started in January this year." Biyani had been building up large positions in a dozen scrips. The disciplinary action committee which includes the president, the executive director, the vice-president, the secretary and R.K. Daruwalla, a representative of the public, after intensive discussions on 17 March, asked Biyani to reduce his outstandings to manageable proportions. At that time Biyani had reportedly accumulated outstandings worth Rs 4 to 5 crores. Says Mayya, "Biyani promised to reduce it but even by end June he had not done anything. On the contrary, in settlement after settlement, his outstandings increased. Meanwhile, the board asked him to pay the Rs 25 lakhs *ad hoc* margin but he neither paid this amount nor the daily margins. So, on 19 July, we gave him a showcause notice, asking him why action should not be taken against him."

Biyani replied on 23 July and asked for a month to clear his outstandings. But, since till 10 August he took no action, the governing board finally summoned him. At this point Biyani promised to reduce his outstandings by Rs 50 lakhs per settlement, which would have taken another six months. The board met again for a four-hour meeting with the Reserve Bank nominee also present. It was then decided to expel Biyani because since March, he had refused to fall into line.

"Once even the manager, marketing operations, had to bring him in physically because he refused to come when he was called," said Mayya, who also felt that they had no alternative but to take the step in the interest of the investing public. "Biyani is a terrorist on the financial scene and one has to have a modicum of discipline on the stock exchange. So far Biyani has honoured his contracts, but if there was even a ten per cent fall in the market it could mean a loss of Rs one crore," he said. Since the confidence of the investors would have been shattered, "we could not take a risk", he added.

There is also no question of shielding anyone, says the executive director of the stock exchange. The latter had been accused of shielding Purshottam Ruia, a former board member. An indignant Mayya retorted, "We suspended Ruia for a month and even cancelled the badge of his son. Ruia paid up all his dues

M.R. Mayya: firm stand

Earlier this year, there was widespread criticism that the BSE board was packed with speculators. Now, the same board has taken the unusual step of expelling a leading broker, Ghanshyam Biyani

The Bombay Stock Exchange: curbing speculation



Vibhor

and has resigned from the governing board."

However, the pro-Biyani brokers feel that last year when he was building up outstandings, the stock exchange did not take any action, because as they allege, his purchases had kept the market at a reasonably buoyant level. At that time he was building up Tisco shares. But a former member of the board averred that Biyani was cautioned last year too. When a broker turns a major speculator, he can become like a runaway horse because he does not have any limits.

Many brokers cite the example of the king of speculators, Manu Maneck, but the authorities say that "he (Maneck) spreads out his business. He has about five cards and he stays within limits. Biyani has only one and is reckless." In fact, it is alleged that Maneck turned a heavy bear seller and sold some seven to eight lakh shares of Reliance Industries in two days and on 23 August, Reliance were brought on spot delivery to save the shares from going down. Of course, Biyani is not out on the streets. He is a heavy speculator in commodities too. But efforts are still being made to get him reinstated only to save the face of the broking community who feel that it could be their turn next.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

MADRAS

The 'foreign' bazaar

Set up by repatriates, Burma Bazaar is a flourishing market for goods made abroad

"We get customers from all over India, even from Nagaland. Three thousand visitors come to the bazaar every day, and double that on Sundays. We have become a very famous market, just like an international shopping centre."

The pride in the statement of Mohammed Esoof, a kingpin of the glittering foreign goods market in Madras, could not be missed. After all, who has not heard of Burma Bazaar, just outside the seaport, the place where one can get any item with a foreign tag ?Set up soon after Burma began driving out Indian nationals in 1964-65, the multi-million-rupee shopping complex today has 750 tiny kiosks spread across three neighbouring areas And the bazaar keeps growing with new shops springing up to accommodate the relatives of the original Burma repatriates.

According to a conservative estimate, the bazaar has a turnover of Rs 1.50 crores a day. Another Rs 1 crore could easily be added to this figure if one adds up the activity in the peripheral "joints" where shady brokers and middlemen operate, quite often fleecing the innocent tourist looking for a cheap VCR or a two-in-one.

But Esoof insisted that there was just enough for the survival of the 10,000-odd people depending on the bazaar and not many have made it.really big from selling smuggled goods to their wealthy clients. "Since each shop, measuring six feet by four feet, or even less, has at least five partners,each fellow would be lucky to go home with a profit of Rs 60 a day," he said.

It was the late Congress chief minister K. Kamaraj who had first allocated these little kiosks to the Burma repatriates when they landed in chartered Indian ships in their homeland after two centuries. "We came carrying just our personal belongings and frightened women and wailing children," recalls Esoof. "The Burmese government had confiscated our properties amounting to several million rupees--in fact the entire wealth now in that country had once belonged to the Indian settlers while the locals only formed the cheap labour force." "One morning," says Esoof, "we went to open our shops and found troops telling us our entire property now belonged to the state and we could get lost. That was day-light robbery and we got no compensation. And when we left for India, we were allowed to take just one sovereign (eight gm) of gold and Rs 50 per individual, in addition to some clothes."

There were about two lakh such refugees who came in ships crossing the turbulent Bay of Bengal and they were despatched by the receiving government to various refugee camps spread in Tamil Nadu. Small doles were given and a few among the educated provided with jobs. But mostly, the Burma repatriates were told to fend for themselves. And they did—by setting up the small shops which have come to be known as Burma Bazaar.

Today, a tiny three feet by six feet shop in Burma Bazaar reportedly commands a *pagdi* of Rs one lakh. "But where are the shops to give us *pagdi* like that?"asked Husseinbhai, a trader. "Each shop has got several partners and who will sell it to another? Besides, we have been here for so many years."

However, some of the Burma repatriates did sell away space in the thriving bazaar and moved to a less exciting place trading in goods such as iron scrap, electrical goods and so on. Some others moved to open up Burma Bazaars in other towns in Tamil Nadu. Trichy has a busy complex because it is the only town in the state other than Madras which is linked to the international airport at Colombo.

"In fact, traffic of goods from Singapore landing in Trichy has been on the increase during the last couple of weeks," said a senior customs official. This followed the clamping of stricter vigilance by his department at the Madras airport, he said.

While the customs officials believe that most of the Burma Bazaar wares come from abroad and are brought into Madras by professional carriers, Esoof argued that there were about 5,000 passengers coming into India every day at the airports and seaports in the various centres and they were the major suppliers to the shops at the complex. Also, there were brokers who kept a watch at the entry points and approached the passengers for buying up their baggage, along with the customs duty payment bills.

Mohammed Esoof: proud



R. Bhagwan Singh



R. Bhagwan Singh

Shoppers in the Burma Bazaar: brisk business

It is unlikely that such private passengers provided the whole of the massive stocks kept in each of the Burma Bazaar kiosks-there were the latest electronic gadgets, the best of textiles, watches and travel bags. Any new model in Singapore would find its way into this bazaar in a matter of days and the discerning among the wealthy local Marwari and Sindhi clientele managed to even get their choices marked off fresh catalogues and imported in quick time by their favourite shopkeeper.

"The main source of supplies for the Burma Bazaar are the carriers they employ. Usually they pick up unemployed men from the wayside and turn them into carriers by dangling before them a free trip to Singapore and a couple of hundred rupees for the labour of carrying the heavy baggage through the customs," said the customs official.

However, he admitted that 90 per cent of the goods in the bazaar were not smuggled in, but imported through normal channels. But then, using such professional carriers is itself illegal. So, how could the government turn a blind eye and say most of all that stuff is legal? "We have been trying to stop this carrier business," the officer explained. "There has been some improvement in recent weeks and the traffic on Singapore Airlines has suffered a drop because of our onslaught."

For the last fifteen days of July, the customs department has started scrutinising those passengers who are coming in from Singapore and such other foreign markets loaded with goods, especially if they appeared *prima facie* incapable of footing all those bills themselves. And then the entire baggage of such a carrier is confiscated by the department.

The Burma Bazaar traders and the foreign goods businessmen have always used unemployed men as carriers. Their tickets would be bought and even their passports and visas arranged. The dealers also have their contact men in Singapore who make the goods available—the payment for which is made in Indian rupees. They call this the *hawala* transaction, meaning the deal is done over *hawa* (air) with no written agreements.

The carriers have many passports with different names in order to get the Reserve Bank's FTS sanction. To arrest this practice, the customs department has now introduced computers for a quick cross-check when a suspicious-looking character arrives with heavy baggage.

The dealers have always found ways to circumvent customs restrictions. If a passenger after a computer cross-check, is found to be carrying a lot of goods despite his not being eligible for FTS, a stock reply is that they were gifts from relatives and friends in Singapore. Says a customs officer, "It is not possible to check out his relatives in Singapore," adding that as long as the craze for imported articles existed, Burma Bazaar would continue to thrive.

Even raids have not been of much help. A couple of years ago, countrywide raids were conducted by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence. In Madras, the Burma Bazaar traders rioted and there was police firing. Ever since, customs officers are a bit wary about seizing goods from the tough-looking traders there.

"What is the point?" wailed the customs spokesman. "We make a big kill, but invariably there is political pressure to drop the case. Over a year ago, customs collector Jayaraman was assaulted in the airport by a Burma Bazaar businessman, but pressure from the Congress(I) saw the offender escape while his lieutenant got a year's COFEPOSA term."

But retorts Esoof: "Those fellows are not from our Burma repatriate community. They are outsiders, who dominated the market at that time because of their Congress(I) clout. They are not operating any more now. And that COFEPOSA convict, Govindan, is stated to be absconding, but we see him around quite often. Obviously, there is a collusion between him and the cops."

Esoof is particularly sore that the cops in the police station "which is here just across the road", do not take adequate action to apprehend the brokers and anti-social elements who operate along the bazaar pavement wooing the innocent customer away from the genuine trader by promising VCRs and other expensive items at rockbottom prices. These customers are then taken to little rooms in nearby lanes and after being made to pay up for a non-existent VCR, are made to run for their lives with the operators raising false alarms that customs officers were coming for a raid. It is these people, says Esoof, who give a bad name to Burma Bazaar. But business goes on as usual in Burma Bazaar, the irritants and checks notwithstanding.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

Set up soon after Burma began driving out Indian nationals in 1964-65, the multi-million-rupee shopping complex today has 750 kiosks spread across three neighbouring areas. And the bazaar keeps growing with new shops springing up... the turnover is around Rs 1.50 crores a day

Times' faux pas

The Times of India appears to have stirred up a hornet's nest with its controversial ads for its centenary celebrations The copy suggests to media managers that they drop *India Today, Sunday, Business India, Business World* and *Gentleman* from their schedules and use the *Times'*





The *Times* ads: contentious

supplements instead because they have a larger circulation than all five magazines put together. While the publishers of four of the five magazines seem to think the ad is self-destructive enough to warrant no rebuttal, the *India Today* management has reacted with righteous indignation.

And now Mohammed Khan (of Enterprise Advertising)— a caricature of whom appears in one of the ads—has written to Ravi Gupta, head of Trikaya, the *Times'* agency, to complain "Clearly, no permission was sought from me for the use of my representation I am therefore constrained to write to you and ask you to ensure that no further releases of my caricature take place "

Khan's outrage comes on the heels of a similar letter to Ravi Gupta from Alyque Padamsee demanding that the ad in which his caricature appears be withdrawn Trikaya has apologised and agreed

Obviously, a media fiasco like this one comes once in a hundred and fifty years

Advantage K.N. Modi?

The never-ending war in the Modi family continues unabated Group patriarch K.N. Modi has made the next move by calling a Modi Rubber board meeting His nephews who maintain that K.N Modi has been ousted as Modi Rubber chairman, are in a fix and trying to work out a new strategy to cope with the challenge. Their problems are made worse because they have antagonised the financial institutions who now appear to be solidly backing K N. Modi who has a vast network of contacts built up over the years Till now Gujar Mal Modi's sons have had the upper hand But who will win the next round is anybody's guess

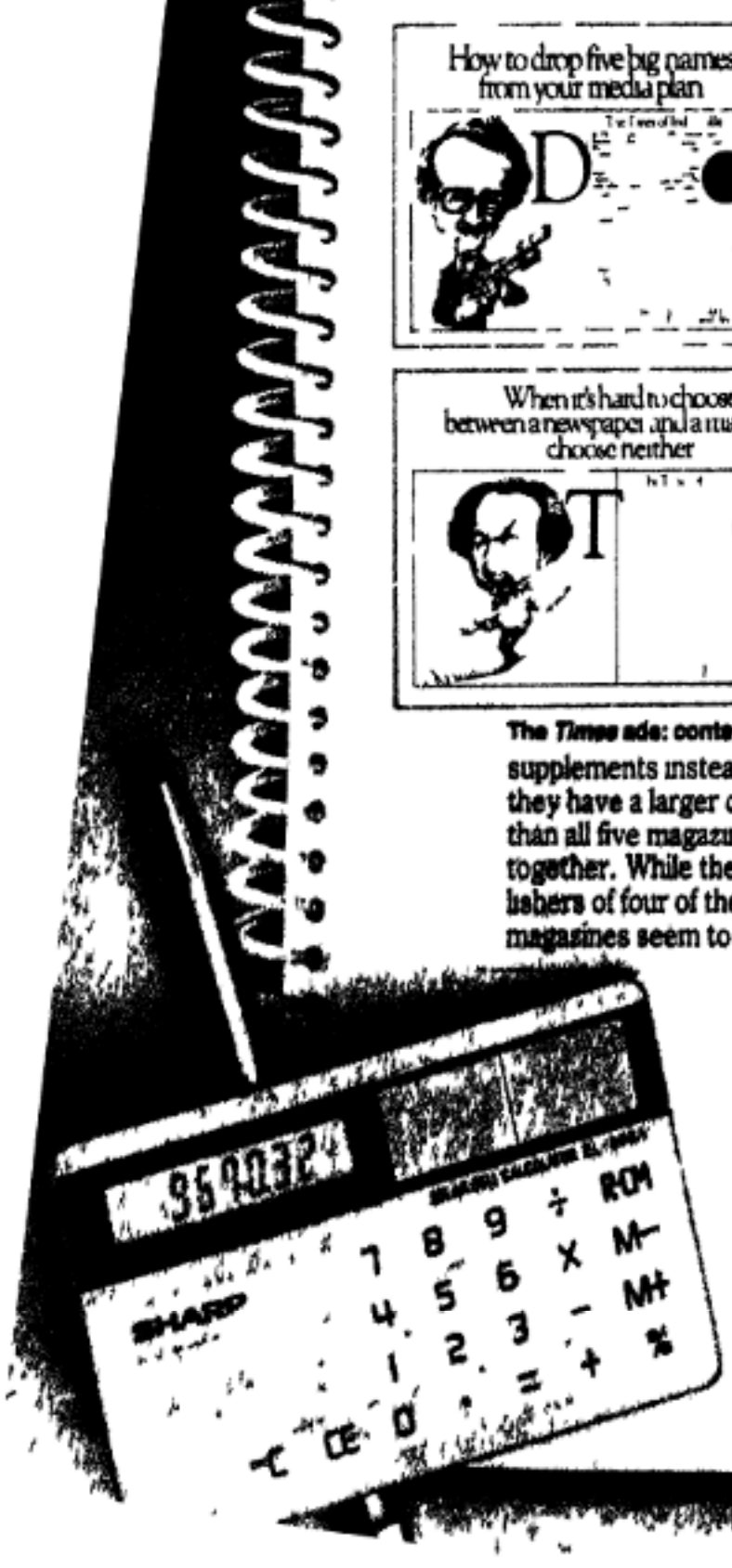
Good news for Jetley

Air-India managing director Rajan Jetley, who has been facing flak from quite a few quarters in recent times, appears to have made his point on at least one score The government is reportedly considering a downward revision of domestic fuel prices by October The civil aviation ministry has proposed that fuel prices should be based on volume discounting, that is, the higher the fuel consumption, the larger is the price discount



Rajan Jetley silver lining

Moreover, against 107 cents in India, aviation fuel is available abroad at below 60 cents a gallon Given A-I's winter schedule which includes long-haul, non-stop flights to London, Tokyo and Paris—which involve high fuel consumption—Jetley has argued that his airlines should be allowed to buy fuel at international rates. If the proposal is accepted, Jetley can show a tidier balance sheet in 1988-89



Race to the top

Asian politicians in Britain have used ethnicity to their advantage, but they can't get on with Afro-Caribbeans or with each other

When it comes to politics, Indians can never be far behind. Whether the colour of their skin is getting them a post or keeping them out of it, their voices can be heard all the time — pressing for equal opportunities and raising the war-cry against right-wing racism.

Which is not to say that they are all crying together. Even as one councillor attacks the ruling party, another attacks him for attacking something he does not believe in himself. And so it goes, the unending saga of accusations, controversies and politicking. There is even some floor-crossing thrown in once in a while.

Is it blasphemy to be called Black when you are actually not as Black as Afro-Caribbeans? Or is it blasphemy to divide the ranks of the Blacks and break Black unity against the racist, right-wing Tories? Are Asians obliquely racist as well? Or do they deserve a separate cultural identity from the Afro-Caribbeans?

The bickering and divide go on. So and so is a sold-out councillor, another is a weakling and an opportunist. The accusations pile up. While the government takes advantage of a divided opposition.

"It's such a pity that the Asians who most need to be united are such a divided lot," Ealing councillor Madhav Patil told SUNDAY. "The Afro-Caribbeans are a united body. They never split their ranks but unfortunately, given the Asian nature, we are not united. This is one of the main reasons that we get left behind and our demands are never met."

Madhav Patil comes from Ealing, a London borough with a large Asian population. The local Labour government has come under fire recently for not giving due powers and positions to Asian councillors.

One month back, the Labour Party decided to nominate two Asians as deputy leaders of the council. The posts went to Ranjit Dheer and Valerie Vaz (the latter is the sister of Asian MP Keith Vaz). The nominations caused an immediate uproar among Ealing's Labour councillors, with several people accusing Vaz and Dheer of selling out to the local leadership and accepting posts for their own gains.

"They are accepting the crumbs that the Labour Party is throwing to them," said Patil. "The posts are purely ornamental and have no real power. By accepting them Dheer and Vaz have broken the unity and negated what we have been fighting for.

"Whites have a supremacy in the council and we have never had any say in decision making. We have fought for so long but now we have been deserted by our own fellow-men who are sycophantic and will do anything for personal gain."

Patil pointed out that the Labour council had actually split one position into three posts and left the Asian deputy leaders with no power at all. "The Whites need a few token Black faces to fill in posts and these people readily oblige them," he said angrily.

Patil, who is an officer in the national Black section is totally opposed to any division between Asians and Afro-Caribbeans. He feels that despite the different cultural aspects of the Asians they need to fight along with the Afro-Carribbeans for racial unity. "We are fighting institutional racism," said Madhav Patil "and we cannot do so with divided ranks."

Valerie Vaz, the much accused, much maligned 33-year-old councillor from Ealing, who fell from favour ever since she accepted the deputy leader's post, vehemently denies that the post is ornamental. "The posts have very real powers," she said. "I am in charge of community matters, councillor Dheer is looking after grants and the other deputy, Hilary Benn, is looking after policies. These are very specific jobs as far as I am concerned." Vaz has been in the news ever since she was sacked by the BBC from her job as presenter of "Network East", the magazine program-



Valerie Vaz: sacked from the BBC

me for Asians broadcast every Saturday. She had threatened to sue the BBC for breaking her contract and earned the immediate sympathy of the Asian press as she accused the BBC of sacking her because she was a Labour councillor and would not toe the Tory line. The BBC, however, maintained that they had told Vaz that she would have to resign from her Ealing job if she worked for "Network East" and it was Vaz who had not kept to her contract.

Meanwhile Valerie's brother, Keith Vaz, proclaimed that his sister had been sacked so that the programme's producers could criticise him. Herself a lawyer, Valerie won the support of three Labour MPs over her decision to sue the BBC. But in her own council this led to a split within the ranks as Patil broke away with two other councillors and decided to boycott group elections.

If Vaz was sticking up for her new post, deputy leader Ranjit Dheer did not think the post offered much. "Not being white, I think I have not acquired the sort of power and recognition I had actually hoped for," said Dheer. Torn between what his fellow-Asians will think of his new position if he could not do anything worthwhile and how his own colleagues have reacted to his acceptance of the post, Dheer seems a saddened man



While councillors like Patil are calling for an Asian leader in a council where 30 per cent of the populace is Asian, the echoes can be felt in another council not far away from Ealing and the home of another 33 per cent of Asians — the infamous Brent council.

Infamous, because Brent is one of the largest Labour-controlled councils and also one of the poorest with a large deprived section living in it. Currently the council is proposing to cut Rs 17 million in aid for social services in the borough — a poor picture in thriving Britain.



According to Ealing councillor Madhav Patil, "It's such a pity that the Asians who most need to be united are such a divided lot. The Afro-Caribbeans are a united body. They never split their ranks"

"It's a shame that the council is in such a shape," said former deputy leader Manibhai Patel. Patel, whose post as deputy leader terminated last year, never stood for elections since he felt it was futile to push for a better deal for Asians in Brent. "I prefer to be a backbencher now," he said. "At least I can demand more powers from here."

The plight of Asians in Brent was pathetic, he said. There were only seven Asian councillors and a total lack of representation in politics. They were not represented in council services and in council employment and things looked definitely bleak.

"Asians are not politicised enough," said Patel. "They lack the awareness that the community can benefit from participation in the political process.

"As in other boroughs, it is the Afro-Caribbeans who are over-represented in Brent. They are the ones who get all the benefit from the Labour council. For the Whites, the Blacks are a whole, and it is the Afro-Caribbeans who get the benefits. The Asians with their diverse culture are not represented in any way.

"Recently, Rs 150,000 was set aside for a 'Caribbean Focus' but no such thing has ever been done for Asians. Asians want a community hall, they want a temple, but their demands are never given any importance. Recently, the Pakistan Workers' Association was also closed down."

Patel pointed out that even in the 'Caribbean Focus,' the 50 per cent of Caribbeans who were of Asian origin received no benefits at all. Asian culture, he felt, was being ignored and the Asians were doing nothing about it. Did he then believe in a separate identity for Asians as different from Blacks?

"Yes," said Patel. "Initially I was for a united stand but now I find that the Asians are the sufferers. A separate identity and separate cultural demands must be met. The cuts in Brent council will hit 563 elderly people living in Brent and it is all because we have no voice in opposing anything."

Asian councillors in Brent had at one time gone on strike demanding greater say in council affairs. Russel Profitt, the Black race relations officer in Brent was accused by Asians of being racist towards Asians and favouring and promoting Black.. "It is the Asians who are also to blame," said Patel. "They are timid and not naturally aggressive like the Blacks who always unitedand get their demands met."

Former mayor and councillor of Brent, Peter Pendsay, echoed councillor Patel's remarks. "During the last eight years in Brent the Labour group has gone all out to promote the Afro-Caribbeans to the detriment of other groups," said Pendsay who is also the chairman of the Race Relation Committee. "Posts are naturally given to Blacks though there are several Asians who could be chosen as well. Besides, there is mismanagement of resources which has led to the present crisis in Brent which is hitting Asians hardest."

While the Asian councillors in the London boroughs of Brent and Ealing fight themselves and the ruling Labour Party, in far off Leicestershire another councillor raises his voice. V.P. Sood, who has been active in Asian affairs, speaks out against those who have been working for themselves.

"The problem with Asian councillors here is that we have coconuts -- brown on the outside and white on the inside — they will do anything for the British and do not have the interests of the Asians at heart. They are people who use the colour of their skins to get a position but have no commitment to Asians. The Labour government has picked a few sycophants like this whom they present as token cases of Black representation. They are no good to the Labour Party or to the Asians."

Though Asian councillors from various boroughs met last month and passed a resolution favouring a united stand against councils that were discriminating against them, actual unity seems a distant thing. While racist immigration bills are passed, families made homeless and children made to go through blood tests to prove their lineage, the councillors present a sorry picture with their infighting and strife.

Black unity seems reserved only for the Afro-Caribbeans.

Shrabani Basu/*London*

Guests of contention

Four judges of Madras High Court are in the centre of a storm for attending a function organised by a contractor

King.....my Thomas, my little brother? My royal wish is to have you elected Primate of England.

Becket: You're joking, of course, my Lord.....If I become Archbishop, I can no longer be your friend....this is madness, my Lord. Don't do it. I could not serve both God and you.

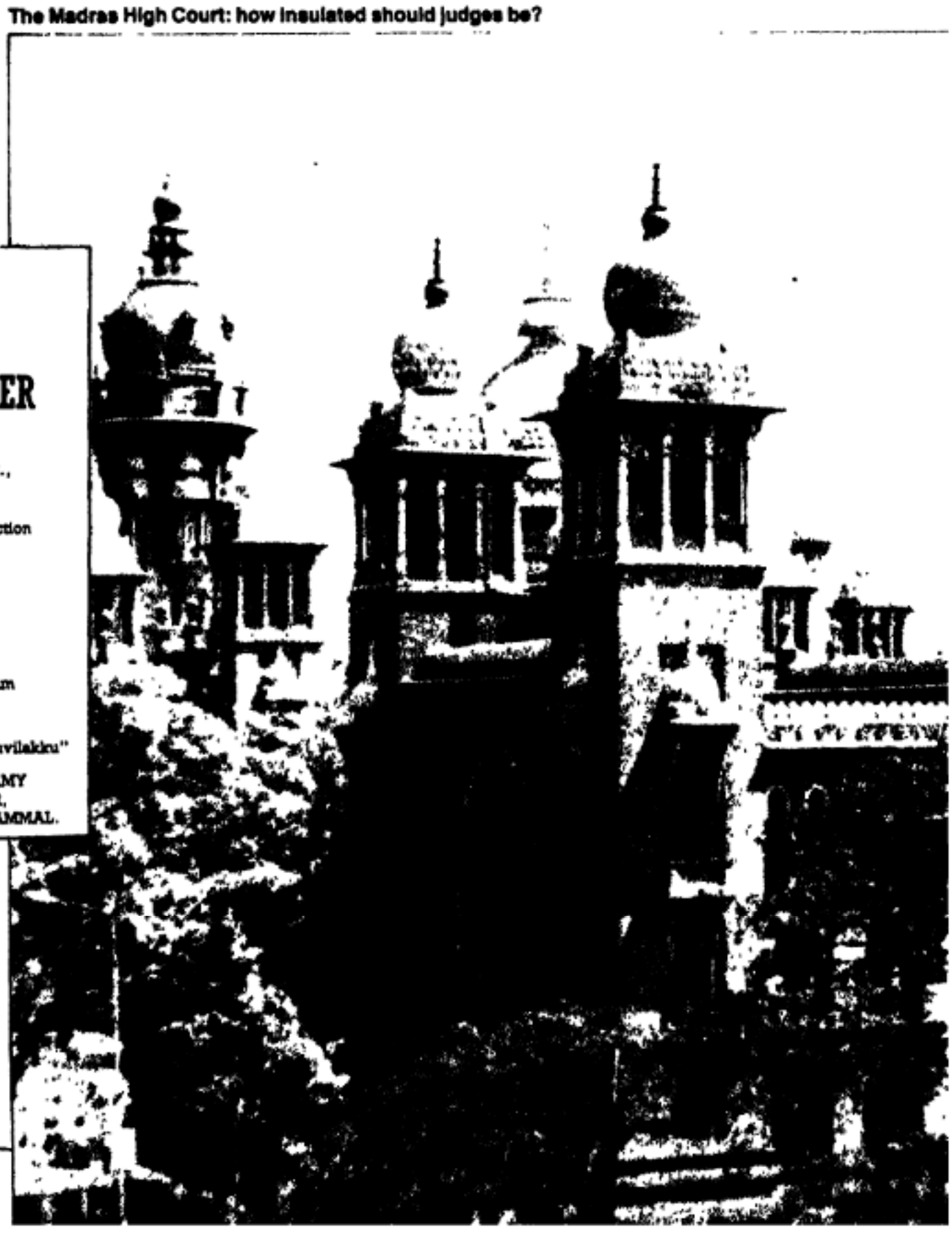
The dialogues are from the famous play, *Becket*, by Jean Anouilh. And they relate to the situation where King Henry II wanted to make his close friend Thomas Becket, in whose zestful company he had wined and whored, the Archbishop of Canterbury so that he would be able to control the Church that had become too powerful for his liking. Becket was apprehensive that his good days with the King would be over once he donned the robes of the Archbishop, for, he would not be able to serve two lords—King and God.

Becket should serve as a good example for our judges here: to refuse to equate an old friendship with a new responsibility. But at least four judges of the Madras High Court certainly did not have Becket in their minds, when they recently chose to blur the rather thin line of demarcation between public office and private associations, setting off a lively debate among legal practitioners as well as the public about the propriety of the defenders of the law lending their names to private enterprise.

The four judges, along with the state's police chief and an IAS officer, were the most prominent guests at a function at Salem, in north-western Tamil Nadu, to inaugurate the marriage hall constructed by a private building contractor, on 19 August, a working day for the courts.

But what provided grist to the mill in the controversy over such an overt expression of friendliness for the builder — P.A. Construction Company—by these judges was a very prominent advertisement in the leading dailies, the *Hindu* and the *Indian Express*, regarding the inauguration of the marriage hall at Salem. The advertisement flaunted in bold print the names of five judges who

The Madras High Court: how insulated should judges be?



PA

You are cordially invited for the inaugural function of

"CHAIRMAN KANDASAMY GOUNDER KALYANA MANDAPAM"

at Poiman Karadu, Trichy Main Road, Salem Dt.,
On Friday the 19th August 1988 at 8-30 a.m.

Thiru M F Farooqui, I A S.,
Collector Salem has kindly consented to preside over the function in the presence of

Hon'ble Thiru Justice **K. Venkatasami**
Hon'ble Thiru Justice **K. M. Natarajan**
Hon'ble Thiru Justice **P. Bhaskaran**
Hon'ble Thiru Justice **P. K. Sethuraman**
Hon'ble Thiru Justice **S. Sivasubramaniam**
has kindly consented to declare open the Kalyana Mandapam
and

Thiru B. P. Rangasamy, I.P.S.,
Director General of Police has kindly consented to light the "Kuthuvilakku"

K. DORAISAMI, Public Prosecutor, High Court, Madras.

K PONNUSAMY, Proprietor, P.A Construction, Madras-28.

P KANDASAMY GOUNDER,
K. PAPATHI AMMAL.

The controversial advertisement

With an insistent King, unable to see his point of view, and imposing his will on him, Becket takes up the new assignment and meets his death in the cathedral defending God and his Church against the King, his old friend.

Indian jurisprudence has drawn so much from the English—both written and conventional—that the story of

would grace the function, besides stating that the Salem district collector would preside over it and the state director general of police was scheduled to light the auspicious *kuthvilakku* (brass oil-lamp).

The advertisement, signed by the proprietor of the construction company, K. Ponnusamy, and his lawyer-brother K. Doraisami, who also happens to be the state public prosecutor, at once set tongues wagging. A senior lawyer of the High Court, V. Selvaraj, shot off a stiff letter to the acting Chief Justice, S. Ratnavelpandian, taking strong exception to the judges attending a private function and that too on a working day.

"Judges associating themselves with private functions in full public view will lead to misgivings in the minds of the public. It is not a mere question of propriety but one concerning the administration of justice. No room should be given to create an impression that some judges are close to one or the other of the members of the bar or members of the public. A good number of judges of the High Court participating in such a private function on a working day will only render a disservice to the public image of judges." Thus ran the indignant letter from lawyer Selvaraj who also pleaded with the Chief Justice that his script should be circulated among the judges of the High Court for their "careful consideration".

However, one of the five judges, annoyed at seeing his acceptance of the builder's invitation splashed in the media, decided to stay back in Madras and attend court. "That advertisement was a shock to me and I knew at once he was misusing the names of the judges for his private purpose. I cancelled my trip to Salem intended primarily to attend a wedding in an old friend's family," Justice K. Venkatasami told SUNDAY.

Narrating the sequence of events that had led to his giving consent to visit the marriage hall, the judge said he agreed since it was public prosecutor Doraisami who had come with the request, and also because he would be in Salem anyway on that day to attend a wedding. "But then, Mr Doraisami did not take my permission to include my name in that advertisement. That, in my opinion, was very unfair and I decided I would not go," Justice Venkatasami said.

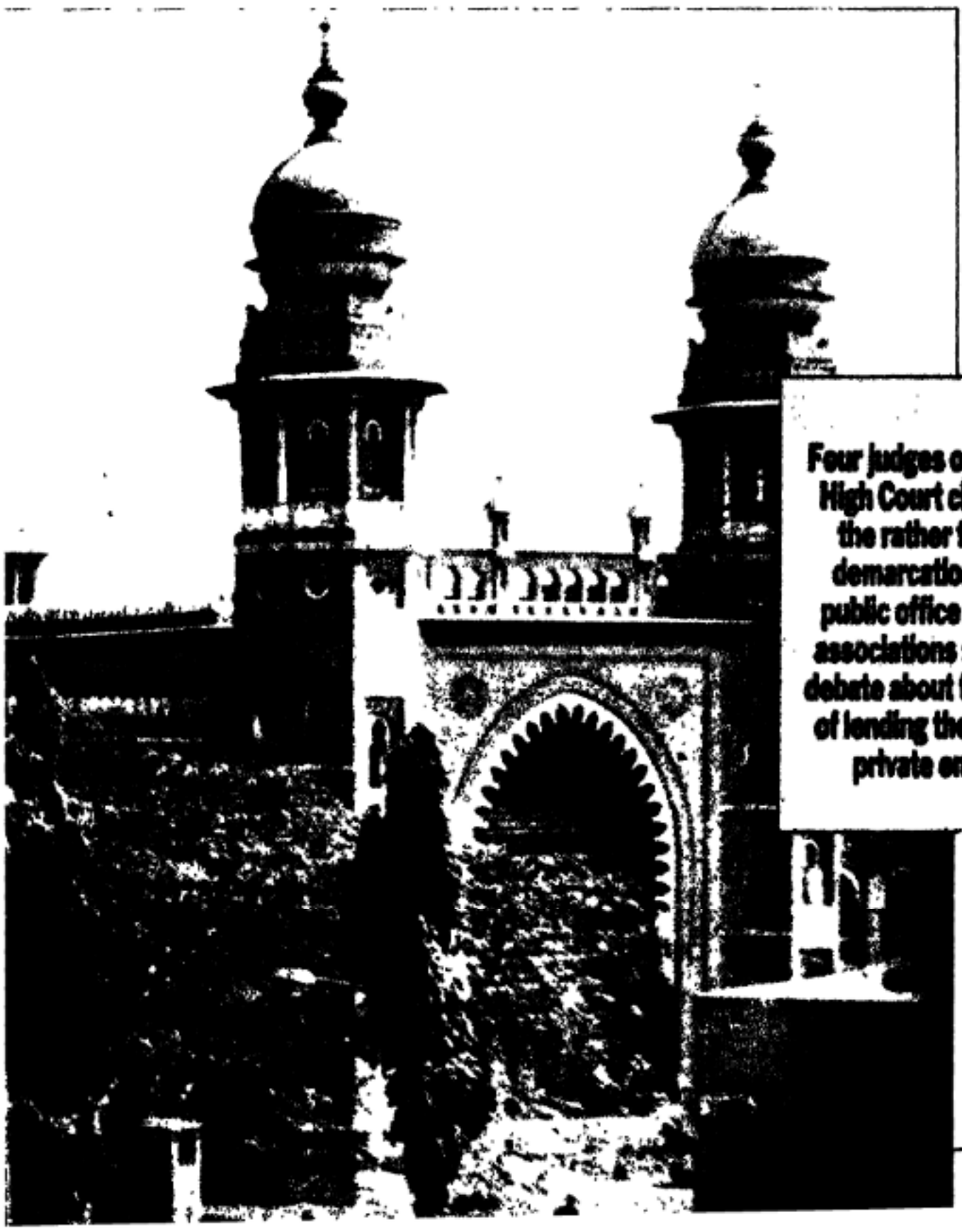
But those who did not mind the advertisement and chose to keep the appointment at Salem, appeared to feel there was nothing wrong in attending a private function. "A judge is a human being too, and it would not be proper to expect him to boycott all his old friends and family members just because he has become a judge," remarked a senior judge who participated in the ceremony. He did not want to be named though "because I do not want to participate in a public controversy". Little did the judge realise he was already part of a public controversy.

Said Cho Ramaswamy, political satirist and editor of the Tamil fortnightly, *Tughlak:* "If such incidents occur, the common man would feel he would not get justice from the courts. Whether, ultimately, justice is done or not in the courts, it would seem that justice would not be done. And this would only encourage the people to take law into their own hands."

Apart from this factor, the present incident could also lead to indirect intimidation of the lower judiciary before whom Ponnusamy's litigations with government agencies like the Madras Metropolitan Development Agency (MMDA) might come up in future. How would a magistrate dealing with the case of P.A. Constructions react on seeing such an 'impressive' advertisement as the one that appeared in the 18 August newspapers?

Public prosecutor Doraisami would not agree that the advertisement intimidated the lower judiciary or influenced the litigant public from his Salem district into assuming that his family had enormous clout with judges and other wings of the administration. "That advertisement was only meant to express our respect for the honourable judges who were attending the function. It was not our intention to get any unfair business advantage," he said.

Was it not improper on his part, being the public prosecutor, to have asked as



Four judges of the Madras High Court chose to blur the rather thin line of demarcation between public office and private associations setting off a debate about the propriety of lending their names to private enterprise

many as five judges to come on a working day, thereby upsetting the court's work? "As a matter of fact, we had only invited two judges. But later, when I came to know that these three other judges would also be present at Salem for the wedding, I thought it would be improper on my part if I did not invite them personally for our function as well. And they agreed to come after finishing with that wedding. Also, it was my duty to invite the judges and it was up to them to come or not to come," he explained.

There was no wedding performed in any important household in Madras, especially those in the houses of big industrialists and politicians, Doraisami said, where judges were not present on being invited." He added, "And the converse too holds good. No judge performs a wedding in his household without calling important men in business, industry and politics."

That brings to the fore the question whether judges should ostracise themselves from society just because they are expected not to rub shoulders with members of the public.

Cho Ramaswamy thinks that that is not necessary. "But then, they should exercise a dignified aloofness. Even an umpire officiating in a cricket match



MGR: close ties with Ponnusamy

would not go into the dressing room of a particular team and hobnob with the players there because that kind of practice would make his decisions on the field suspect. Should not the citizens expect from our High Court judges at least the standards of public conduct that cricket umpires set for themselves?" Cho asked.

If such norms were set, it may not even be possible for High Court judges to take their families to cinema previews for selection of award-winning movies. "Would judges then not be rubbing shoulders with film personalities, who are frequent litigants before the courts?" asked a senior lawyer.

And if norms were set, a senior judge of the Madras High Court might not have found it possible to take a holiday from the court (as it happened some months ago) only to inaugurate a small non-vegetarian eating joint in the city.

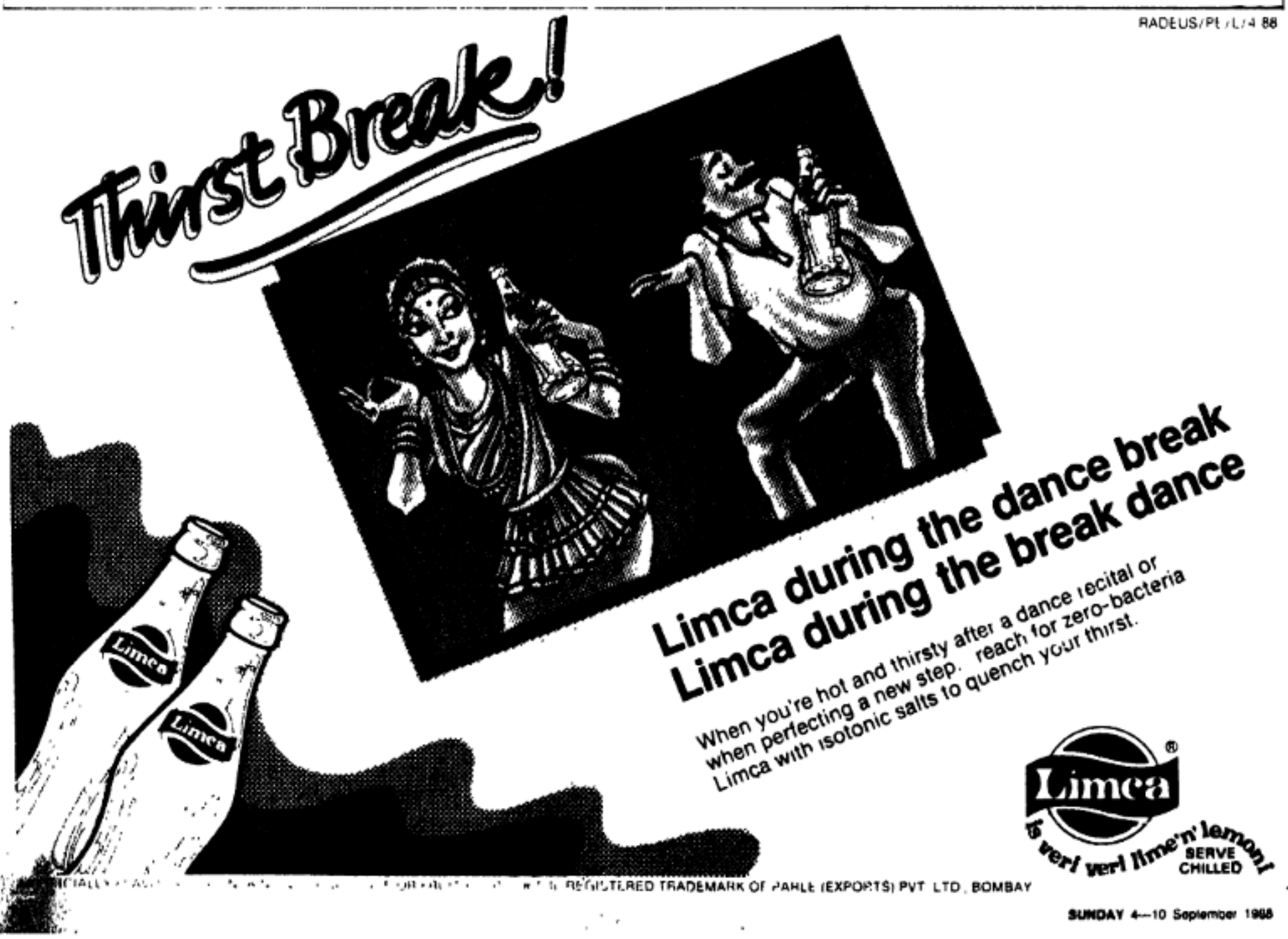
Asked if such outings by judges did not affect court work, Justice Ratnavelpandian replied: "It is true that the situation regarding pending cases in our court is rather serious. I cannot comment any further on this present issue." Obviously, the acting Chief Justice did not want to hurt the feelings of his brother judges.

The P.A. Construction Company has had tremendous clout during the late MGR's regime and was said to have got concessions for circumventing MMDA norms. "My brother Ponnusamy was very close to MGR," Doraisami recalled, "but then he was not himself a political person nor a member of the AIADMK party. The same is the case with me."

Nevertheless, the media have been talking about the high connections that the construction company had in the AIADMK government for a long, "fruitful" time. And the owners of the company have only proved by their most recent public function at Salem that their clout has not decreased with the death of MGR.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

RADEUS/Pt./L/4 88



® REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF PARLE (EXPORTS) PVT LTD, BOMBAY

So Dev Anand has a new girl. Only we feel that she won't be his much longer. Not if her massive crush on Amitabh is anything to go by. Hangers-on at the studio where Ekta was shooting recently with Aamir Khan were amused no end by the spectacle Ekta provided when the Bachchan paid a visit to the studio. Dropping the plate of food she had been digging into enthusiastically only a moment before, she zeroed in on the star only to have her way barred by his securitymen. Highly incensed, she squeaked, "I'm Dev Anand's new heroine." Only to have the hunks laugh in her face and throw her out anyway.

And who can blame them? Their vision, at least, isn't clouded like Dev's.



Jayesh Bedekar

Ekta with Aamir Khan: a crush on the Bachchan

What could Sunny Deol lack that he can't achieve the same success with Sridevi as the other macho men of the film industry? The cold-cold vibes between the two are enough to send a few shivers down the spine of even the most seasoned penguin. The director has only to shout 'cut' and Sridevi violently disengages herself from the muscular physique of Jat the Junior and flounces off in a direction diametrically opposed to that of Sunny's.



Durgaprasad

Sridevi: allergic to Deol



Durgaprasad

Sunny Deol: *thanda* reaction

Poor Sunny, it is said, is flummoxed at the *thanda* reaction to his warm, warm appeal. Instead of eating his heart out in solitude, the guy had better take tutorials from Anil Kapoor on how to charm Ms India. And before that, he should sound out Madhuri Dixit on how to reach the Kapoor's heart. Gawd knows he hasn't had much success on this score before.

Perhaps the most level-headed of the Kapoor kids is Rima Kapoor. Which is why the running of RK Studios was entrusted to her capable self after the demise of Papa Raj. Come December and Rima will find herself running a household as well— hers and Manoj Jain's. Manoj, to whom Rima got engaged recently, is the brother of Rima's best friend Renuka Jain.

There's obviously lots to a name—Kumar Gaurav (remember him?) was also christened Manoj by his parents.

Did you know that Raakhee Gulzar has an Imelda Marcos fixation? Subhash Ghai was the first to find out, and the hard way at that. Ghai, in a desperate bid to economise these days, is cutting down on all extraneous expenses during the shooting of his latest film *Ram Lakhan*. As part of this drive Madame Gulzar was denied matching sandals with her saree. And since hell has no fury like Raakhee denied, all hell broke loose on the sets of the starrer. The least cutting of the broad asides she directed at Ghai was the crack that perhaps it was by saving on the cost of footwear that Ghai could throw those famed bashes at Leela Penta, which have earned him the epithet of the Great Showman.



Durgaprasad

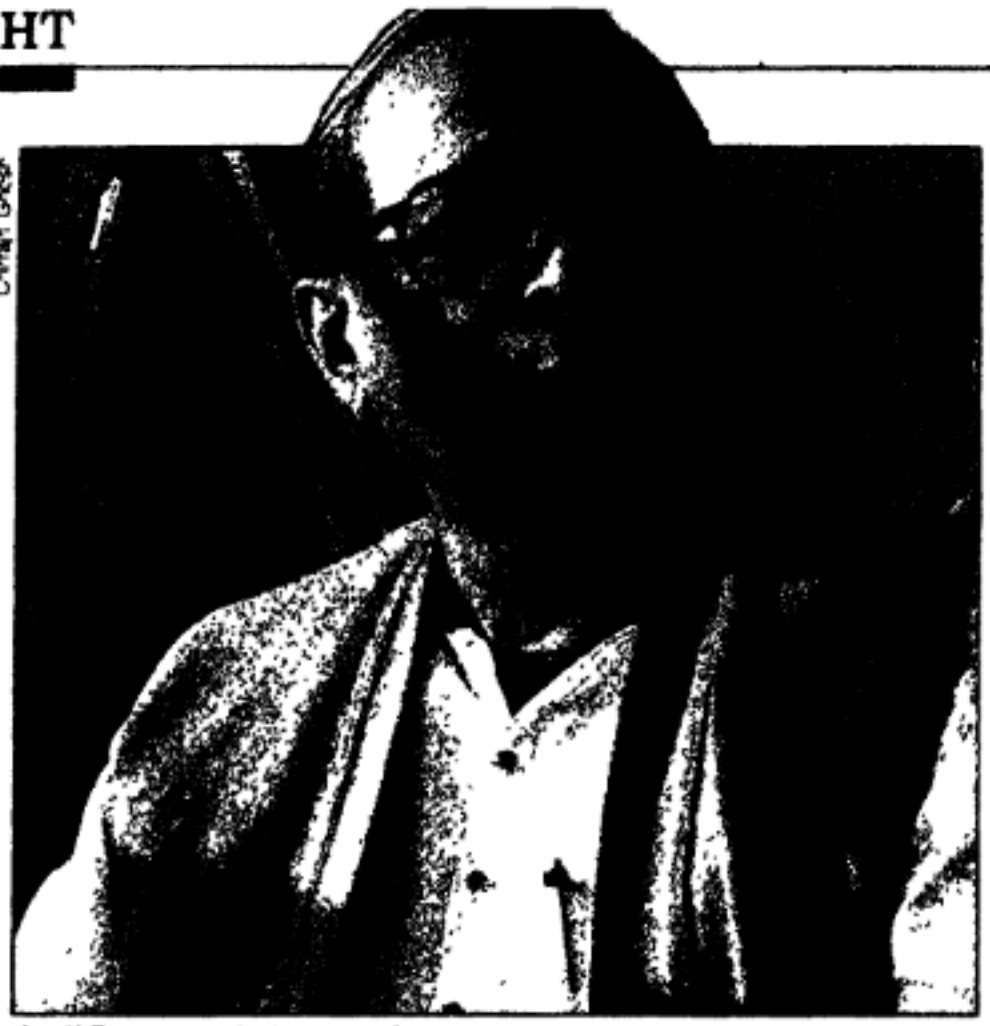
Raakhee: the Imelda Marcos fixation

The years which have added considerable layers of adipose tissue to the once comely figure haven't been quite so successful at mellowing the notorious temper.

PATRIOTISM, ANYONE? Anyone but **Jyoti Basu,** chief minister of West Bengal, if the Congress MPs agitating at the portals of the Rajya Sabha were to be believed. What had them questioning Basu's patriotic antecedents was the discovery (made with the help of paper clippings) that the communist leader had never in his entire career as chief minister (spanning all of 11 years) ever hoisted the national flag at Independence Day celebrations. Basu, it turns out, always delegates this onerous responsibility to his Cabinet colleagues, Jatin Chakraborty and more recently, Benoy Chowdhury.

Highly incensed at what they perceived as disrespect to the national flag, Congress MPs led by Suresh Kalmadi and S.S. Ahluwalia, demanded that the home minister Buta Singh make a statement on the subject. Singh, however, deciding that discretion is the better part of foolhardiness, desisted, claiming that he had no information on the subject.

Basu reacted to the uproar in his usual deadpan manner. There has been no deviation, he held, from the tradition which decrees that any member of the state Cabinet can unfurl the tricolour. "Am I to learn patriotism from those who are destroying the country?" he enquired, if only rhetorically. "I work in Writer's Buildings under the national flag."



Jyoti Basu: patriotic enough

Chiranjit Ghosh

NO SEXISM please, she's **Mallika Sarabhai.** The versatile daughter of Vikram and Mrinalini Sarabhai, heroine of Peter Brook's *Mahabharata* and Bharata Natyam *danseuse* of distinction, will not allow her kind to be patronised by male chauvinists. No, not even if they belong to the *Times of India.*

Celebrating the 150th year of its existence, the newspaper recently carried an advertisement which Mallika found "astonishing for its blatant discrimination against women". The offending advertisement carried as its main slogan the infamous line which once peddled Virginia Slims cigarettes: "You've come a long way baby." And what's more, as Mallika pointed out pithily in a letter to the newspaper, it certainly did not refer to those under five. For carried prominently beside it were visuals of women suffragettes and the Iron Lady of Britain, Margaret Thatcher, all of whom have, presumably, come a long way.

The copy had gone on to add, much to her indignation, that it was (in its commemorative volumes) offering its readers a look into "our father's father's father's father's and his father's lives". Sarcastically queried Mallika: "What of the mothers? Are their lives not worth looking into? And where would all the fathers have come from, without the mothers?" Where indeed, Ms Sarabhai?



Devi Lal: too big for his bed

Jagdish Yadav



Mallika Sarabhai: no sexism please

Vivek Das

IF OPPOSITION unity is a tall order, so is its current high priest **Devi Lal.** So the hapless officials of the Raipur Circuit House discovered when the Haryanvi strongman paid a visit to the city recently. The chief minister, district officials were informed, was too big for his bed, at least, the one he would have to sleep in while in Raipur. None of the beds in the circuit house were more than six feet in length and Devi Lal, as is well-known, is six feet four inches in height. His security goons, part of whose brief was ensuring that there were no shortcomings in the CM's sleeping arrangements, insisted that the officials find a bed big enough for the political giant (only, you understand, in a manner of speaking), well before his arrival. So the officials scurried around for a seven-foot bed, a search rewarded after considerable endeavour. And Devi Lal, presumably, slept in peace.

NOW, WAS this a case of committed reporting? As always, there are two sides to the story.

Version one. **Captain Satish Sharma,** close friend of the Prime Minister and grist to a great many gossip mills has served a notice on *The Statesman* asking the paper to tender him an unconditional apology expressing profound regret for the news item linking Sharma to the Sumitomo deal and alleging that he had misled Parliament on this score. The notice, served on D.J. Gooptu, publisher, M.L. Kotru, resident editor and

Sunanda K. Dattaray, editor, threatened that if an apology was not forthcoming, a Rs one crore defamation suit would be filed in the Delhi High Court against the paper.

Commenting on the 30 August, 1984 deal between Sumitomo and Jyotsna Holdings, Sharma said, "On that date Rajiv Gandhi was not even the Prime Minister."

Version two. C.R. Irani, chairman of *The Statesman* board (and member of the PTI board) protested that the news agency had carried the item not once but thrice, and that even before the notice had actually been served on the newspaper the result of succumbing to

Rakesh Sahai

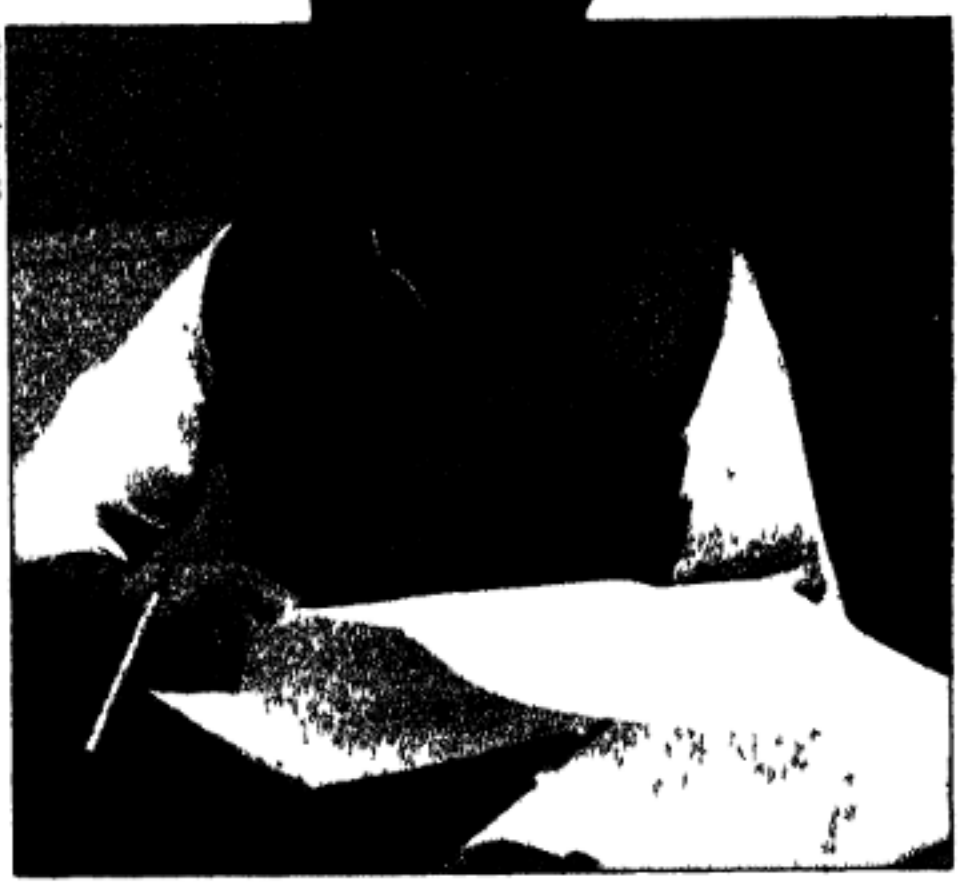


Sharma, damaging allegations

the pressure being exerted by Sharma, who was in an excellent position to do so, because of his prime ministerial connections.

THE MINISTER vanishes. So it seemed to **Jagdish Tytler's** securitymen when they found their charge mysteriously missing from Heathrow Airport, London. The minister for food processing was on his way back to India from Geneva where he had gone to attend a conference called by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The journey back home involved a stopover at London and this is where Tytler did the vanishing

Sandeep Shankar



Jagdish Tytler: off to the races

trick. But this was one trick that did not amuse. Instead it made the securitymen press the panic button. And understandably so. Tytler is, after all, pretty high on the terrorist hit list.

A search was immediately launched and heading the effort was the chief of security at the Indian mission in London. It seemed in vain until, lo and behold, there was Tytler, relaxing at a friend's residence, with nary a care in the world. Evidently, he had played truant only to take off for the races. Why racing should be regarded as a dark passion, only to be indulged away from the public gaze is a question only Tytler can answer. Yes, minister?

Bhagwan Rajneesh: from one god to another

Rajneesh Foundation



"Buddhas," Rajneesh rued, "have been forced to worship pigs and nobody has objected. But nowhere in the whole history of mankind has man been given the dignity of a god." That was a task whose fulfilment needed a Rajneesh.

So here's to amusement—from one god to another

Ashok Das



Rajesh Khanna: late, as usual

IT COULD only be ascribed to sheer force of habit, when **Rajesh Khanna**, sometime superstar of Hindi filmdom arrived late for the Independence Day parade (in New York) which he was supposed to lead in his capacity as grand marshall.

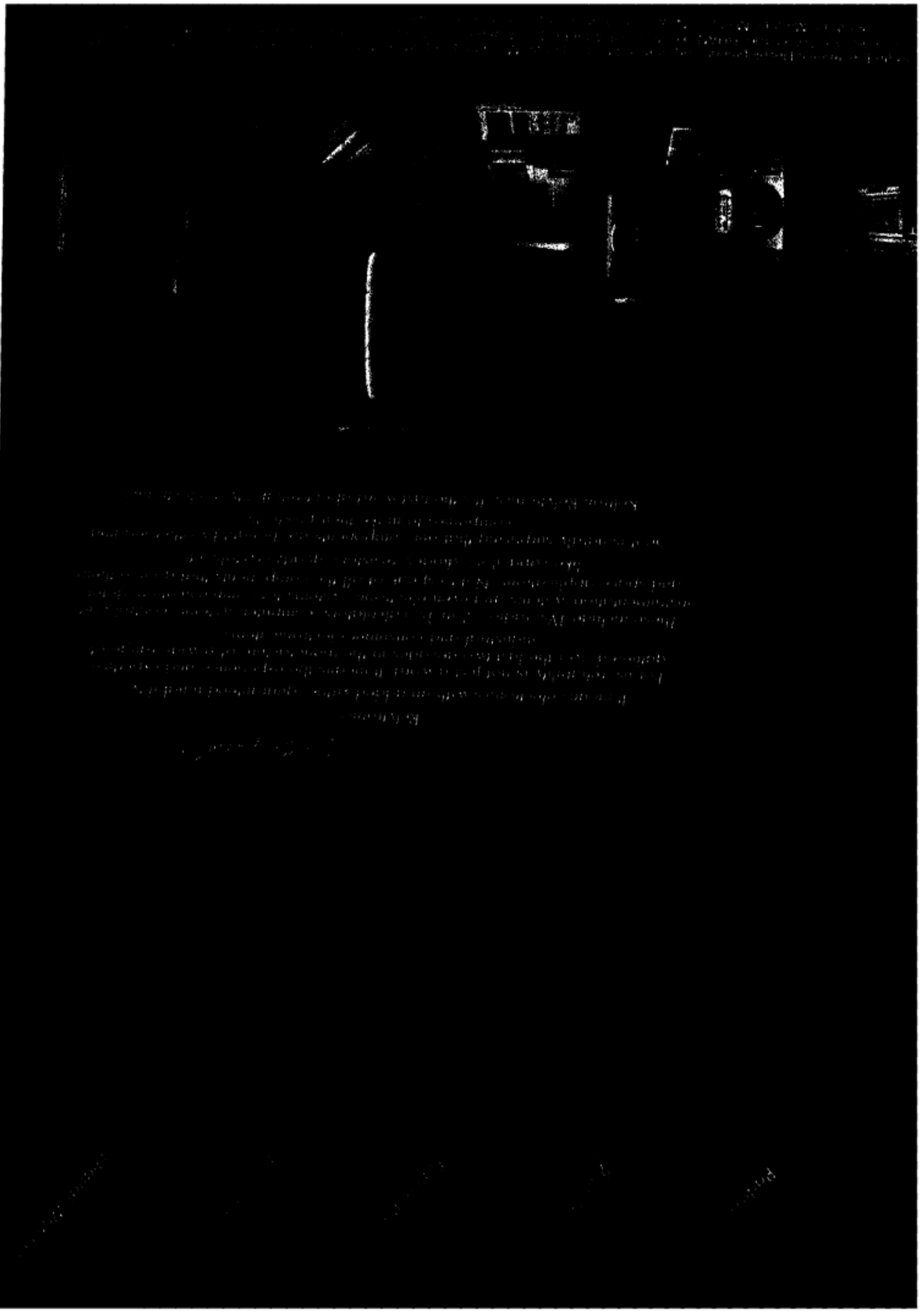
IF IT'S a Museum of Ancient Gods in Rajneeshdham, Pune, it has to be inaugurated by **Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh.** And its first exhibit, a cute, pink, fully automated toy pig, which had an audience of 10,000 including the Bhagwan's disciples and curious visitors, in hysterics as it trotted across the podium in the Gautama Buddha auditorium of the *ashram*, uttering little squeals and grunts all the while.

But like all things Rajneesh, even this bizarre ritual had a point to it, no matter how obscure. The godman was only trying to show humanity how it had demeaned itself by worshipping insensate animals.

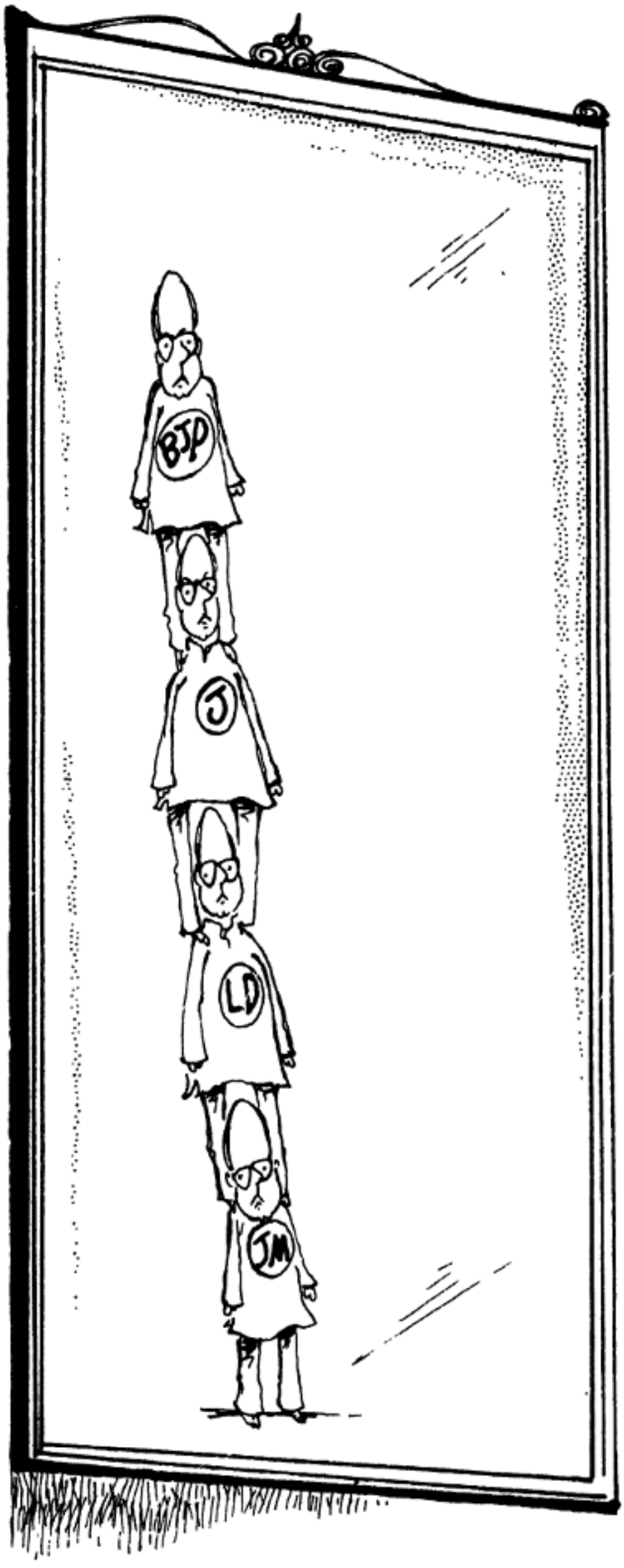
Khanna had flown in specially from Bombay only to lead the march in the company of Ed Koch, mayor of New York city, and other celebrities. But as Ramesh Patel, a spokesman, announced ruefully, the star arrived late (reasons yet unspecified) by which time the march had already commenced. And the *securitywallahs* would not let any vehicle through, Rajesh Khanna or no Rajesh Khanna.

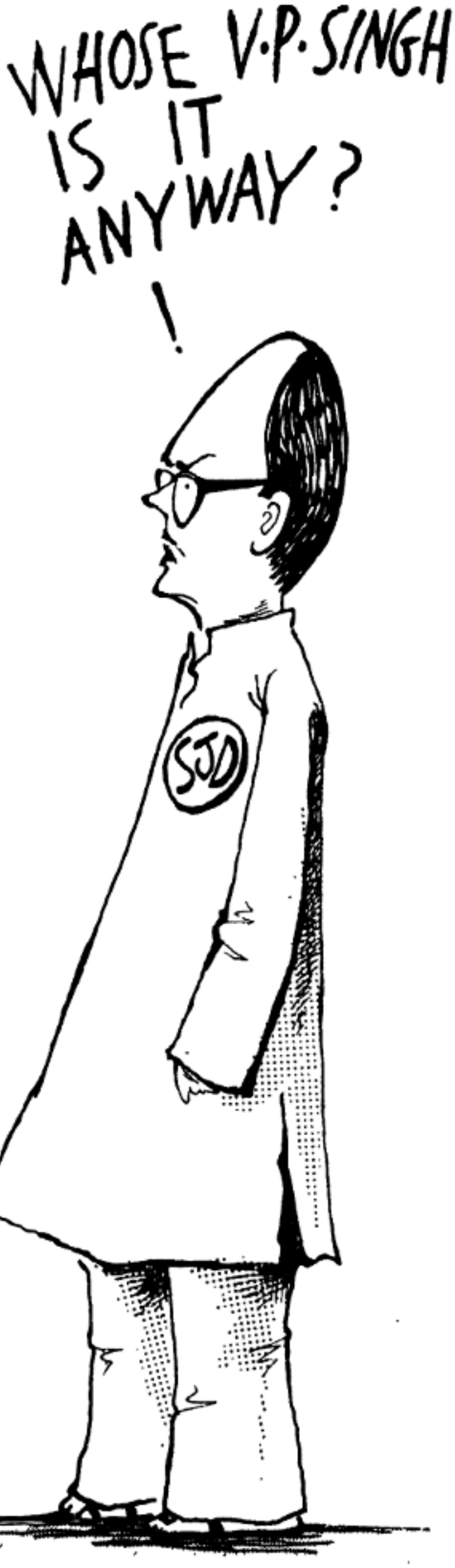
And that, for your edification, was the story of how nemesis caught up with the ex-phenomenon of Indian cinema, in the guise of a New York policeman.

Compiled by Seema Goswami



RAVI SHANKAR





ravishankar

NICE GUYS,they say, finish last. **Vijay Amritraj** may not be the world's nicest guy if you believe what other Indian tennis players have to say about him, but at least the rest of the international tennis circuit likes him.

Last month, the man Indians cheer in the first round of every tournament (and sometimes, the second–if he gets that far) was awarded Le Trophee International du Fair Play Pierre de Coubertin for 1987. As is now inevitable, the prize was not for excellence in tennis but for being a nice sort of chap.

Read the citation: "He has a 15-year career always marked by an exemplary



Vijay Amritraj: a real sport

spirit of fair play...and the best possible image of his sport by his speech and general behaviour."

Amritraj said he was honoured; and in these days of tantrum-throwing, racquet-flinging tennis brats, the elegance and style with which he always exits from tournaments must come as a refreshing change.

CONGRESSMEN IN the Rajya Sabha exchanged embarrassed glances as the Opposition MPs looked justifiably indignant. Question Hour was over and Union



Ashok Vaitheeswaran

P. Shiv Shankar: not excused

human resources minister, **P. Shiv Shankar,** was not there to move the Jamia Millia Islamia Bill. Punctuality, obviously, was not a virtue the minister believed in. Deputy chairperson Pratibha Patil would have moved on to the next Bill, but Opposition leaders, including Atal Behari Vajpayee (BJP) and Dipen Ghosh (CPI-M), strongly objected to the minister's absence and claimed that the "government was treating the House with contempt".



Swamy: another comeback

The House was finally adjourned for 15 minutes. When it reassembled, a highly apologetic Shiv Shankar admitted it was a "clear lapse" on his part. Looking more like a guilty schoolboy than an honourable minister, he said he was ready to take any punishment that the House gave him. No one had any answer to this, however. (Obviously, no MP could figure out what the appropriate punishment for an erring Member of Parliament should be.)

Ramanand Sagar (centre) with Arvind 'Ravan' Trivedi (left) and Arun 'Ram' Govil (right): bouncing back to the small screen



Rakesh Sahai

YOU'VE GOT to hand it to **Dr Subramaniam Swamy.** The maverick MP and former Harvard economics professor has more lives than a cat and has made more comebacks than Frank Sinatra.

Just when everybody thought that Swamy was finished, he bounced back as advisor to his old *bete noire,* Chandra Shekhar. And as the smoke-filled room caucus in the Janata Party (Dandavate, Patnaik, Fernandes–the usual gang of has-beens) tried to finish him off, Swamy retaliated by destroying Ramakrishna Hegde, the caucus' choice for Prime Minister.

But he was not content with mere national prominence. Last month, the Emergency-era Pimpernel winged it across to Pakistan as part of the Indian delegation to General Zia's funeral. But, foamed Swamy's detractors,"He's not the leader of any party!"

No problem. The man of a thousand quips was ready for this objection, "I am going as Morarji Desai's personal representative," he retorted.

At this rate, the country's best-looking MP will soon become the Opposition's Macavity.

IT NOW looks as though the canny **Ramanand Sagar** will get his way after all. Shortly after his horrifically watchable *Ramayan* went off the air, the pious Sagar asked for, and received, an extension.

But because Doordarshan mandarins were tiring of Sagar's tacky little extravaganza, his rotund, white-suited figure was ejected from Mandi House each time he asked to be allowed 26 new episodes rather than the sanctioned 13.

Then, this latter-day Valmiki had an idea. He explained to Congress(I) hacks that the *Ramayan* was vital to the Hindu vote. Harijans, he said, venerated Valmiki. So, if he ditched the Tulsi

Ramayan (which the serial has followed so far) and went for the Valmiki version (including Lav and Kush fighting with Ram, etc.), then the Congress could secure the vote of this minority.

It tells us something about the desperate straits the Congress(I) now finds itself in; that Sagar's solution to the problem of its sagging popularity was greeted with whoops of joy by Congress(I) hacks who rushed off to their leader and wangled 26 episodes for the saintly filmmaker.

IT WAS Bob Dylan who told us that the times, they were a-changing. But it looks as though it is going to be **Bruce Springsteen,** Sting and Peter Gabriel who will drive the point home. For, to celebrate 150 years of its existence, and perhaps to remind us how much it has evolved, the venerable *Times* group is sponsoring a gigantic rock concert at Delhi's Indira Gandhi Stadium on 30 September.

The gig is part of Amnesty International's world tour to whip up interest in human rights and the megastars will be joined by Tracy Chapman and Youssou N'dour.

Bruce Springsteen: boss of the show



Gautam Rajadhyaksha

Hema Malini: from films to chocolates



For Sting, the former lead singer and bassist with the Police, this will be his second concert in India. Eight years ago, as *Walking on the Moon* and *Message in a Bottle* hit the top of the charts, the Police performed what Sting regards as their best-ever concert at Bombay's Rang Bhavan.

He promised then that he would be back and now in 1988, it looks as though we will see the Englishman in New Delhi.

OLD MOVIE queens don't die, they just turn into...chocolate magnates. Or at least, that's the way that **Hema Malini,** the dream girl of the 1970s seems to feel.

If the Bombay grapevine is to be believed, the second Ms Deol has already utilised a visit to Switzerland to confer with Swiss chocolate makers Tobler about the possibility of manufacturing their distinctive pyramid bars in India.

Apparently with her film career drawing to a close, Ms Malini now wants to be regarded as a big-time tycoon, not a mere heroine. And chocolates are the way to tycoon-ness.

As Ogden Nash did not say: Stardom is humdrum but candy is dandy!

SHE WOULD be unremarkable in a middle-class drawing room but in the Uttar Pradesh ministry she is a decided oddity. She is 28 years old, pretty, articulate and an unlikely combatant in the sordid power games of the cow belt. How **Reena Kumari** got to the position of deputy minister for power in N.D. Tiwari's ministry is consequently something of a mystery and cause for chagrin to scores of hardened UP Congressmen waiting in the wings of power.



Reena Kumari: unlikely combatant

Reena is, however, determined to prove her credentials and disprove her detractors. She has been minister only for a month but is already startling UP power department officials by making sudden appearances at their places of work. Chronic absentees and slack officials are realising that a pleasant exterior can hide a tough decision maker. ■

Dimple Kapadia turns vegetarian. No, she hasn't discovered religion—only done some soul-searching and come up with an abiding maternal love for daughters Twinkle and Chinky. The two were down with chicken-pox recently and the school authorities sent them home, to safeguard the health of other children. Nursing them back to health, Dimple worried incessantly if the disease would permanently disfigure her little darlings. "I decided," she said, "that if nothing happened to my kids, I'll give up meat for good." So, as of now, the Kapadia household comprises two children, hale and hearty, and a mother, wholly vegetarian.



Pradeep Bandekar

Dimple: anything for the children

Sanjana Kapoor may be less than impeccably dressed, but she picks up admirers with envious ease. They, unfortunately, don't have the same luck with picking her up, what with her pathological obsession for boyfriend Aditya Bhattacharya, once adjudged the sexiest man in India.

Take the case of *bechara* Gul Anand. Producer of Sanjana's first starrer *Hero Hiralal*. Anand is so besotted with his *phirang*-looking leading lady, that he treats her absence from even a single frame as a national calamity. "What? No Sanjana?" he inquires querulously of director Ketan Mehta.

But Sanjana, the coldest thing to hit filmland since Meenakshi Seshadri, remains unmoved.

People thought that after the stupendous success of Rakesh Roshan's *Khoon Bhari Maang*, child specialist Rekha would have little to rue. But such people had reckoned without Rekha. Informed sources tell us that the sometime *femme fatale* of Indian films has sworn never to work with Rakesh again. The story goes thus: one dance sequence of the film saw Rekha looking very, very overweight indeed. Unwilling to be screened at anything but her best, the buxom star pleaded with Rakesh for a re-shoot. Rakesh, inspired by Jeetendra perhaps, agreed, provided his heroine shared the costs incurred. The lady didn't buy that and the film was released, offending dance intact, showing Rekha in all her plump splendour.

So much for Rekha's resolution. But more important, does Rakesh want to recast the original Ms Difficult? Judging by his colour (purple), no way.



N. Prasad

Rekha: difficult as usual

Supriya Pathak: unnaturally plump?

You've got to hand it to the guy for sheer spunk. Vinod Pande (of *Ek Baar Phir* fame) refused to let go of the title of his next movie, *Sach*, despite Tinnu Anand's and Habib Nadiadvala's best attempts to hijack it for their next film, an Amitabh Bachchan-Shabana Azmi starrer.

To celebrate his victory, the dimunitive Pande has started work on his film and promises to finish the masterpiece (yes, that's what he makes it out to be), in record time.

"Pankaj who?" Supriya Pathak would inquire, a look of lost innocence on her baby face, when asked about her liaison with Pankaj 'Karamchand' Kapoor. Apparently, the amnesia was only temporary. Now fully recovered, she will soon be marrying the mumbling detective of the telescreen.

But the film industry being what it is, people have already begun speculating whether Supriya is bulging unnaturally under her saree. ■

Dayaprasad

Tongues in trees

In the Karnataka village of Heggodu, a repertory theatre company and a drama school bring Shakespeare and the classics to life

It is a long way from civilisation. Hidden among the forests and areca nut plantations in the green Malnad of Karnataka, the village Heggodu is yet to be caught by the spreading tentacles of television. For its population of 500, living 350 km from the capital Bangalore, the sounds of the city come only with the *mofussil* bus winding its way through the village from Sagar Taluk to the far coast. And yet, this tiny village is the home of Ninasam, a cultural organisation running a repertory theatre, a drama school, a film society and an annual film appreciation course

From this unlikely perch Ninasam has been sending out its repertory company to tour all 20 districts of Karnataka over the last three years For eight years an average of 15 students, including girls, from all over the state have been taking Ninasam's one year undergraduate course at the theatre school.Ninasam has been running its annual ten-day film appreciation course and rural film festival over the last one decade at Heggodu, with the cooperation of the National Film and Television Institute and the National Film Archive, Pune. Within a radius of 10 km around Heggodu, the rural intellectual, thanks to Ninasam, can engage himself in serious discussions on Eisenstein, Shakespeare or Aristotelian aesthetics!

Says noted theatre critic, Rustom Barucha in his treatise *Ninasam: A Cultural Alternative*,"If we had to choose a cultural centre in India today, it would not, to my mind, be found in any of the major institutions in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, or Bhopal, which continue to be isolated from the needs of our people. Rather, I would locate this 'centre' in the village of Heggodu, where one finds alternatives not only for the Indian theatre but for the mobilisation of growth of our culture at large." From an amateur dramatics society founded in 1949 Ninasam has grown quite remarkably, despite the frequent lack of enthusiasm for the arts it patronises.

According to K.V. Subbanna, the guiding spirit and visionary behind Ninasam *(see box)*, "Its growth has not been planned. Ninasam has actually evolved slowly, it has responded to needs." With the exit of stalwarts like B.V. Karanth and Prasanna from Karnataka, and the increasing desolation of the Kannada theatre scene, it was Subbanna's dynamism that kept Ninasam going and fashioned a repertory company, perhaps unparallelled in the country. Tirugata, the Ninasam repertory, is now the major theatre event of Karnataka, with over 150 performances of great plays at more than 60 venues. In the three years since its formation in 1985, Tirugata has performed 430 shows of 11 plays to around three lakhs of people, three quarters of this audience being from rural areas.

The amazing thing about Tirugata's success is the fact that the rural audience has found pleasure in a choice of plays from *Macbeth* to *The Threepenny Opera*. Says Barucha, "Not only has Tirugata been able to confront such intellectual prejudices (regarding rural audiences), it has also succeeded in demonstrating that a professional theatre can be more or less self-supporting." Explains K.V Subbanna, "We have managed to keep the repertory financially viable so far, but certainly with great difficulty." For the 20 members who form this year's repertory, it is a gruelling routine. The same team performs all the four plays of the repertory, manages lights and loads and unloads the sets at the performing venues. There are shows practically everyday during the six-month tour.

The repertory is certainly a marvel of logistics and planning. Says Subbanna, "We choose three plays for adults and one children's play each year. The three will include one world classic, one Indian classic and a modern play." For the 1988-89 repertory starting this October, the plays are Poornachandra Tejaswi's *Chidambara Rahasya* directed by K.V. Akshara, *Chanakya Prapancha*, an adaptation of *Mudra Rakshasa* directed by C.R. Jambe, Shakespeare's *King Lear* directed by Raghunandan and a children's play *Bholeshankara* directed by K.G. Krishnamurthy. K.V. Akshara, Subbanna's son and a graduate of the National School of Drama, explains, "Even the choice of plays each year involves considerable exercise. The actors have to be found from within the team of 20." Why 20? "Because only so many can fit inside our bus."

The Shivarama Karantha Ranga Mandira: Ninasam's well-equipped theatre





C.R. Jambe

Says C.R. Jambe, principal of the theatre school, "We take only 15 students. There are no holidays." Small wonder then that the Ninasam actors and actresses can perform in four different plays in as many days. In between they change sets, handle lights and costumes, and carry out numerous

This kind of practical approach to logistical problems enables Tirugata to complete its annual schedules. "After the sets for the four plays are designed, a committee sits and discusses how to make small compromises in order to increase the number of common items to reduce the total load " Needless to add, the sets are kept simple and flexible. In the 60-odd centres that the repertory performs, barely three can boast of a proper, fully equipped stage. It is in the light of these constraints that the achievements of Tirugata seem doubly wonderful

Ninasam is perhaps the only organisation that can hope to handle such a venture. Members of the repertory, drawn mostly from the theatre school, have to go through a rigorous course Says Chidambara Rao Jambe, school principal and NSD graduate, "We take only 15 students The school opens at 7 am with two hours of physical exercises and voice training. We break for breakfast, meet at 10 am for theory classes. After lunch we have practical classes and later, we rehearse plays the students have to produce for their diplomas till 9-30 pm. There are no holidays." Small wonder that the Ninasam actors and actresses can perform in four different plays in as many days. In between, they change sets, handle lights and costumes, and carry out manual work. "Even if one actor falls ill, we are sunk," says Akshara.

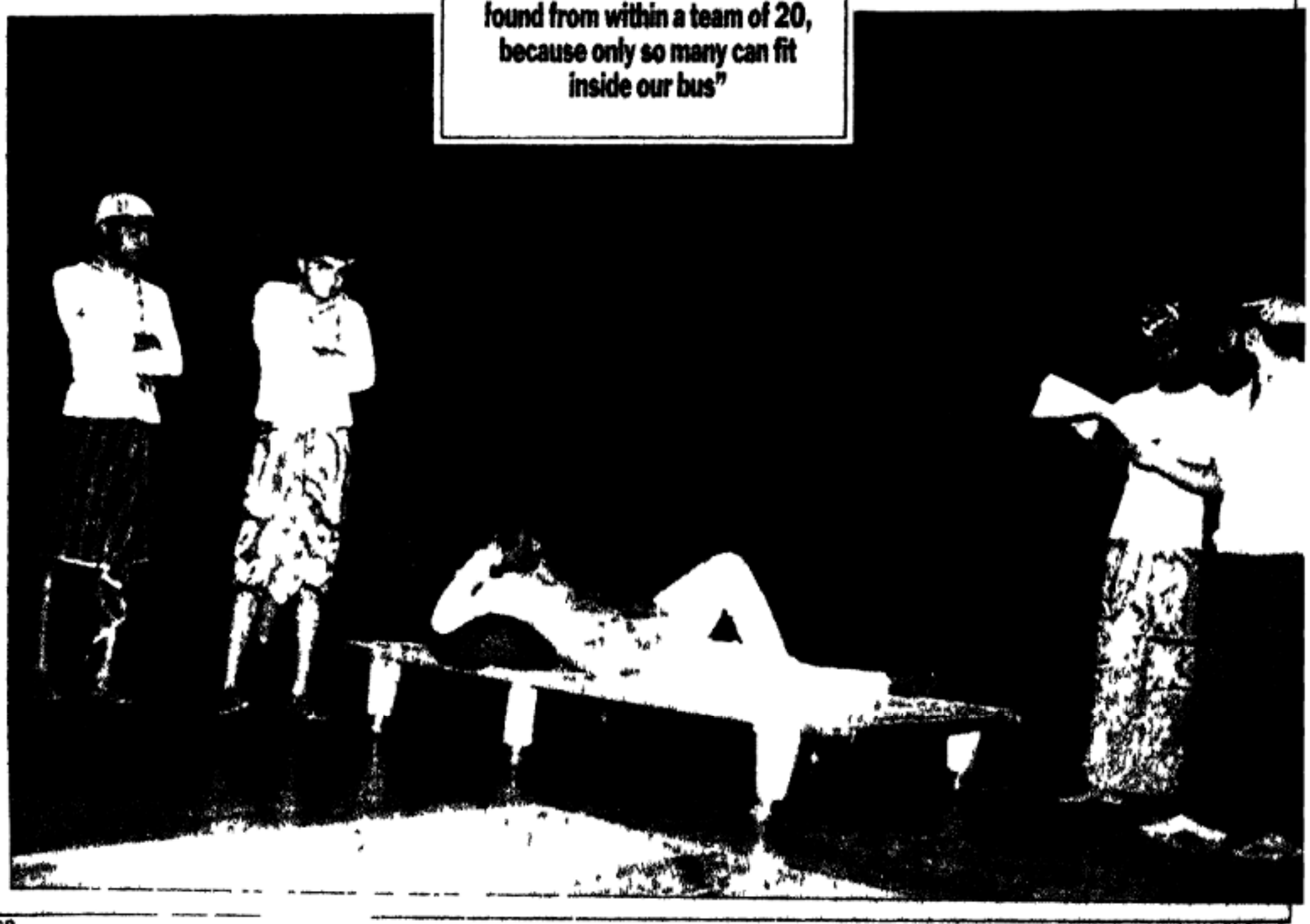
Life is hard for the Tirugata performers who only get a monthly stipend of Rs 650 But, as Subbanna points out, the shows are presented at rural centres for as low as Rs 1,500 per show. "They cannot pay more in most villages." The total cost of the repertory in the three years has been Rs 1.20 lakhs, Rs 2 lakhs and Rs 2.75 lakhs, respectively. Last year the government granted a subsidy of Rs 22,000. Ninasam does not expect more financial help from the government. "The government cannot pay more. There will be questions, naturally, from other cultural organisations," explains Subbanna.



K.V. Akshara

K.V. Akshara, Subbanna's son, explains, "The choice of plays each year involves considerable exercise. The actors have to be found from within a team of 20, because only so many can fit inside our bus"

This unique lack of eagerness to grab financial support wherever possible has certainly added to Ninasam's credibility. When the Ford Foundation offered a grant of Rs 12 lakhs to Ninasam three years ago, it was taken. The organisation first purchased a bus for the use of the repertory, set up six "equipment banks" with light and sound facilities in the backward areas of the state for promoting local theatre, set up training programmes for teachers to promote film and theatre appreciation and then, politely refused to take further aid. Ninasam accounted for the money used and made accounts available for all



Students rehearse for a play limited resources, boundless enthusiasm

Theatre, exempt from public haunt

The strength and philosophy of Ninasam is that of K.V. Subbanna. His is the courage that scorned the glamour of cities, that moved him to return to his village after graduation and made his dream possible—to build a prestigious cultural centre in the heartland of Karnataka. When SUNDAY asked Subbanna why he chose Heggodu for his dream, he said simply, "This is where I belong."

Started as a small dramatic society in 1949, the Sri Nilakanteshwara Natyaseva Sangha, shortened to Ninasam, was a product of its times. Says Subbanna, "In that age of enthusiasm, it was started not really as a theatre movement....but more as a platform for culture. Only a few of us were interested in theatre." Subbanna's father, an agriculturist, was the president of the Sangha. At that time Subbanna, still an undergraduate student, was publishing a cyclostyled newsletter with a group of friends, for local circulation.

In the 1960s Subbanna was actively involved in the running of the Lal Bahadur College at Sagar, 12 km away. He was, essentially, a man deeply concerned with his environment. In 1967, he attended the first film appreciation course in Pune, organised by Marie Seton, and this became the foundation for a lasting relationship with cinema. At the same time there were exciting days in Bangalore, for B.V. Karanth was making waves with *Evam Indrajit, Oedipus Rex, Sankranthi* and there were the beginnings of a revolution on the stage.

The then finance minister Ramakrishna Hegde once visited Heggodu. Subbanna told him of his wild plan. "Let me build a theatre here." Hegde, then as now, a fond patron of the arts, sanctioned the initial sum and within a year, a crude theatre was ready, which ultimately became the full-fledged theatre it is today.

By then already a member of the Rare Taste Club in Sagar, formed by film buffs viewing *Rashomon, Bicycle Thieves* and *Battleship Potemkin* in a nowhere town like Shimoga, Subbanna was planning his film society at Heggodu. The first rural film festival of great classics in 1977, the film appreciation course in 1979, the theatre school and the repertory have firmly established Heggodu as the premier cultural centre of Karnataka.

But what is the future? Says Subbanna, "We will proceed step by step." It was the plight of jobless youngsters who completed the course at the theatre school which moved Subbanna to start the repertory. Ninasam, which maintains a relationship with all its old students, says only 20 per cent of them are not engaged in any form of theatre activity. Two members of Tirugata have started their own repertory and some old members are moving over to B.V. Karanth's state-aided national repertory which is soon to be announced. There are no less than 28 NSD graduates in Karnataka and Ninasam may yet provide the opportunities that the premier national institute did not. But first, they will have to turn their eyes away from the cities and look Subbanna's way, towards the place where they belong.



K.V. Subbanna: guiding spirit

interested. "We are not in a hurry to become bigger than we can manage to be," asserts Subbanna.

The greatest proof of Ninasam's pragmatism is the construction of its own auditorium, the Shivarama Karantha Ranga Mandira. Subbanna's foresight has enabled Heggodu to boast of a well-equipped theatre that can be the envy of the best and the most ostentatious in the cities. Says Barucha, "Ninasam has designed it in a way that is appropriate to its needs. The problem with most of our cultural complexes like the National Centre for the Performing Arts or Bharat Bhavan, the 'white elephants' of our culture, is that their architectural sites are planned even before the semblance of any creative work." But Ninasam had been performing plays for two decades before planning to build its theatre. Consequently, it escaped "experts who are more interested in creating impressive facades" and "aberrations like enormous stages without adequate wing space or with poor acoustics that demand the use of macrophones"

The theatre which started off with a government aid of Rs 85,000 in 1971, thanks to Ramakrishna Hegde, the then finance minister, was ultimately completed at a modest cost of Rs 3.2 lakhs with central and further state government aid. It is always at the disposal of the students who frequently rehearse Tirugata plays. This is a luxury that even the NSD does not possess. The 720-seater is also the performing base of Ninasam, the centre for its film festivals and appreciation courses and a haven for major productions of the Kannada stage, all of which have been invited by Ninasam to perform at Heggodu.

Beyond all the pragmatism there is the genuine desire to provide the cultural environment that stimulates creative response. *Akshara Prakashana,* a publishing firm run by Subbanna, has been bringing out books in Kannada on the greatest films in the world and in the country. Ninasam has a small library of films made by Kurosawa, Eisenstein and Ray, all ready for viewing. Even its distance from the harsh sounds of urban life adds to the cultural ambience of Heggodu. But Ninasam is not a "retreat". For Subbanna, an agriculturist, it is his place of work and his passion. He truly believes that "India lives in her villages".

As Rustom Barucha emphasises, "Ninasam is not another Santiniketan, an etherealised vision of a harmonious life, so rhapsodically envisioned by Tagore, only to corrode into the rotting bureaucracy that it has become today. Despite the obvious idealism that has inspired Ninasam's creation, it is not a dreamworld, an artificial refuge self-consciously created to resist the vulgarity of our times... Ninasam is a place of work."

Prakash Belawadi/Bangalore

Photographs: H.K Rajashekar



Nirmal Hriday, Mother Teresa's home for the dying and the destitute an important point on a volunteer's map

LIVING

For love, not money

They get nothing out of it, but each year hundreds of foreigners descend on Calcutta to work with the city's poor

"They don't see any reason for it They haven't been made immune to the sight of poor people suffering, as you have by the training of your middle-class upbringing They see no reason for there to be such poverty and disease in a country that's not really poor, not at the bottom of the Third World heap."
—Jack Preger

"They can come and do some things for the poor but they must come with proper visas for this Can you imagine, if you go to America or England and begin to do social work there, on a tourist visa, what would happen? Their authorities would never allow it"
—Indian government official

"Me and my husband sold everything to come here to work for Mother



every day but whose numbers and lifestyle remain more or less the same They return to Europe, America or Australia when their holidays, visas or stamina run out What they take back with them ranges from feathers in the caps of their conscience to deep psychological trauma

They are the products of the last 25 years of European and American history They grew up in the Seventies, a decade that was bland and had no trumpeted moments of revolt, a decade where those who had stayed "straight" in the Sixties came into their own It was also a time of violence and turmoil as immigrants, minorities and others who faced adversity because of the changing times began to react by thinking about themselves and sometimes taking their very real demands to the streets

Most of the foreign volunteers in Calcutta would never think of themselves as either hippies or as members of the Peace Corps of the Sixties But they have rejected the current trend of self-obsession and inward-turning in European and American society They are neither yuppies nor punks, though there are elements of both in their attitudes and attire

The people they deal with every day, the "poor of the city", have varying opinions about them "I don't know why these people come here," says Abdul Halim, one of the regular patients at Jack Preger's roadside clinic on Middleton Row, Jack's Ranch As a nursing student from France puts lotion on his leg, affected by leprosy, he shakes his head and asks, "Why do people work? For money Someone must be giving them something They must be getting paid, if not here, then where they come from— *kuchh to milta hoga jaroor, nahi to kyun aate?*"

A volunteer's map of Calcutta would

Teresa. It was an inner need to serve God. We work through the day and in the evenings we sit in our little hotel room and read the Scriptures."
—a young lawyer from Pittsburgh, USA

The poor of the city consider the efforts of foreign volunteers as little more than momentary pauses of relief in their arduous journeys. Help, in whatever shape it comes, is never enough

Some are middle-aged but most of them are young. They stay in Calcutta for periods ranging from two days to six months Some of them come intending to do the work that they immerse themselves in, and some just fall into it. For varying reasons they "volunteer" at one of the two or three places where they try to provide the poor of the city with medical help and well-meaning, but sometimes haphazard, solace and comfort. Neither pure tourists nor classic missionaries, theirs is a club whose membership changes



Kalyan Chakravorty







Dilip Banerjee

Foreign volunteers in Calcutta: what difference do they make to the lives of the poor?

cut across the poshest and poorest parts of the city. Sudder Street would be in the centre with one of its cheaper hotels serving as home base. A line down Free School Street and Middleton Row would lead to Jack Preger's clinic, which, by chance or high wit, is located on the curve right across the road from the main gate of Loreto College. As the well-dressed young women emerge from the institution, they are obliged to walk past the long row of people waiting to be treated by Preger and his ever-changing team of volunteers.

Another line would lead down from Chowringhee to Kalighat, where a volunteer walks past the heckling of the temple *pandas* and the stares of the shopkeepers to Mother Teresa's home for the dying and the destitute, Nirmal Hriday. They work there under the command of Sister Luke, who rules with an iron hand and a heart of gold.

Across the Howrah Bridge, on Belilious Road, stands Naba Jiban. On Lower Circular is the Mother House, Mother Teresa's headquarters, which is one of the first places of pilgrimage for the volunteer looking for work. From here the new volunteer is sent to one of the other centres run by the Missionaries of Charity—at Dum Dum, at Sealdah Station or on Lower Circular Road itself.

Overlaid on this map would be another that would light up only after six o'clock in the evening. The line would again go down Chowringhee, but this time it would turn left, past the Tata Centre on to Ho Chi Minh Sarani and stop at the gates of the British High Commission. Here the British Club holds its gatherings on Thursday—'pub night'. If the line continues further south, it makes a sharp right past the Calcutta Club and leads to the fortified dwellings of the US Marine Corps where the Marine Club occasionally welcomes volunteers on Friday nights.

For most evenings, however, the map would stay confined to the Sudder Street-Park Street area, where those of the volunteers who are not confined to bed by gastric attacks, wander the streets, fighting off the attentions of the seasoned beggar kids (who speak English, French and German), and the affections of fat young men cruising by in Marutis (speaking only one sentence: "Hey sexy baby, yu



Kalyan Chatterjee



Bikram Jolly

wantu __ with me!?!")

Gayle Humphrey can afford only the occasional night out Her day begins early, when her helpers set up the tarpaulin and pull out the patient cards and medicines at Jack's Ranch. At about 6 am, new patients, some of whom have come from places as far away as Canning, start to line up for their registration numbers. At about 8 am, Preger and the other volunteers arrive and the work begins. As the day progresses and the heat mounts, Humphrey gets into her daily rhythm. She handles everything from diagnosis to treatment to dispensing medicines to the patients.

Humphrey, 29, is a qualified nurse from New Zealand. She has been "on the road" for over the last three years. Travelling through South-East Asia, working with hospitals and village clinics in Thailand and Indonesia, spending "an occasional week being a proper tourist on a beach", she arrived in Calcutta sometime ago.

Watching over wailing babies and shaky new recruits at Dr Preger's clinic, she articulates the motivation of some of the volunteers: "A lot of the young kids in the West feel like they want to do something But they re reluctant to just give money. You feel that the money is going to build the posh buildings for UNESCO and to pay the salaries of bureaucrats who rush about in poncy



Some feel it their turn to carry the baton of volunteering for a couple of weeks—"doing their bit". For others, it is a way of gaining "hands-on experience" in order to "jump-start" their careers as doctors or nurses or health bureaucrats when they return home

cars designing health programmes that don't really work. Money always seems to corrupt people. A lot of the kids feel it is more honest to do something themselves, even if it is only a little bit"

Some feel it is their turn to carry the baton of volunteering for a couple of weeks, "doing their bit", carrying on till others arrive from the West to relieve them of their temporary burden. For others, it is a way of gaining "hands-on experience" with sick or dying patients in order to "jump-start" their careers as doctors or nurses or health bureaucrats when they return home. On the more positive side, there are those who come here and understand that what they do is fairly insignificant in the context of the huge problems that exist in the world.

Some volunteers are even honest enough to admit that they are doing this kind of work primarily for themselves, as one flawed and limited way of dealing with a completely alien reality. A very few of the volunteers show a strong determination to stay here for as long as possible and come back as many times as they can. Their trips back home provide the necessary opportunities to earn more money to support themselves here and to get new visas.

A social worker who has worked in the Pilkhana *basti*, Debu Ghosh, is more critical of the motives that bring people to the city as volunteers "I would differentiate between people like Mother Teresa, Jack Preger or some one like Father Laborde who has lived in the midst of the poor in Pilkhana for the last 20 years, and most of these people who pass through. The difference is one of commitment to this thankless and never-ending task as a way of life, as opposed to mere involvement, no matter how intense, for a short period."

Ghosh says he would place the more sincere of the temporary volunteers on a higher level than a lot of others who come with clearly suspect intentions. "Dominique Lapierre may have had sincere feelings, but it shouldn't be claimed that his book is a document of reality He has written a readable work of fiction based on what he saw, but without understanding very much of what he saw

"Many people come here, hang around the missions and the clinics for a few days, shoot lots of pictures, talk to a couple of other Westerners and go back and write knowledgeable articles about the horrors they have seen and confronted This, in turn, gives many people in the West some very stupid preconceptions, which they then come here and work very hard to confirm," says Ghosh He recounts the story of a Finnish woman who came here to volunteer only to be disappointed that there were so few beggars on the streets!

Tom is a sturdily built young man from the southern part of the United States Though religious, he does not seem to share the typical mix of condescension and Bible-thumping fervour to be found in many of his compatriots from the same area "You know, when I pick up that man's feet and put my hands on them, when I put Vaseline on them and feel my human touch reach him, when I sense that he feels a little comfort, I really feel *humble*. I feel as though God himself was in some way touching that man's feet through me and my actions," he says, talking about his experience at Mother Teresa's home for the dying and the destitute in Kalighat.

Talking to the patients there makes two things very clear. Tom is regarded by them as one of the few exceptions to the general rule of volunteers with most of whom the locals feel a massive communication gap. Secondly, it is this very gap that reduces the best efforts of many of them to utter failure. The complex needs of fragile old people



A British volunteer dealing with a completely alien reality

in the home are hard to express and often go unheeded

This same communication gap is manifested in a lighter vein at Naba Jiban, where the needs of the urchins who pour into the compound every Sunday morning are simpler and easier to meet. Around the corner from the main playground, the volunteers give the kids their baths, drenching themselves liberally in the process. One of them informs me that all the kids are orphaned waifs. But this is a misconception that is soon put to rest Most of the children have families, who put them out to work at various jobs by the time they are six or seven They are sent to Naba Jiban by their parents for free meals and medication.

When the bathing and minor medication are over, the kids stand in rows, looking impatiently at a stack of *thalis* filled with food A young boy with a cross dangling from his neck says grace in Hindi, "*Mai prabhu ko iss khaurak ke liye abhaar deta hoon,*" while the others repeat each sentence, clearly impatient to get down to the business of eating.

For women volunteers in Calcutta, the challenge is greater Sexual harassment seems to come from all sides. If it is not a lonely European executive who senses the prospect of conquest when a girl leaves a party early, then it is the boys in Marutis, seeking the fulfilment of their fantasies based on NRI-imported films

On occasion, even bureaucrats use their power as leverage for lust. Many women complain that some officials in charge of granting visa extensions used to make a quid pro quo very clear. When they were turned down, they would retaliate by serving expulsion notices, instructing hotels or guest houses to evict the alien Sometimes the women would have inept agents following them around the city. Vanya Kewley, a journalist for Canadian Radio, is said to have gathered enough evidence to confront the authorities and have one implicated official transferred. But, according to several volunteers, the latter is still at his original job.

"I know it's not fair to make generalisations about all Indian men," says Ann, an American journalist who came to India to travel and now does volunteer work seven days a week, "but the number of men who approach you on the street and immediately start asking you about 'free sex' in the West, and then within another half a minute ask you to sleep with them, is not funny...I don't want to be rude to them. Initially, I talk to them. But it doesn't surprise me that most white women are instantly on the defensive After you've been propositioned three or four times, it's quite understandable "

The shunting back and forth of sick, poor people, however, is a far grimmer business than the sexual harassment faced by these women As kids from all over the city make a bee-line for Naba Jiban on Sundays, many villagers come into Calcutta from as far as Canning to receive the help they have heard of by word of mouth. There are cases where patients receive radiation therapy for cancer at a hospital in the city but not the bandaging that goes with it as an essential part of the treatment. Quite often Jack Preger sends a volunteer to accompany a patient in urgent need of hospitalisation to one of the big hospitals, only to find admission refused.

"More than the government getting after Jack or hassling those of us who work with him, I feel we are fighting other medical institutions and health systems in the city. You can deal with the cops and the courts, but it's really frustrating to see the effort you've put into making a patient better come to nothing when a simple little treatment which we can't provide is unavailable to them at some huge city hospital," says Gayle Humphrey

It is a familiar complaint, voiced by volunteers from Kalighat to Sealdah. Humphrey is one of the few who are aware of the context and the heavy odds under which the hospitals in the city operate Most volunteers, however, are blissfully unaware of the situation faced by medical personnel in the city's large hospitals.

For the poor of the city these comings and goings mean little but an addition to the already bizarre bank of images in their lives. Help, in whatever shape it comes, is never enough or consistent. They are too accurately and cynically aware of their own struggles and histories to consider these efforts as more than momentary pauses of relief in their arduous journeys. The passing human contacts that the volunteers make remain as images in two very different systems of understanding and remembering, to be seen and interpreted by the ones who visit and leave, and the ones who are visited and left.

Ruchir Joshi/Calcutta

Most of the foreign volunteers in Calcutta would never think of themselves as either hippies or as members of the Peace Corps of the Sixties. But they have rejected the current trend of self-obsession in European and American society. They are neither yuppies nor punks, though there are elements of both in their attitudes and attire



BEGINNING 11 SEPTEMBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) Do not be impulsive in your actions Matters of the heart will make steady progress this week On the professional front, however, there are likely to be problems Step with care but do not lose your confidence With patience and resilience things will soon improve Be careful about expenditure during these days and do not indulge in unnecessary speculation Friends will provide unexpected help
Good dates: 11, 12 and 15
Lucky numbers: 6, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South-west



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) This week is very unlucky for you in all matters of speculation Therefore do not take undue risks This is a problematic phase for you but your will power and perseverence will see you through successfully An old friend will come back into your life to render invaluable service At work subordinates will cause trouble
Good dates: 12, 13 and 16
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North-west



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) You may gain through property or insurance matters A fair measure of peace and happiness is in store for you this week and the home front will not pose problems However, the time is not favourable for romance and matrimonial affairs The professional front does not look particularly bright, but do not despair as this is a passing phase and good times are imminent Family members will help you in difficulties
Good dates: 13, 16 and 17
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: East



CANCER (21 June—20 July) This week is favourable for new contracts You must take the initiative and embark on a new venture Those of you in service will be presented with an opportunity for this You will probably be required to spend a lot of time with your family as your help may be required in resolving minor problems Do not be too hasty in matters of the heart as this is not a favourable week for romance
Good dates: 11, 12 and 13
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: West



LEO (21 July—20 August) Strangers will help you this week, financially or otherwise In spite of the help, you will have to face a number of problems On the domestic front, there will be disputes and quarrels Try not to get embroiled in such problems For those who are married an understanding attitude towards your partner is imperative This week, however is favourable for all those who are not yet employed
Good dates: 12, 14 and 16
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: South



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) This is a very lucky week especially for women and children You will tide over a lot of problems which you have been facing of late Domestic life will be smooth With care and attention your health will improve Elderly family members however, may suffer from illness and cause worry Romance is forecast for those still single
Good dates. 11, 13 and 15
Lucky numbers: 1 4 and 8
Favourable direction: North



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) This week there are chances of gaining money or property from unexpected sources Generally, the period is one of intense and hectic activity Businessmen should avoid unnecessary risks Those who are still unemployed need not lose hope Opportunities will soon come your way Do not hesitate to take help offered by friends or acquaintances they may help to remove obstacles in your path
Good dates: 13, 15 and 17
Lucky numbers: 2 4 and 6
Favourable direction: South-east



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) This week is not very favourable for many of you There will be disputes and controversies, especially within the family A word of advice steer clear of such controversies as far as possible Women will help to smoothen matters Unlike the men, the fairer sex will have a pleasant and enjoyable time They will be presented with clothes and ornaments
Good dates: 15, 16 and 17
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: North-east



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) This is a good week for romance Those of you engaged in business ventures will be required to shoulder added responsibilities You may have to undertake a trip for matters of business You will have to guard well against misleading advice and rumours Follow your intuition but do not make too many alterations in your plans now Domestic life will run smoothly
Good dates: 12, 14 and 15
Lucky numbers: 3 5 and 7
Favourable direction: West



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) This week is very favourable for creative work All your activities in this field will prove fruitful If you are careful in your investment, you will gain financially A change of residence is likely Letters will bring all the good tidings you have been waiting for A favourable week for lovers So do not postpone important decisions
Good dates: 11 13 and 16
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: South



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) This is the time to make amends for the past The week is also favourable for new ventures although success will not come your way very quickly Do not be discouraged perseverance will bring its reward You will be preoccupied with work But try not to be irrational in tricky situations There are chances of an increase in salary and added responsibility You have worries on the domestic front
Good dates: 13, 15 and 16
Lucky numbers. 6 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North



PISCES (21 February—20 March) Problems are signified on the professional front this week You are therefore advised to proceed with great caution in your work If you exercise enough tact, you will benefit Be careful of what you say and to whom you say it You are likely to face difficulties in your personal life too You will need to apply patience and understanding in resolving problems
Good dates: 11, 12 and 17
Lucky numbers: 2 3 and 4
Favourable direction: East

Star Partners: Aquarius—Leo

While the Aquarius man is apprehensive and hesitant when it comes to decision-making, the Leo woman knows exactly what she wants and is ready to fight for it His inability to concentrate on anything, including her, will frustrate her demanding nature The two partners must learn to be more accommodating and adjusting with each other.

"We have all along been businessmen engaged in winning freedom and prosperity for our country by our chosen methods."

— S.L. KIRLOSKAR

Kirloskar



India's industrial growth owes its origin and its strength to the pioneering efforts of individuals and groups who survived countless difficulties in establishing their enterprises

I have followed in the footsteps of my father Laxmanrao Kirloskar His undaunted spirit laid a strong foundation for us to build upon This legacy will persist down the Kirloskar generations

My father used to say, "**You cannot distribute wealth unless you first create it. And you cannot create it unless you know how.**" If we have primarily remained in the engineering industry, it is because engineering is what we know best

We shall continue to contribute to India's social and economic betterment through engineering excellence — our chosen method

100
KIRLOSKAR CENTENARY
1888-1988



INTERNATIONAL COOKERY SPECIAL

SEPTEMBER (FIRST) 1988



Here's WE International Cookery Special with connoisseur's cuisine presented on a platter !
An indispensable collector's item to relish and cherish with over 50 exotic recipes from every part of the globe.
This comprehensive housekeeping helpmate brings you uptodate on the art and science of kitchen management, table setting, perfect parties and other aspects of cooking and serving food.

PLUS REGULAR HOT, SWEET AND SPICY FARE OF ABSORBING ARTICLES, SCINTILLATING STORIES AND FABULOUS FEATURES.

BUY A COPY TODAY

Woman's era

BUILDS YOUR PERSONALITY • BUILDS A HAPPY HOME

INDIA'S LARGEST SELLING WOMEN'S MAGAZINE IN ENGLISH • Published by DELHI PRESS, New Delhi

She's a VIP

She certainly has a way of getting what she wants! On 21 August, Kamal Basu, West Bengal CM Jyoti Basu's wife, decided it was time she visited the holy shrine at Tarakeshwar. The First Lady of Bengal had made up her mind and obviously nothing could make her alter her decision. Result: the entire railway administration was thrown into



Kamal Basu: privileged

panic. After all, the CM's wife couldn't be expected to travel with the riff-raffs of society!

With no prior notice of Kamal Basu's programme, the local train was all set to leave Howrah Station, when all of a sudden, officials of the Calcutta Police were seen frantically pacing up and down the platform. They soon entered a compartment and asked all the passengers to alight because the CM's wife and her entourage had to travel in comfort. Heated arguments were followed by a *lathi*-charge.

The VIPs finally boarded the train, leaving a trail of harassed and disgruntled passengers. Does this then mean that even in Marxist Bengal, common passengers have to put up with the whims of VIPs?

Sacred bond

The pledge was as sacred as the occasion on which it was made. When Sadvichar



Parivar, a voluntary organisation in Gujarat took its volunteers to the jails to tie *rakhis* on the wrists of prisoners on Raksha Bandhan day, they were in for a surprise.

Apart from the normal pledges of prisoners to reform themselves, seven inmates undergoing life sentences, pledged to donate their kidneys and eyes in reciprocation of Parivar's gesture.

Even as onlookers were filled with emotion, one thing was clear: even hardened criminals were not without feeling.

Media rivalry

Reporting has its own pitfalls, but when correspondents indulge in unwarranted one-upmanship, the result can be disastrous. A recent case in point was the Bihar earthquake, which was a disaster all right, but made to appear worse by the news reports. As it happened, on that fateful Sunday when large parts of north Bihar were hit by the tremor, the correspondents of the two national news agencies, sitting in Patna, tapped their sources and agreed on a particular death toll.

But the correspondent of one agency shot off a death figure of 500. Learning of this, the correspondent of the rival agency, not to be outdone, reportedly dashed off a higher toll figure of 700. The Prime Minister rushed to Bihar to see first-hand the extent of the calamity. So did the agency correspondents the next day, only to find, much to their chagrin, that the death toll was less than 200!

Whiz-kid

He is like any other boy of his age. He loves watching comedies on television and is addicted to computer games. He reads fiction and collects sea shells. He is Arjun Desai, an 11-year-old boy studying at New York's Thomas Jefferson Public School.

Recently, this shy, bespectacled youngster was presented with the prestigious Presidential Academic Fitness Programme award of the US in recognition of his outstanding academic achievement.

He is understandably ecstatic about the honour bestowed upon him. After all, he has a certificate signed by none other than President Ronald Reagan himself!

Whose funds?

Question: If you are a minister in Tripura and you need money to buy a colour television, what would you do?

Answer: Help yourself to government funds.

Two Congress(I) ministers in the state have done



just that. They wanted to buy colour TVs, but were short of funds. Using the advantage of their ministerial position, they decided to help themselves from the state's coffers. A big sum was drawn from the funds meant for family welfare, maternity health and the universal immunisation programme. Two colour TV sets worth Rs 31,950 each were purchased.

On the other hand, former CM Nripen Chakraborty has been allotted only a single room in the legislators' hostel. Having been out of power for so many years, the Congress ministers are perhaps now making up on lost opportunities.

THIS INDIA

• NEW DELHI: A person posing as a press photographer was handed over to the police for teasing girls inside the Delhi University campus. According to the complaint lodged by the girls, the person identified as Rajiv Chopra would visit the university campus and pretend to be a reporter of a national daily. He would then conduct interviews with the promise that they would be printed. However, he was found to misbehave with the girls under such a pretext.—*India Express* (Samrat Sinha, Calcutta)

• HYDERABAD: The rat continues to be the biggest thief of foodgrains in Andhra Pradesh. In the districts of Krishna, Godavari, Nalgonda and East and West Godavari alone, 15 per cent of the foodgrains produced in a year is being eaten away by these rodents.—*The Hindu* (Suresh Kulkarni, Hyderabad)

• NEW DELHI: For want of a proper boundary wall, no classes were held in a senior secondary girls school in Kalkaji for months. The principal and vice-principal of the school suspended classes four months ago because they felt that a school without a boundary wall posed a grave threat to the safety of the students.—*Indian Express* (S. Dhillon, New Delhi)

Illustrations: Debasish Deb

What your mother couldn't tell you about making your marriage work.



Remember the day before your wedding? Your mother and you talked into the small hours of the morning. She told you the meaning of marriage, those little compromises you would have to make, how to fit into his life and how to please him. However, like most women, your mother shied away from one sensitive topic — the right contraceptive method to use.

The contraceptive confusion

There is a bewildering choice of contraceptives today. And making the right choice is not easy. Some methods involve the tension of counting days (you could go wrong so easily), while others carry the risk of side or after effects. Or worse, the embarrassment of a clinical examination. Some depend upon the temperature for effectiveness. Surely there is a contraceptive method that's absolutely safe without the mess, the accompanying side effects or one that involves a lot of preparation? What you need is a safe, simple, sure method that is right for both of you.

The safe, sure condom

The condom is one of the safest, simplest and surest of contraceptives. It does not involve a visit to the doctor or a clinical examination. Nor does it mean surgery, pain or discomfort to your body. Now thinner and finer than ever before, the condom protects without interfering with the pleasure.

Kohinoor confidence

Ask for Kohinoor by name at your nearest chemist. One of India's largest selling condoms, Kohinoor gives you the confidence of knowing you are absolutely safe. It is lubricated and made from the finest latex to give you a near natural feeling. Each condom is electronically tested for total safety. That's the Kohinoor confidence. Is it any wonder that millions of couples all over India are choosing Kohinoor as the safest, most practical method of contraception?

Kohinoor is from the people who understand your need for privacy, protection and pleasure, for a contraceptive that is absolutely safe. And your wish to make your marriage the best thing that ever happened to both of you.

KOHINOOR

Plan your family with Kohinoor confidence.

A Product

MAA COMMUNICATIONS LRCF 388

The terrible Tamil twins

We all know that Jayalalitha and Janaki hate each other, but less known is the enmity between the Congress(I)'s two Tamil *femme fatales* Jayanti Natarajan, the pert, gossipy MP, can't stand Vyjayanthimala, the silver screen's gift to politics and doesn't care who knows it

As neither woman is of much consequence politically, their enmity might have passed unnoticed had both ladies not chosen to be around when Rajiv Gandhi recently toured Tamil Nadu That trip was distinguished by endless bickering between the two women who refused, point blank, to even share the room they had been allotted in a Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation hotel "Who is Jayanti?" demanded Vyjayanthimala imperiously "I am known all over the country" Retorted Ms Natarajan "If I'd become a film dancer, then even I'd be known in that way" And so on

Sighed a Union minister accompanying the PM "These Tamils! As if Partha and Mani weren't enough, we've now got to cope with these squabbling girls!"



Vyjayanthimala: ego problems

Rajiv's high-flying 'cousin'

Politicians in Maharashtra are impressed by the behaviour of Marzban Patrawalla, a young Congress(I) MLA who, it was believed, was related to Rajiv Gandhi (The Prime Minister's staff say that they are not aware of any kinship.)

Recently, Sharad Pawar made young Patrawalla a minister. So thrilled was the MLA that he neglected to turn up for the swearing-in ceremony

Politicians looked forward then, to seeing him at the opening day of the Maharashtra Legislature This too was not to be Master Patrawalla had taken off for the airport to bid goodbye to the man who may– or may not– be his cousin Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi

Nevertheless, his peers were certain that Marzban would turn up on the day of elections to the Legislative Council They were wrong again The peripatetic Patrawalla had flown off abroad

Considering that the fellow is never around and likes going abroad, perhaps he is Rajiv Gandhi's cousin after all!

Hair-raising statements

One of a woman's prized assets, it is believed, is her hair. But what happens when a few strands of her beautiful locks fall off? Does she bother to pick them up? No, according to the firebrand of Tamil Nadu politics Ms Jayalalitha, who subsequently went on to make a hair-raising statement. "Those who left my camp are like such unwanted, fallen hair"

The reference was obvious, the rebel leaders whom she had expelled– particularly Nedunchezhiyan and Panrutti Ramachandran — were not going to take such 'indecent' statements from her lying down (in Tamil, hair is a dirty word) The retorts were quick to follow "Jayalalitha is a disaster," raved Nedunchezhiyan and recalled his glorious past when none other than DMK founder C N Annadurai had invited him to lead the party as its general secretary Who was this black-tongued woman to call him a "fallen hair"?

Nedunchezhiyan: out of favour



The rebuttal of Panrutti S Ramachandran, who played a key role in the negotiations



Panrutti, blunt attack

to end the Sri Lankan crisis, was even more blunt "If we are hairs fallen off her, what about those men still clinging onto her? They are all bound to leave her sooner or later and when they do that, one wonders from which places in the body they will fall off"

Police wars

The confessions of the notorious autorickshaw driver cum underworld don, Gowrishankar (better known as "Auto-Shankar") before a sessions judge have created quite a flutter in the police force in Tamil Nadu A bitter war is on between two rival sections of the police force, each trying to expose the other's connections with the criminal Now, one senior police officer has come out with a video cassette which reveals that the rival camp had close links with the bootlegger. The cassette, which the officer claimed was worth over Rs one lakh, was the answer to the video cassette in the CID's possession, which showed them as Shankar's guests.



India's answer to Jackie Stewart: Rajiv Gandhi waves to his fans

A Contessa by any other name

All of Delhi is chuckling over the saga of Rajiv Gandhi and the Mercedes gifted to him by Jordan's King Hussein. According to the security drill, the PM must travel in a motorcade of six identical cars and he must keep changing vehicles so that assassins never know exactly in which car their target is.

Everything went well until Rajiv got his Mercedes. He then announced that he didn't see why he had to travel in a boring little Ambassador when he could zip around in a spanking new Merc. The security drill was explained to him. Bah! said Rajiv.

The officials insisted. "Sir," they pointed out, "if we have a motorcade of five Ambassadors and one Mercedes, then assassins will know which car you are in." Rajiv looked extremely cross. "Well sir," intoned a sycophant, "how about buying five more Mercs so that the whole motorcade comprises Mercs?" Rajiv got a little excited but then decided that the spoilsport press would again attack his extravagance and waste, etc.

But he still wouldn't travel in a silly little Ambassador when he could have a Merc.

So, finally, weary security officials came up with a compromise formula. They would send four Contessas for refitting (one version is that they went all the way to Germany), have their grilles changed, raise their axles etc. so that they looked like Mercs. Then, they could have a motorcade of identical cars and Rajiv could keep his Merc.

Unfortunately, if wishes were horses and Contessas were Mercs, then Chandrakant Birla would be a very rich man today. As it has turned out, the cars look like ordinary Contessas tarted up by some adventurous Karol Bagh mechanic and the entire motorcade is a joke with Rajiv's Merc all too clearly identifiable.

So much for the security drill!

Maybelline: The Mercedes Ratham

More on the Prime Minister's Mercedes *ratham*. It seems that because Rajiv loves his limousine so much, he regards all the other government drivers as incapable of handling the Benz. This poses certain problems.

Recently, as Rajiv was finishing a meeting with scheduled caste MPs at 7 Race Course Road, he asked for the Mercedes to be driven to the porch so that he could take it to South Block. Unfortunately for the fearless slayer of peacocks, the Merc was parked in the garage of 5 Race Course Road (Rajiv works out of 7 but lives in 5) and nobody was willing to drive it.

First, Sonia's driver was approached. He broke into a cold sweat and refused. Then Rajiv's staff asked a Special Protection Group driver. He said, *"Saheb, naukri ka sawal hai* (It's a question of my job)," and backed out. Other drivers were similarly reluctant. (No, Satish Sharma was not around.)

Finally, Rajiv used a staff car to ferry him to the garage and took the Mercedes himself.

The CPI(M) sees red

The Leftists in West Bengal have not been too happy with the Centre's treatment of the state. To compound their miseries, a new threat has come from Delhi. And it is none other than the CPI(M)'s leader from the north, Harkishan Singh Surjeet.

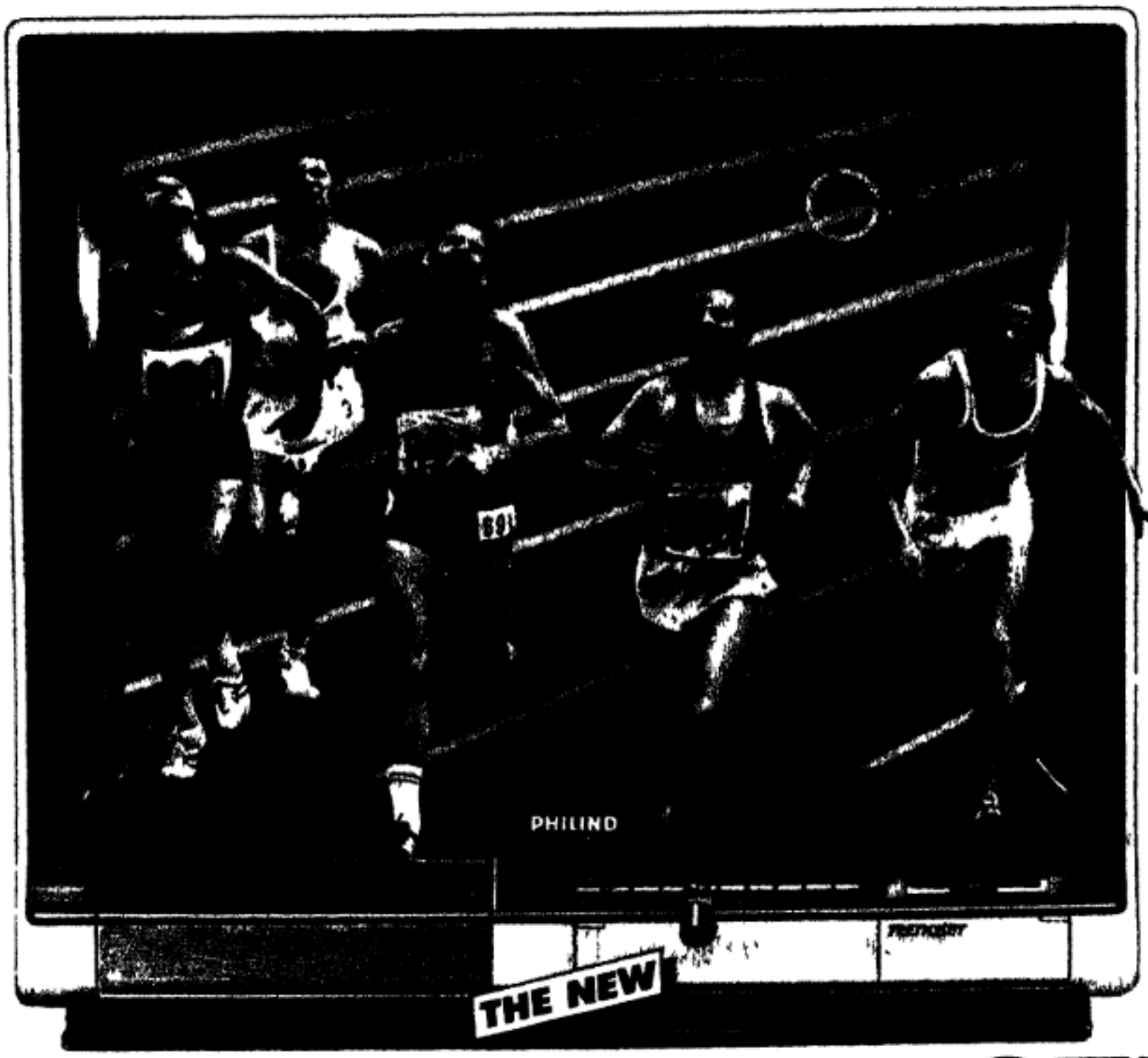
It happened on the day of the Darjeeling Accord. Along with the GNLF delegation and Union home minister Buta Singh who flew into Calcutta on a special BSF plane, came Comrade Surjeet. To top it all, Singh introduced Comrade Surjeet as his "guru". That left Comrade Jyoti and his partymen astounded.



Surjeet: Buta Singh's guru

That single word has now given rise to a host of questions. To begin with, the Leftist leadership in West Bengal has not been too happy with Comrade Surjeet taking so much of an active part in the talks. And now Buta Singh's words have confirmed their worst fears: that Comrade Surjeet is much less red than his partymen.

Colour so natural, it's almost like being there



PHX TRENDSET

THE OLYMPIC STAR

Now, the best view of the Olympics outside Seoul is going to be in your very home On the sleek, new vertical PHX Trendset Take a closer look

Colours as nature made them

Inside the new PHX Trendset, we've put in the clever little chroma circuit to give you colours that stay permanently natural So if you're tempted to reach out and touch those faces on screen, don't be surprised!

Wow! Listen to that sound

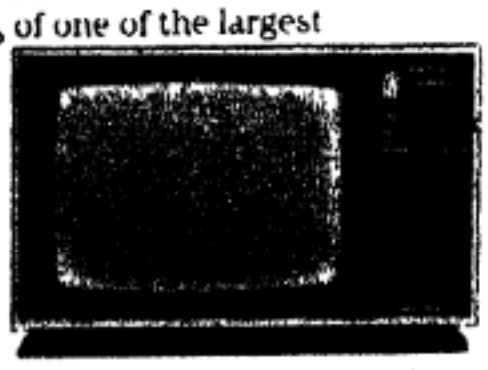
All 12 watts of it! And because the audio technology is also state-of-the-art, you get pure sound, even at peak output Why, you may even find yourself cheering with the crowds!

There's more to cheer about

An automatic sound muting system that cuts off the volume when there's no TV signal An automatic degaussing circuit automatic frequency control beam current limiter, line and frame synchronisation, current overload protection And one more reason to take home the new PHX Trendset

Complete after-sales service

You get the backing of one of the largest service networks in the country With an army of Philips trained technicians, virtually a phone call away, should you ever need them The new PHX Trendset **Take a closer look.**



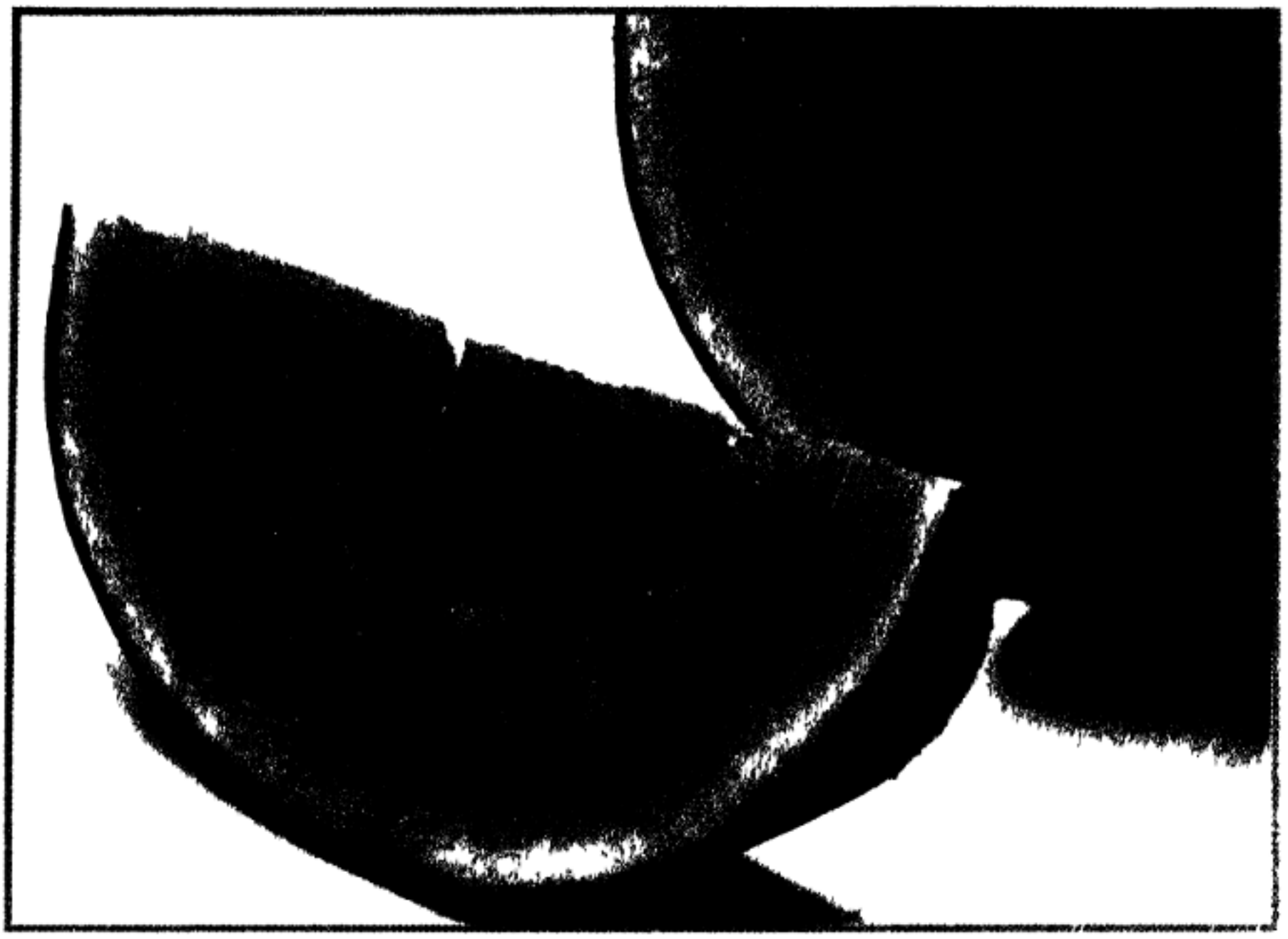
The PHX 20(' colour television is also available

From Peico Electronics and Electricals Limited

An affiliate of N.V. Philips, Holland – Official sponsors of the 1988 Olympics

OBM/2556

Colors to Bite into



Mouthwatering.
Delicious,
luscious, rich colors.
From Fujicolor —
Japan's No.1 color
film.

Finer grain.
Super sharpness.
Choice of speeds.
And true-to-life
colors.

Fujicolor — it
gives you an appetite
for more.



Totally true to life

FUJICOLOR
SUPER HR 100·200·400·1600

Sole Distributors

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING DEVI LAL

SUNDAY

THE SECRET STATE

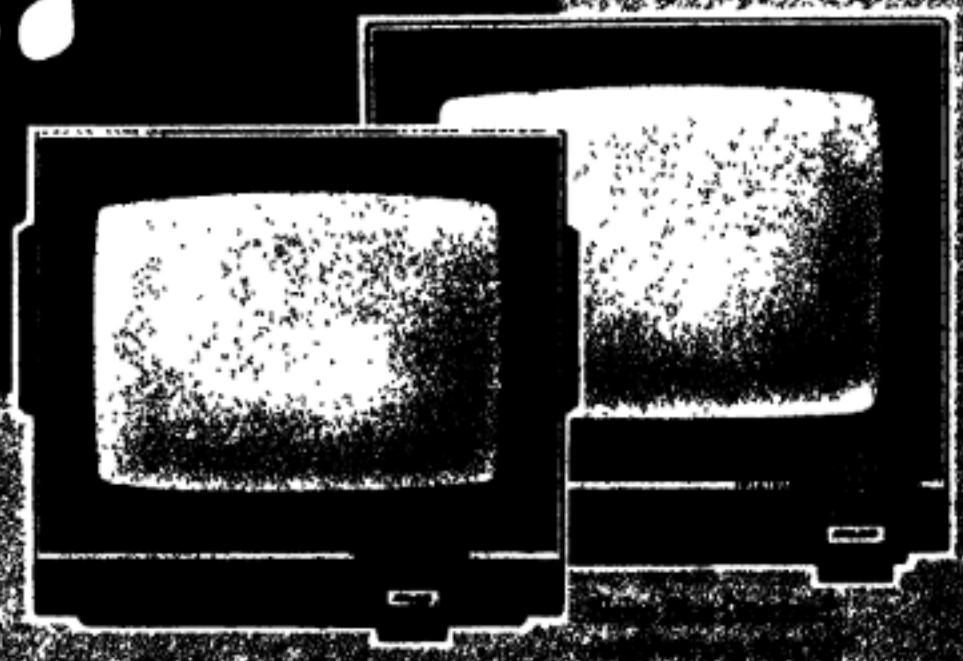


How good are India's intelligence agencies?

NELCO BLUE DIAMOND

It's been seen.
It's been compared.
It's been bought.

NOW, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR!



NELCO
BLUE DIAMOND

CONTENTS

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 43 RS 6.00

SUNDAY

AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

18—24 SEPTEMBER 1988

COVER STORY **35**

THE SECRET STATE

How good are India's intelligence services? An indepth report.

POLITICS **14**

A HEALTHY CAMPAIGN



With a view to wooing the voters, Jayalalitha is sending doctors to the rural areas to hold free medical camps. A report on this innovative campaign.

SUNDAY SPECIAL **20**

PORTRAIT OF A PEASANT AS POLITICIAN

Despite his long years in politics, Opposition leader Devi Lal remains a peasant at heart. A profile of the Jat leader.

MEDIA **27**

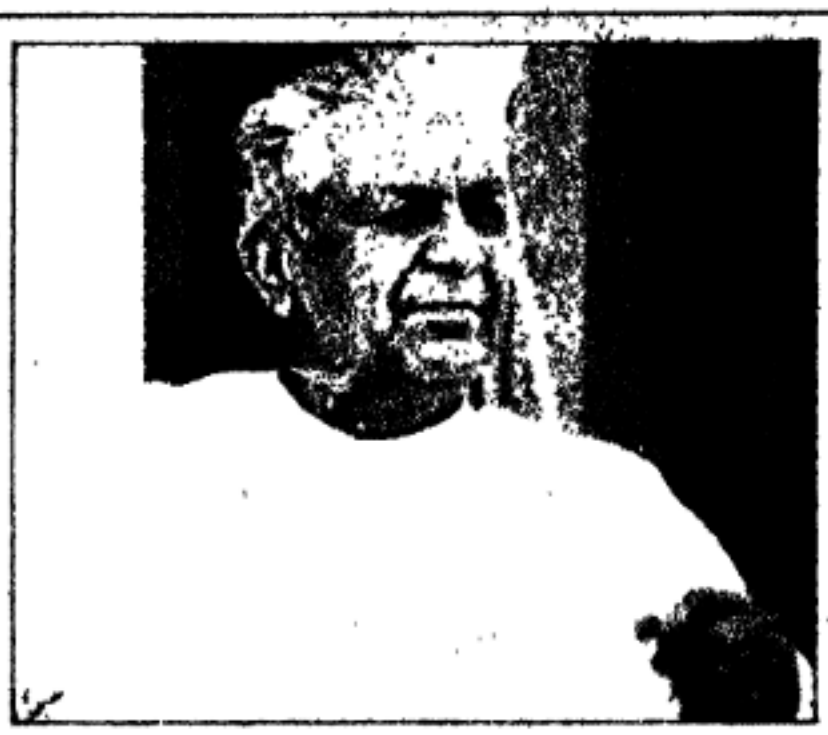
THE TAMING OF THE PRESS

Is the press in Orissa under pressure from the government? Is chief minister J.B. Patnaik trying to influence journalists? How true is the allegation that uncompromising newsmen are being harassed by the state administration? An investigation.

MUSIC **46**

DRIVEN TO TEARS

Bruce Springsteen, Peter Gabriel and Sting aim to move New Delhi audiences into acting for human rights.



Page 20



Page 62

COMMENT

Opinion 4
Byline M.J. Akbar 6
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 9
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 10
Sight and Sound 11
Business Diary 74

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Deccan Diary 105
Delhi Diary 106

Cover photograph: Priyaranjan Rakshit
Cover artwork: Sandip Bhattacharya

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bijit Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 8 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001

Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura 20 paise: North-Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup, Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nalbgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts of Assam 30 paise

ART **52**

COLOUR, FORM AND SMELL

On the trail of the lonesome Ganesh Pyne, one of the country's top painters.

NEWSWATCH **76**

PRODIGALS TO THE FORE

In order to counter the political offensive launched against the Congress(I), Rajiv Gandhi and the party high command are now relying on the old guard to ward off the threat.

INTERVIEW **82**

OF SATAN, ARCHANGELS AND PROPHETS

Renowned novelist Salman Rushdie speaks about his forthcoming book, *Satanic Verses*.

BOOK EXTRACT **92**

JAIPUR'S PRINCE CHARMING

In this extract from his book, *The Cat and the Lion*, Robert Stern describes the princely state of Jaipur during the British Raj.

NEWS **61**

BUSINESS **68**

PROFILE **98**

KEEPER OF THE JANATA PURSE

Jayant Malhoutra, the new treasurer of the Janata Party, strides the worlds of business and politics with equal ease.

Spotlight 88
Khaas Baat 90
Peanuts 91
Sundayweek 103
Odds and Trends 104



A new phase

Your cover story (*The hand of Allah*, 28 August—3 September) was superb. With the passing away of the late President,Pakistan has entered a new phase in its chequered political career. Zia's death will bring about significant changes in South Asia's politics. Although as a military dictator, Zia was not popular within and outside his country, he managed to carve out a niche for himself in the sphere of international diplomacy.

The interest of Pakistan was always foremost in his mind and in order to achieve his purpose, he never hesitated to put up a gesture of mock friendship to foreign countries, including India. He was basically a power hungry person, who did not hesitate to overthrow his benefactor to reach the top of the power ladder. And his falling a prey to a brilliantly executed plan only proves the adage that one who lives by the sword dies by the sword.

Amit Mukherjee, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ One can only be shocked at Zia's sudden death (*Pakistan without Zia*). In course of time, we will come to know who was behind it. As a man Zia knew how to exploit situations in his favour. As far as our country is concerned, the late Pakistani President played an ignominous role in the Punjab politics. Many of Punjab's misled youths crossed over to Pakistan for terrorist training and came back to launch a reign of terror at the behest of the foreign government. Our hopes now rest on the new President, Ishaq Khan who has a reputation for honesty.

Atindra Nath Misra, Durgapur (West Bengal)

■ The cover story was thought-provoking. General Zia, no doubt, made Pakistan militarily strong during his 11-year reign, but he proved to be a ruthless leader as far as his country was concerned. During his reign, Indo-Pak relations were at an all-time low. By providing assistance, including training, to the secessionist movement in Punjab and anti-national politics in Kashmir, Zia proved to be a foe rather than a friend of India.

Md Sabir Nishat, Guwahati (Assam)

■ The fact that Zia ruled Pakistan for 11 years during which no Indo-Pak war took place and his country witnessed stability does not indicate his greatness. Zia was very cunning and always deceived both his own people and our leaders. "Bhutto's butler" was the real enemy of India.

On the one hand, he played diplomatic tricks with India, and on the other, let his soil be used for training 'Khalistani' terrorists to destabilise India. Zia was a hidden enemy which made it difficult for India to tackle him.

Shahzad Hussain, New Delhi

Gen Zia-ul Haq: wily



Sipa Press

Why the howl?

The report on the honour conferred on the former Prime Minister Morarji Desai (*Rewarding a Friendship*, 28 August—3 September) made interesting reading. It is ridiculous on the part of Congress(I) MPs to ask Morarji Desai to refuse an award given to him for helping to promote good relations between the two countries. Buta Singh's statement that it is a "mean joke" is totally baseless. The Bharat Ratna presented by India to the Frontier Gandhi was accepted by the late leader, whereas we Indians indulge in controversies over such trivial issues.



Morarji Desai: unfair criticism

S. Satyamurti, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

■ By conferring the Nishan-e-Pakistan on Morarji Desai, the Pakistan government has bestowed an honour not only to the former PM, but also to the nation. A Prime Minister is a Prime Minister, regardless of the party to which he/she belongs. The Congress(I)'s criticism of the former PM is politically motivated. If Rajiv Gandhi or the late Indira Gandhi were to get the award, the same people would not hesitate to applaud.

S.C. Mathur, Agra (Uttar Pradesh)

Clarifying facts

Facts are the first casualty in Seema Mustafa's write-up (*Peace in the Morcha*, 14—20 August). The Prime Minister had never asked either Arif Mohammed Khan or Z. R. Ansari to speak on the controversial Shah Bano judgment in the Lok Sabha. Both of them had sought the permission of the Prime Minister to speak on Banatwalla's Private Bill seeking exemption of Muslims from Section 125 of IPC. After getting the permission of the Prime Minister both of them had expressed their personal views on Banatwalla's Bill and also on the Shah Bano judgement. Second, it has also been suppressed by the correspondent that on 25 July, 1985 22 Muslim Congress MPs under the leadership of Dr Najma Heptullah had met the Prime Minister and submitted a memorandum to him that the government should come out with a Bill containing all the rights granted to Muslim women by the Islamic Shariat and that the Muslim Women's Bill of 1986 was largely on these lines.

Dr M. Hashim Kidwai, MP, Rajya Sabha, New Delhi

Seema Mustafa replies: Dr M. Hashim Kidwai obviously does not have his facts in order. I did not go into the details about the exact nature of the Bill for reasons of space and also because for most persons Banatwalla's Private Bill assumed importance only after the Shah Bano judgment was delivered by the Supreme Court. And even Dr Kidwai cannot deny the fact.

that both the then ruling party ministers, Arif Mohammad Khan and Z.R. Ansari, spoke essentially on the judgment, the latter being called upon by the Prime Minister to contradict the former on the floor of the House. Arif Mohammad Khan had spoken on the Bill initially only after he was asked to by Rajiv Gandhi, and was not airing just his private views on the subject.

I have not suppressed any facts because what a group of Congress(I) MPs did or did not do was not the subject of my report which was essentially on the Jan Morcha. But, as Mr Kidwai has brought up the matter, I regret that he should take pride in the fact that the Congress(I) Muslims joined hands with the fundamentalists by actively helping to push Muslim women in this country further into the ghetto so carefully created for them.

A true General

The *Book Extract* (*Dangerous game*, 21—27 August) makes some misleading comments. Ravi



Gen Sundarji: fine soldier

Rikhye has made an extremely shallow and superficial assessment of General Sundarji's character by calling him ambitious and proud. I have had the privilege and honour of serving under General Sundarji and have seen him from close quarters. All I can say is that in my 28 years with the army, I have rarely come across a person who has been so compassionate and warm.

Lt Col (Retd) B. Singh, New Delhi

Not twins, are they?



Prafulla Mahanta (left) and Pritish Nandy: bearded resemblance

I can't help but comment on the astonishing similarity between Pritish Nandy, editor, *Illustrated Weekly of India* and Prafulla Mahanta, chief minister of Assam. Can two people look so similar and yet not be related to each other?

Ena B. Bhagat, New Delhi

Stop guzzling

A serious magazine like yours should not have published the report on why more and more Indians are resorting to drinking (*Cheers!* 14—20 August). On the contrary you should have condemned this unhealthy trend. Our government should take concrete steps to save the youth of today from living life in a drunken stupor.

Ritesh Misra, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

■ The statistics demonstrated how much the liquor business has prospered during the last five years or so as a result of the westernised culture. Your report hardly says anything about the ill-effects of drinking or the permissible limits of alcoholism. The liberal attitude of parents does not necessarily mean that children have been given a licence to follow this new culture. At present, as estimates show, 30 per cent of people's earnings is spent on this unhealthy habit. Morality apart, alcoholism stands in the way of domestic tranquility.

Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan (West Bengal)

Strange leaders

The value of the Opposition (*On the line*, 14—20 August) made me doubt the integrity of the writer. Is there really "a political, constitutional and moral necessity" for the Opposition to come to power? The Opposition is led by people like N.T. Rama Rao who uses the name of the Almighty for his personal gains, Ramakrishna Hegde who had made it a



Ashok Vahie

V.P. Singh (left) and Arun Nehru: self-seekers

habit to threaten to resign from office like a child, V.P. Singh, a morally corrupt man who can sell his country to get fame, and Arun Nehru who has put the Nehru name to shame.

Does the columnist really understand what democracy means? After all, Rajiv Gandhi has been elected by a democratic process and has every right to make his decisions. What is the meaning of a leader who does not have the final authority?

Amit Bagaria, Calcutta (West Bengal)

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager (U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta-700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

The law of the unintended consequence

Or, setting Devi Lal loose on Tamil Nadu

A couple of weeks ago, Maulvi Iftikhar, a Congress leader of Kashmir, created history of sorts by taking off the pyjamas of an opponent during a fierce and obviously angry factional debate in the presence of a party emissary from Delhi. History has been repeated. On Thursday, 8 September, Thampan Thomas, Janata MP and the man looking after the Tamil Nadu unit on behalf of the party high command, lost his *dhoti* in a scuffle with supporters of the local Janata strongman, Eza Sezhiyan. Are we seeing the beginning of a new age in Indian politics, an age of true honesty? You must have come across the Hindi phrase, "*Ek doosre ko nanga karna*". Is this now going to be literally done in the corridors of political power? If this is going to be the norm, then it might lead to a resurrection for a dress which is becoming an increasingly rare sight—the *churidaar-pyjama*. The loose pyjama can be dropped by a strong yank at the string, and the *dhoti* of course is

Devi Lal's views on Hindi are hardly a secret. He would happily impose it on every part of the country. How are Hindi stalwarts like Devi Lal going to find acceptance on a DMK-sponsored platform?



Devi Lal: Hindi chauvinist

vulnerable to even the mildest tug. But the *churidaar*, I can assure our politicians, will require far more effort before it leaves your skin. The *churidaar* could, therefore, become a beneficiary of a well-known law of politics: the law of unintended consequences. All you are trying to do is humiliate your opponent, but you end up improving the market for *churidaars*.

We are destined to see this iron law operate at a far more serious level once the politics of the National Front really gets underway in Tamil Nadu after the conclave and public meeting of this weekend. Sezhiyan, who resigned as the state Janata chief in anger against the party's alliance with the DMK in the National Front, was only giving an indication of what lies in store. Some of the constituents of the front can happily agree on everything in Delhi, but getting their state units to adjust to new realities is another matter. Local animosities are deep and bitter. Once again—as one has pointed out before in this column—it would be superficial to see the tensions within the Opposition front as only the consequences of the egos of leaders. This, apart from being unfair to them, is totally untrue. Each leader represents a certain political philosophy, and when his lifelong views are sought to be compromised or diluted in the name of unity, there is a natural outburst of resentment. Eza Sezhiyan has kept his party alive in the state on an anti-DMK diet. Why should he suddenly surrender all his positions because M. Karunanidhi has been handed the *subedari* of Tamil Nadu by the National Front?

Karunanidhi will, of course, be able to tackle Sezhiyan because the Janata is not too large a party in his state. But he needs to be a little more careful about some of the *lathi*-wielding heavyweights who are scheduled to descend on his state. So far, Karunanidhi seems to have got the Tamil Nadu bird in hand; he should be wary about losing this bird in hand in his search for two in the Delhi bush. The international hero of the National Front, Devi Lal, could trip him up on the most sensitive issue in Tamil Nadu: language. More particularly, Hindi.

Devi Lal's views on Hindi are hardly a secret. He would happily impose it on every part of the country, and do so in the complete belief that thereby he was saving the nation. Far from showing an intellectual tolerance of English, or accepting the need for the language as a bridge, Devi Lal even refuses to speak—or even hear—English. (The Congress-S leader, K.P. Unnikrishnan, discovered as much during one of the unity talks, when he was at the receiving end of Devi Lal's rude, irresponsible and irrepressible tongue.) How are Hindi stalwarts like Devi Lal going to find acceptance on a DMK-sponsored platform? The DMK, remember, is far more extreme than even MGR was on the Hindi issue, and MGR went a long way to keep Hindi out of Tamil Nadu. It is not as if Karunanidhi does not know that this problem exists. In any case, his party reminded him pretty strongly about it after he returned from unity deliberations in Delhi. It will be most interesting to watch what stand Devi Lal takes on Hindi during his visit to Tamil Nadu. His best option is, of course, to keep totally quiet on the subject but that, for Devi Lal, is easier said than done (the metaphor is most appropriately mixed). There will be other, equally serious, problems at the Madras meet. The biggest one will be the oldest one: should the BJP be present at the inaugural rally of the National Front or not? So far, silence has been the answer, but now the moment of decision has been reached. If the BJP comes, the Left will stay out—and that will have its own consequences. Moreover, the CPI(M) has committed itself to non-participation in any front which includes either the BJP or the Muslim League. But the Muslim League is a formal ally of Karunanidhi in Tamil Nadu. Problems, problems.....



M. Karunanidhi: strongly anti-Hindi

And all of policy and principle, not really of individual ego. There is no magic wand which will make these problems go away. The only way out is for the National Front to take a principled stand on the basic issues, and then exclude those who do not agree with this stand. The National Front cannot afford to be everything to everybody. ■

We are destined to see the iron law of unintended consequences operate at a far more serious level once the politics of the National Front really gets underway in Tamil Nadu...Eza Sezhiyan, who resigned as the state Janata chief in anger against the party's alliance with the DMK in the National Front, was only giving an indication of what lies in store. Local animosities are deep and bitter

Your dream about constructing or purchasing a new flat will soon become a reality... with LIC's BIMA NIWAS YOJANA.

Bima Niwas Yojana – a unique housing loan scheme.

- Exclusively for LIC's policyholders
- Loan amounts vary from 55% to 75% of flat value
- Maximum loan Rs 2,00,000/ (Rs 3,00,000/- in special cases)
- Scheme in operation at Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras
- Competitive interest rates
  - For loans up to Rs 50 000/ 12% p a
  - For loans above Rs 50,000/ and up to Rs 1,00,000/ 13% p.a.
  - For loans above Rs 1,00,000/ and up to Rs 2,00,000/ 14% p a
  - For loans above Rs 2,00,000/ and up to Rs 3 00,000/ 15% p a
- Long repayment period – up to 20 years

Life Insurance Corporation of India



NOW!

LIC's Housing Finance facility extended to cover flats, too.



R K SWAMY/LIC/3841 E

For further details contact

• **Bombay**: Bima Niwas Yojana Unit L I C of India, Jeevan Vihar, 5th floor, Apollo Street, Bombay 400 023 Phones 2861517, 2861518, 2861575 • **Calcutta**: Bima Niwas Yojana Unit L I C of India, Jeevan Prakash, 16, Chittaranjan Avenue, Calcutta 700 072 • **Delhi**: Bima Niwas Yojana Unit L I C of India Lakshmi Insurance Building, Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi 110 002 • **Madras**: Bima Niwas Yojana Unit, L.I.C of India, South India Co op Building, Anna Salai, Madras 600 002

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Radhakrishnan—the man



I spent the summer of 1940, the first after returning home from college in England, reading and re-reading Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan's two volumes of Hindu philosophy and his commentary on the *Bhagwad Gita*. I am in the bad habit of marking books and making notes in their margins. Dr Radhakrishnan's books are more heavily marked than any others in my library. I was deeply impressed by his learning and his command over the English language. It was seven years later that I met him in India House in London. I had to restrain myself from touching his feet. As far as Oriental learning was concerned, I looked upon him as my guru.

After meeting him I read all the other books written by him. I did not have the audacity to discuss them with him. I soon discovered that he preferred flattery to candid appraisal. My friend P.N. Kirpal who first introduced me to him but had read nothing by him described him as the world's greatest living philosopher. Not having read any other philosophers I nevertheless agreed but protested, "Sir, he has not read any of your books." Kirpal was honest enough to admit that this was true but that did not change his opinion of Dr Radhakrishnan's pre-eminence among contemporary philosophers. Kirpal came much closer to him than I and owed his elevation to the secretaryship of the ministry of education, head of UNESCO's cultural department and then chairmanship of its executive board to the benign patronage of Dr Radhakrishnan.

I kept in touch with Dr Radhakrishnan when he was our ambassador in Moscow and later when he became Vice-President of India. I was attached to him as his press officer when he led Indian delegations to UNESCO's conferences in Paris, Florence and Montevideo (Uruguay). Mine was a very cushy job. He was much the best orator at these conferences. It did not matter very much what he said because whatever it was, he said it beautifully. Once he was scheduled to speak on China's admission to UNESCO. His speech was on the importance of solitude in cultivating human personality. It did not enhance Chinese prospects of admission but it was a soul-uplifting performance. I saw him practically every evening as it was my job to arrange interviews for people who wanted to meet him. Some evenings we were able to persuade him to come to see the sights and join us for dinner. He was a very frugal eater, as mean of appetite as he was with his money. Much as we tried, we never succeeded in making him pay for our meals.

I saw quite a lot of him in Delhi when he was Vice-President. He was very accessible. He was particularly interested in affairs of UNESCO and the Sahitya Akademi. I was able to persuade him to write the preface to the UNESCO anthology, *Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*.

I lost contact with him when he moved to Rashtrapati Bhavan. I felt no one should impose himself on the President except on business. Then there was a slight misunderstanding which snapped our tenuous relationship. Unknown to me the publishers of the *Sacred Writings of the Sikhs* had put my name at the head of the list of translators. A mischievous member of the panel complained to Krishna Kripalani, secretary of the Sahitya Akademi, and through him, to the President. I was summoned and roundly ticked off. Although the publishers (Allen and Unwin) wrote to him to say that I had nothing to do with the order in which translators were listed and Kripalani wrote to me apologising for having been a carrier of false information, Dr Radhakrishnan never bothered to make amends. I got routine invitations to tea on Republic and Independence days. I never again entered Rashtrapati Bhavan during his tenure as President.

Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan



There was another aspect of his character which disturbed me. Although he struck a high moral tone in his public speeches, he was not averse to spreading gossip, belittling other philosophers and showing undue favours to his cronies. When Vice-President, he told stories of Babu Rajendra Prasad's attachment to his Hindi stenographer, Gyanwati Darbar. He told me of an Indian philosopher delivering a lecture with lantern slides showing inscriptions in some dead language which he had decoded. A member of the audience pointed out that the slide was being shown upside down. As member of the Sahitya Akademi's award giving committee I had once reported against an author who had approached me for the prize. Dr Radhakrishnan sent for him, gave him a piece of his mind and had him debarred from consideration forever. But a year later I complained against a lady whose husband was comptroller of his household of having approached me; instead of having her debarred, he went out of his way to see that she got the Sahitya Akademi Award.

I had always regarded Dr Radhakrishnan as a philosopher of the Nobel Prize timber. My esteem was not shared by Dr Zaehner who succeeded him as Spalding Professor at Oxford nor by American Indologists. They saw him as an interpreter of Hindu philosophy, not a creative thinker.

I last saw him in Madras a year before he died. He was in frail health; an eye-operation had gone wrong and he was unable to read or write. He greeted me with effusive warmth as if to make up for years lost in trivial misunderstandings. For over an hour he talked of past meetings with my wife, daughter and I. When we asked permission to leave, he got up from his bed and ran his feet across the floor for his sandals. His son, Dr Gopal, put them on his feet. He insisted on walking up to the car to see us off. I sensed this would be the last time I would see him. It was.

Dr Radhakrishnan remains for me the greatest interpreter of Hinduism that India has produced since Adi Sankara. Also, one of the greatest orators I have heard. He had some human weaknesses but was nevertheless a great and a good man. ■



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

Cashing in on disasters

What may be termed "disaster politics" is coming to the fore as the elections approach. The Congress(I) and the Opposition parties are vying with each other to get into the headlines as being the "true saviours" of the distressed, and there are statements galore by leaders proclaiming how their hearts bleed for the victims of disasters.

The Bihar earthquake is a recent example. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on the one hand, and Haryana chief minister Devi Lal and N.T. Rama Rao, chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, on the other, flew in their special planes to "see the disaster" for themselves. What Rajiv Gandhi saw and said and what Devi Lal and NTR saw and said were different. They were bound to be. For they are politicians, with politics colouring their vision.

This is not to say that political leaders should not go to meet victims of a disaster. What I object to is their readiness to make political capital out of it. All of them announced lakhs of rupees for relief work. The setting up of a disaster management unit at the Centre seems to have inspired every party to set up a disaster exploitation unit.

Rajiv Gandhi never had the time or the inclination to visit Meerut, hardly 50 km from Delhi, when it was in the throes of a communal riot that took a heavy toll of life and property. This time he was so prompt in "rushing"—in the words of his own PR men—to Bihar, that his motive cannot but be suspect. It is hard to forget the extravagant holiday he chose to have when the country was reeling under the worst kind of drought.

Mrs Indira Gandhi had "greater finesse". She did not live lavishly which would have made a mockery of her oft-proclaimed concern for the poor. She exuded an air of sincerity—a great quality for a politician. Even when she was in the wilderness after her defeat at the polls in 1977, she rode an elephant to Belchi to inquire about the victims of a carnage there. It was a lesson for the Janata leaders, who were reluctant to get their feet wet trying to reach Belchi. A lesson now learnt by the Devi Lals, Rama Raos, Rajiv Gandhi and lesser men.

Take the Congress(I) agitation for supply of more water to Rayalaseema in Andhra Pradesh. Rayalaseema does need more water. But before NTR, successive Congress governments had failed to recognise this. Now the Congress(I) wants to take advantage of a situation for which it is as responsible as the present government. And the Centre is backing the agitation.

J. Vengala Rao, Union minister from Andhra Pradesh, visited the fasting MLAs twice in two days and expressed support for their cause. Another Union minister, Ram Niwas Mirdha, met them once and expressed sympathy. To highlight the drought Doordarshan showed pictures of people migrating from the area. But Delhi is equally to blame for not having cleared some of the Andhra Pradesh projects, especially the Telugu Ganga project meant for the Rayalaseema region. NTR even sent his MLAs to Delhi to demonstrate along with the Opposition for early sanction of state projects.

In West Bengal, the ruling Left government and the Congress(I) recently clashed while holding simultaneous demonstrations. The leftists called it *rail roko* and the Congress(I), *rasta roko*. The Marxists protested against the Rajiv Gandhi government's "failures" while the Congress(I) demonstrated against the state government's "failures". Both pointed out to the people how the other party had indulged in "violence and hooliganism".

Jammu and Kashmir is worse. At the drop of a hat, supporters of the Opposition, whether of the Muslim United Front (MUF) or of Mirwaz Farooq and the ruling party, National Conference, take to the streets to pick up the thread from where they had left it at the last noting. The real purpose is political but both sides pretend that they are fighting for "the people's cause".

There are likely to be more clashes to serve "the people's interest" all over the country because parties and individuals, with an eye on the next elections, may find this an easier and quicker way to win popularity. The stakes for the Congress(I) are the highest, because it faces the threat of losing power at the Centre.

While all the parties are looking for populist causes, the central government is contemplating populist measures, though this may endanger the country's economic future. As much as Rs 4,000 crores is being earmarked for the anti-poverty programme for the next one year, thus diverting much of the funds from other plan projects.

India is already spending far more under non-productive heads like government servants' salaries and security than on productive fields like agriculture and industry. This has led to inflation. And when Rs 4,000 crores to Rs 5,000 crores is proposed to be pumped in, it is bound to worsen the situation.

If things like disasters could be kept above politics, more could be done for the suffering people. But no political party or leader of the present brand is above the temptation of using a tragedy to serve their political ends—even murders have ceased to be just murders. They too have become opportunities for political confrontation.

And since the media tend to jump into the fray, it is difficult to say where innocence ends and guilt begins. Politics seems to be too pervading, too opportunistic. When even reactions to disasters are tainted, it is time for the public to say: we have had enough of this brand of politics and politicians.

Rajiv Gandhi with a Bihar earthquake victim





"

The (Defamation) Bill is not yet dead, far from it. At best you can describe its condition as that of a comatose patient.

UNION HOME MINISTRY OFFICIAL QUOTED IN *The Indian Post*

The press in India needs to be safeguarded but perhaps, most of all, from a new deviant element of itself.

S.D. SHARMA, *Vice-President*

Many of us in the Congress(I) are agitated over the manner in which the Bill was drafted, introduced and later, discussed and passed in the Lok Sabha. We are more agitated about the content of this Bill.

[illegible] GOWDA, *Congress(I) MP*

[illegible] I read reports of the (Defama- [illegible] in the newspapers I was [illegible] statement — 'I [illegible] press. It's just newspap- [illegible]

The truth has been nationalised.

MADHU DANDAVATE, *Janata MP*

The Congress has stood firm for a 100 years. But the Opposition is talking about 100-day unity plans... We don't even know if they have any unity yet.

RAJIV GANDHI, *Prime Minister*

It is a flagrant violation of the Constitution. The Centre has imposed President's Rule even before the Speaker could formally announce his verdict on the status of the eight MLAs who had defected from the party.

LALDENGA, *former chief minister of Mizoram*

There's no point getting maudlin about some issues. You only destroy their delicate tragedy.

MIRA NAIR, *director of the award-winning film, Salaam Bombay*

Hegde has paid the price for his folly.

AJIT SINGH, *Janata Party president*

He (Subramaniam Swamy) serves whoever feeds him.

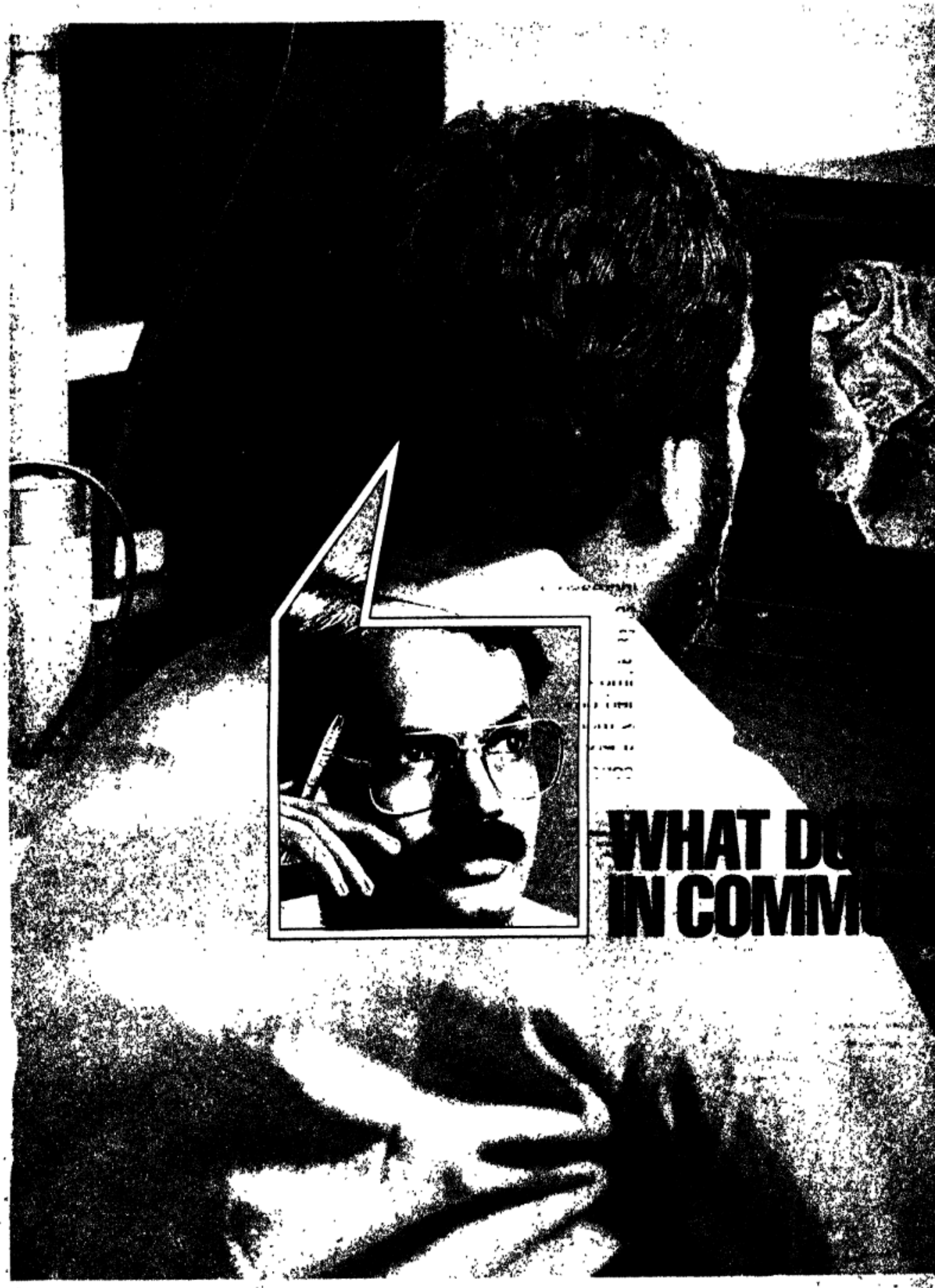
RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE, *former Karnataka chief minister*

He (K.P.S. Gill) may have annoyed or upset a lady IAS officer, but mind you, one would expect that this senior lady official would realise that her personal (I think) minor upset is much less important than the problem of Punjab and its police services.

MARK TULLY, *BBC BUREAU chief in Delhi*

Since the Supreme Court has directed us not to initiate any proceedings even if it is a breach of the Sati Prevention Act, we do not contemplate taking any action for the present.

GANAPATI RAI MATHUR, *SP, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan*


WHAT DO
IN COMM



THE SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPE.

The ultra sophisticated instrument that reveals structures at the molecular level. Whether they are viruses or carbide structures.

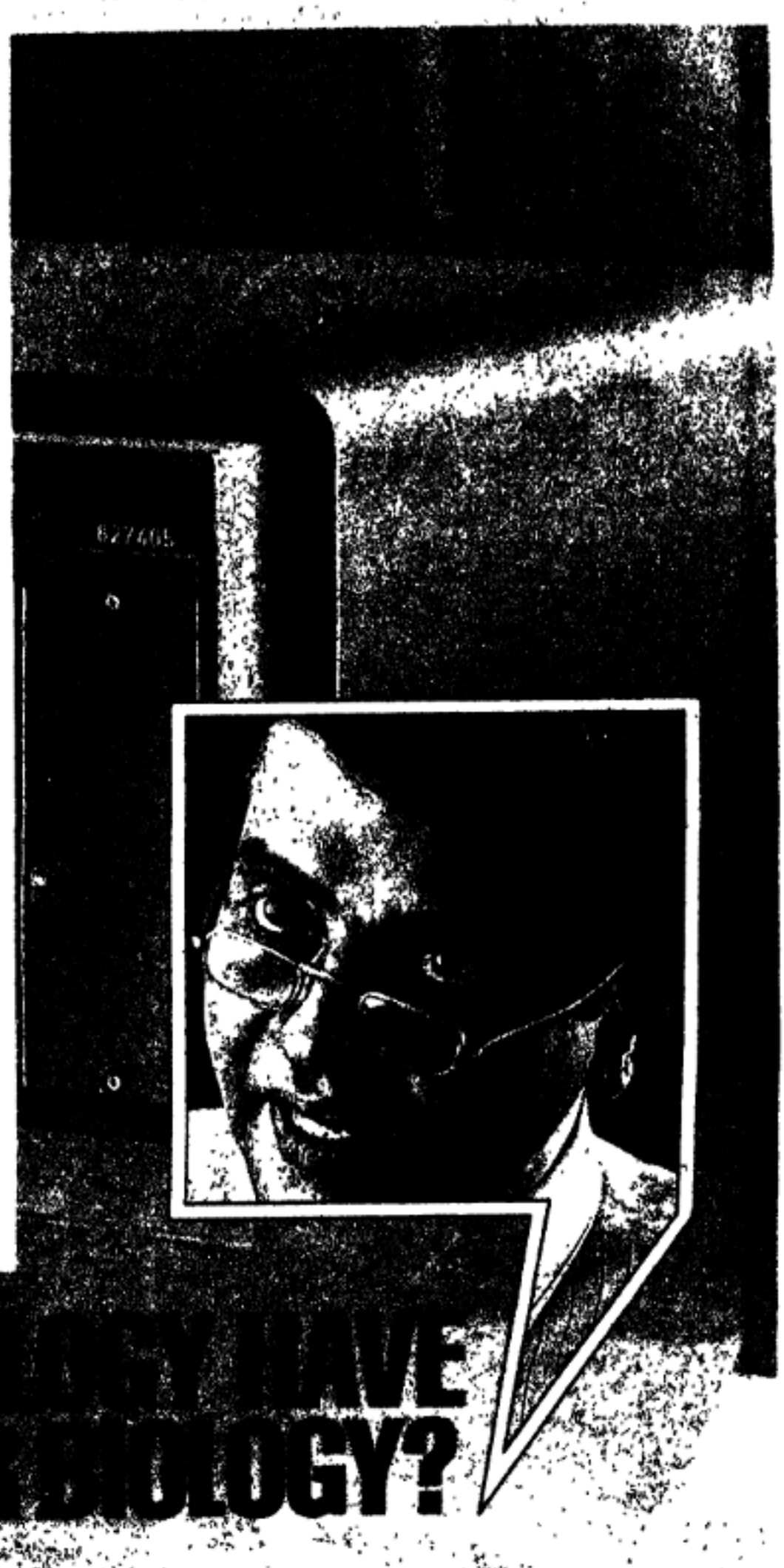
At Sandvik, we know that the fundamental working principles of our metal cutting, rock drilling or metal forming tools have their basis in what happens at the molecular level.

Just a few atom layers thick titanium carbide can make an enormous difference to the wear resistance of our cutting tools.

A controlled binder phase can substantially increase rock drilling performance.

Micronic accuracies of surface finish in our wear parts can considerably improve the quality of the formed product.

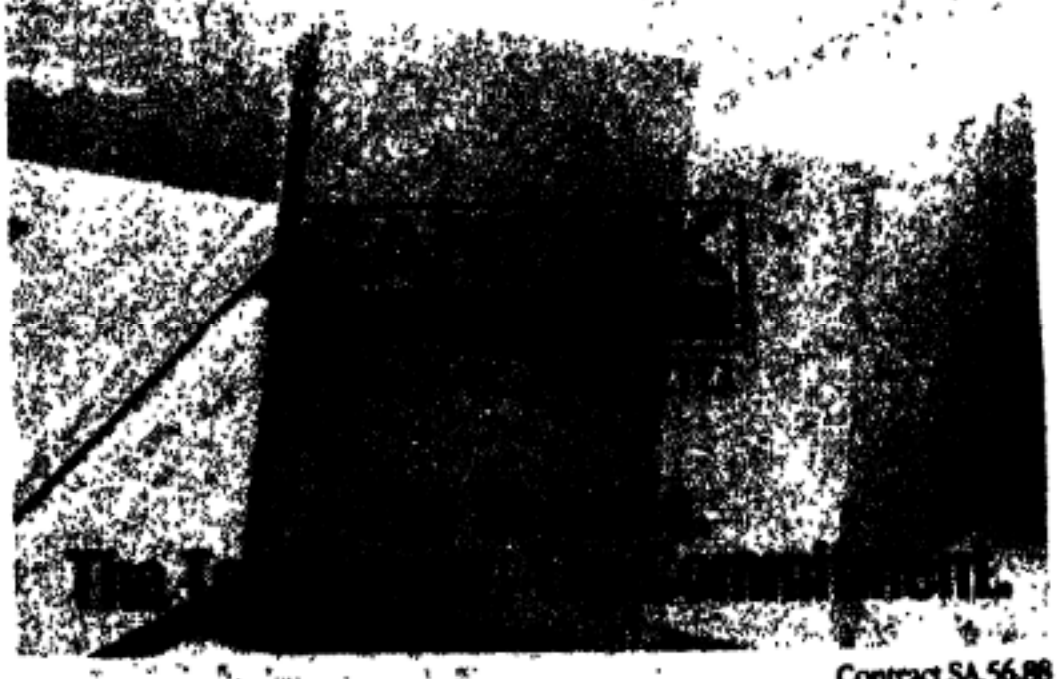
But our R&D is much more than microlevel. At Poona, we recover precious cobalt from



...AVE ...OLOGY?

spent carbide and other secondary sources. We make products that save considerable foreign exchange. Entering new areas of technology. We are looking deep and finding answers.

That's right, this is applied science working at the frontier level. That's the level we're comfortable with at Sandvik Asia.



Contract SA 56.88



A healthy campaign

If you want votes, give them free medical help. That seems to be the message behind Jayalalitha's innovative move to send free medical teams to rural areas of Tamil Nadu

The little elephant stood in the hot sun stamping its legs impatiently The wait was rather long for the hungry, irritable elephant in the little town of Pallipalayam, about 60 km from Salem

The elephant was waiting for the doctors who, it had been widely publicised in the locality, would visit the town that morning (4 September), for a day-long free medical camp organised for the poor Most of the would-be beneficiaries were brought by the organisers from the neighbouring villages, because Pallipalayam is well-known as a wealthy weavers' town

The free medical camp belonged to the Jayalalitha faction of the AIADMK and was part of their one-month-long, statewide programme to treat the poor "without any desire to take political advantage from the service". When the ambulance and two vans comprising the mobile unit with ten doctors and some paramedical staff were flagged off by the fiery AIADMK general secretary, Ms Jayalalitha, at the party headquarters in Madras on 12 August, it was declared that the noble mission would perform its task with religious sincerity

"We are not like the Congress(I)," the lady had thundered amidst cheers "The Congress party too, has a free medical unit of sorts," she said "Only rich doctors with an eye on publicity and political advantage serve on that unit. And they get crores of rupees in boxes from the party coffers We may not have such big funds but we have a genuine interest in alleviating the sufferings of the poor"

The rhetoric naturally attracted strong reactions from the Congress(I), especially its medical unit convenor Dr K Chockalingam —who claimed he was Jayalalitha's personal physician for sometime He issued a statement to the effect that Jayalalitha's state of mind was in doubt Pointing out that the Congress party's medical unit had been functioning for several years now, he said. "It is indeed a joke for Ms Jayalalitha to have said that her party's medical cell alone is rendering service and all others are rendering service only for personal or pecuniary gains It shows the utter degradation of a leader of a party when she comments in this manner"

Having launched her medical cell in such a controversy, Ms Jayalalitha promised to release from party funds all expenses for cardiac and kidney operations required for poor patients, in keeping with the late leader MGR's desire of providing free medical aid to the needy. "We must strive to realise his dreams," she had declared at the inaugural function.

The elephant at Pallipalayam, having performed his duty of welcoming the doctors, was sent packing to his stable. The hundreds of waiting patients then flocked to the school building where the free medical camp was scheduled to be held Each classroom had been converted into a 'speciality' out-patient unit. There were rooms—for dental, surgical, medical and opthalmological department—and each was manned by a qualified doctor and his team of assistants

"This is the first time since the unit was launched about a month ago by Madam (Jayalalitha), that we have had various specialists brought in for providing thorough medical benefits to the rural poor," claimed 'Salem' Kannan He

The doctors' procession with an elephant leading the way: an eye for the votes



Doctors busy at work: curing the sick for an Assembly ticket

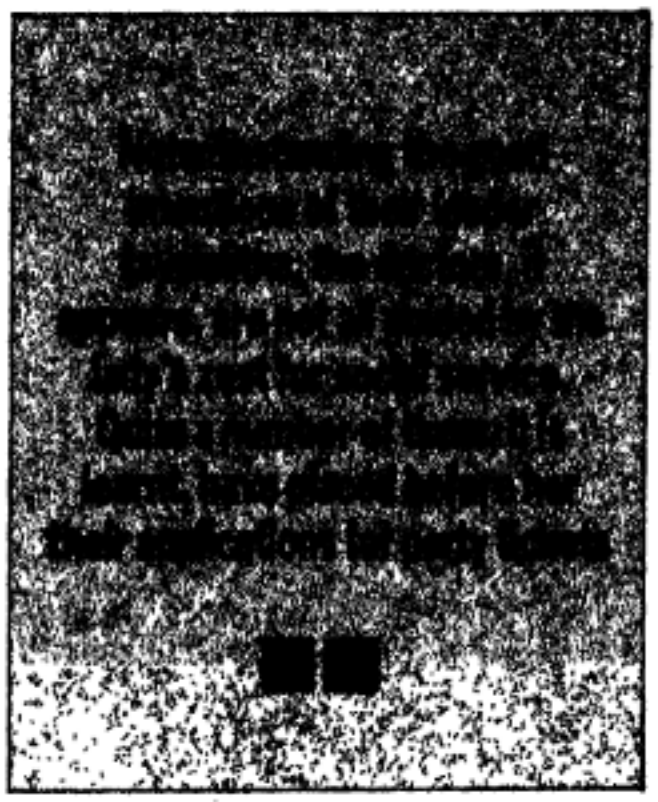


H Bhagwan Singh

formally inaugurated the Pallipalayam camp after making a short speech enumerating the good work done by Jayalalitha for the poor.

Notwithstanding the good intentions of their leader, the doctors, it appears, are not all guided by the lady's zest for social service. Quite a number of them, it is learnt, have placed before her their applications for party tickets. "We are bringing in medicines from our own stocks and we are also procuring some from the market. The party headquarters is not footing any of these bills and as for the expenses for likely heart and kidney surgeries, I really do not know if there is that kind of money available with her (Jayalalitha)," confessed a doctor in the unit, when he was asked about the finances. As long as he got his ticket to contest the Assembly polls, he was not concerned about the time and money he was now spending for the camp.

Apart from the elephant which made a dramatic impact on the affair, there were songs on the loud-speakers and bright posters welcoming the doctors. But for the drawn faces of the patients assembled in that school building, tired and in pain, the whole scene appeared festive, like any other shot from an old MGR movie.



There was the 47-year-old K. Nagappan, a staunch Congressman, who boasted about the fact that Mahatma Gandhi had visited his ancestral home. He would have normally voted for the Congress(I), but now that the doctors of Jayalalitha have come forward to help him set his crippled hand right, he had no hesitation whatsoever in giving his vote to the good lady. Seerangayi, a 40-year-old farm labourer, had come to the camp with an eye ailment. She had brought her husband too, because Palani had been complaining of chest pains. They had been waiting at the premises for over four hours but they looked happy after the doctors arrived. "We have been voting for MGR all along," Palani said. "And now he is dead. We do not know for whom we will vote this time; maybe for Jayalalitha." Fence-sitters, like the couple, often return home convinced that the lady would be their hope for the future.

"We do not tell these patients that they should vote for Jayalalitha's party," the unit's secretary, Dr T.A. Pandian, insisted. However, he said the doctors would address a public meeting in the evening after the camp concluded and there the speakers would make no secret of their motives behind the lady's noble deed. And, after a pause, he revealed in all innocence that he had asked Madam for the Assembly ticket for the Sathankulam constituency in Chidambaranar district. He had hopes of getting it.

Devoid of adequate funds to keep up the pace of hectic campaigning after MGR's death, Jayalalitha could have devised inexpensive methods, such as the medical unit, to carry home her political message to the rural electorate. While the doctors offered their services in return for a possible ticket in the elections, the sick who thronged to such camps did not mind being told by the organisers—as well as the doctors—that it would be a good idea to vote for the lady. They would then get medical facilities, besides being recipients of the all-important nutritious noon-day meal programme that MGR had launched during his tenure as chief minister.

"You will find the doctor with a stethoscope on a patient's chest as though he is listening intently to the heart beat," one senior party functionary narrated, a broad smile on his face. "And suddenly the doctor turns to the sick man and asks who he will vote for if the elections are held tomorrow? And to preserve the message of the camp, the patient is given a treatment-card that has Jayalalitha's picture prominently printed on it." The patient is told to keep the card carefully, for any follow-up therapy later.

It might be unreasonable to question the ethics involved in the conduct of these doctors, for, they have openly admitted they are but a bit of a political party. Whoever advised her to launch the medical unit did a great service to Jayalalitha in that it became possible for her to generate an almost free publicity campaign statewide. All this, of course, is at a great cost. Said a senior Jayalalitha functionary: "We are clearly in the red as far as finances are concerned. The Congress(I) has ensured, through its official agencies in the government, that the few wealthy people who were inclined to help Jayalalitha were quickly and sternly told to keep off." At a very modest estimate of Rs three lakhs per contest and assuming she would field candidates in 150 (out of 234) constituencies—because chances of an alliance with the Congress(I) are bleak at the moment—her poll budget would be upwards of whopping Rs 4.50 crores.

"We do not have even 10 per cent of that kind of money," the party functionary confided. In such a situation, the medical camps functioning in their own silent manner become vitally important to the lady. While the Congress(I) chief Rajiv Gandhi is whizzing around Tamil Nadu in planes, helicopters and car-caravans, Ms Jayalalitha is silently circulating her little visiting card in the countryside, courtesy her doctors. And they have promised her they would complete touring the state by 12 September, exactly a month after the launch of the "mission".

R. Bhagwan Singh/Madras

Jayalalitha: smart move





Standing up for freedom

The war between the media and the Government over the Defamation Bill continues with both sides refusing to bow down

Rajiv Gandhi's statements last week reminded one of Ruth, a character in one of Tom Stoppard's plays, who had quipped "I am with you on the free press It's the newspapers I can't stand," on being told that no matter how imperfect things are, if one has got a free press everything is correctable, and without it everything is conceivable

At the golden jubilee of the *National Herald* incidentally the only newspaper in Delhi not to respond to the strike call on 6 September, in protest against the Defamation Bill, Rajiv Gandhi held forth on the "government's faith in the free press", every once in a while punctuating it with observations on "serious allegations of moral misconduct against people in high public position" Rajiv Gandhi's case was that under the existing law, the judicial process took an inordinately long time and "in the meantime, the moral authority of the person suffered, damaging public interest". The Prime Minister ended his speech with yet another reaffirmation of his "undying faith in the freedom of the press" and an offer to the fourth estate to "open a dialogue without any conditions"

Since 29 August, the day the infamous Defamation Bill was hustled through in the Lok Sabha, pressmen have been asking the Prime Minister and Government representatives to give specific examples—even one concrete example—of what Rajiv Gandhi considers serious allegation of moral misconduct against persons in high public position which was undermining the concerned individual's 'moral authority' which in turn was damaging public interest. But ten days later, none of the votaries of the Bill, have been able to come up with even one specific instance to justify the case for the Bill The only time the Government came somewhat close to specifics was when P Chidambaram (who piloted the Bill in the Lok Sabha) was pointedly asked by the Opposition whether Ms Chitra Subramanyam (by now a household name because of her investigative stories on Bofors for *The Hindu)* would attract the provisions of the Bill because of her exposes, and the minister was forced to nod in the negative. That was the solitary example. Chidambaram had adroitly dodged the question even when Somnath Chatterjee had pinned him down on specific examples in Parliament

As the week drew to a close, the war between the press and the government continued The former obstinately stuck to its position that the Bill was 'needed', that it was 'timely' but nevertheless in view of the widespread criticism, the government was agreeable about initiating a 'dialogue', with no pre-conditions. "We are ready to listen to those who will talk to us We are ready to talk to those who will listen to us," said the Prime Minister at the golden jubilee celebrations of the *National Herald.* Mediamen who have come together on the issue have stuck to their guns. "No dialogue without withdrawal of the Bill," H.K. Dua, editor of *Hindustan Times,* generally perceived as a pro-establishment daily echoed the feelings of many editors. Asked for his comments on the overtures by the government to influential editors, Dua observed unambiguously that "there is absolutely no change in the position of the Editors' Guild of India. Our stand is that there should be no dialogue with the Government, till the Bill is withdrawn *in toto.* And we are sticking to it".

Fortunately for the press, others have started taking up cudgels on its behalf. Dissent within the Congress party on the Government's stand regarding the Bill has been gaining momentum and more and more MPs are coming out in the open to express their feelings. On 7 September the West Bengal Assembly witnessed the curious



The demonstration by pressmen in Delhi: united stand

The only time the government came somewhat close to specifics was when P. Chidambaram was pointedly asked by the Opposition whether Chitra Subramanyam would attract the provisions of the Bill because of her exposes in the *Hindu*



The *Hindu*'s revelations: under attack

spectacle of near unanimity between the ruling CPI(M) and the Opposition Congress(I) members. Saugata Roy and Satya Bapuli, two Congress Legislators, surprised the House when they said that freedom of the press was the essence of democracy and that the press had rightly protested against the Defamation Bill curbing its freedom. Roy congratulated his "journalist friends" for their revolutionary role in regard to the Bill.

The same day, H.N. Nanje Gowda, a Congress(I) MP from Hasan, Karnataka, held a press conference in New Delhi, to dub the Defamation Bill as 'Legislative terrorism'. Nanje Gowda said that it was a matter of shame that after 41 years of independence, the press in India had to grapple with a piece of legislation which even the British had not dared to propose. Nanje Gowda, once a minister in the Devaraj Urs Cabinet, did not mince his words when he said: "The Bill does not help the public. It helps only a handful of persons who want to hide their deeds from the public. Only 70 out of 70 crore people stand to benefit from it. Only unscrupulous politicians and businessmen need the protection of such a law..." Nanje Gowda said that as a Congressman he was convinced that the party leadership had been "misled" by interested parties in this case and that the Bill had caused greater damage to the party than all the scandals put together. Later, when asked by Shiela Dixit, the minister of

H.K.L. Bhagat: foxed this time



Students in Calcutta demonstrate against the Bill: nationwide discontent

state for parliamentary affairs and a close aide of the PM, why he had given vent to his feelings in public instead of expressing them before the Prime Minister or the seven-member ministerial committee assigned to look into the merits and demerits of the Bill, a piqued Nanje Gowda reportedly shot back, "Last time I wanted to meet the PM, I was asked to stand in the queue. Isn't that humiliation..."

The press has found friends among the lawyers. The executive committee of the Delhi High Court Bar Association has called for a one-day boycott of the courts on 12 September to demand withdrawal of the Defamation Bill. The lawyers of the Punjab and Haryana High Court and lower courts observed a one-day strike on 7 September in protest against the Defamation Bill. Representatives of various trade unions in the capital including the state-owned DTC (Delhi Transport Corporation), CPWD (Central Public Works Department), DDA (Delhi Development Authority) and others have condemned the Bill as one which will not only muzzle press freedom but would also "suppress a common man's fundamental civil right of free expression".

In a spontaneous move students in Coimbatore launched a campaign and collected 2,000-odd signatures of people belonging to different walks of life in and around the industrial town protesting against the Defamation Bill and asking for its withdrawal.

P. Chidambaram: dodging the issue

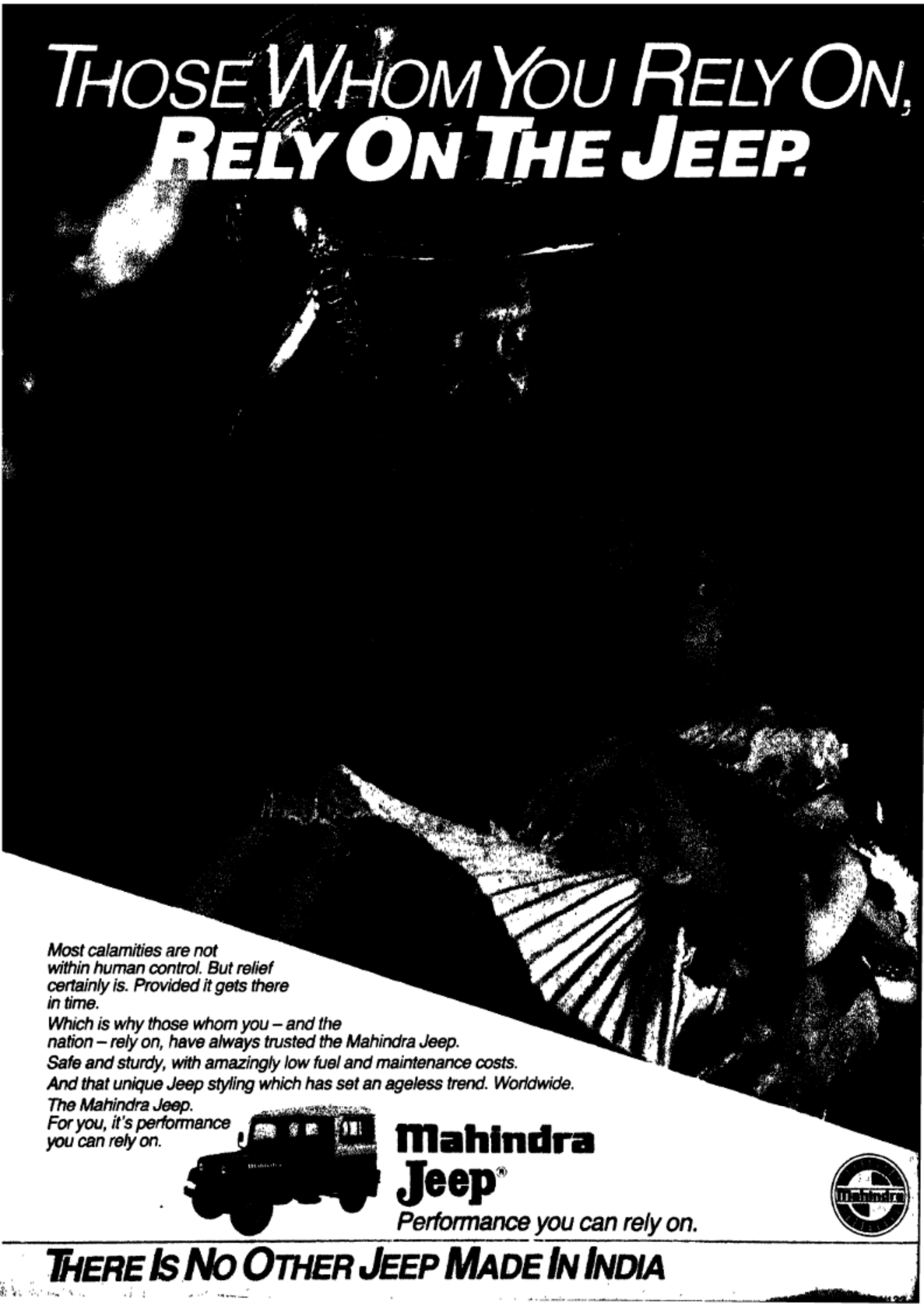


In Delhi, H.K.L. Bhagat, the hapless convenor of the seven-member ministerial commitee asked to initiate a dialogue with the press, has been having a tough time. The day after the nationwide strike by newsmen in protest against the Bill, Bhagat had called a press conference. It was to be one of the routine sessions to explain the highlights of the just-concluded monsoon session of Parliament (Bhagat is the minister for parliamentary affairs apart from holding charge of I and B). Predictably, the issue of the Defamation Bill came up. A large number of mediamen present demanded that Bhagat give a categorical assurance that the Bill would be withdrawn. Bhagat, inspite of his considerable public relations skills, failed to calm the pressmen by saying that they should put their cases before the committee of ministers. Many of the scribes walked out in a huff not convinced by the reply. In Pune, V. N. Gadgil, the newly-appointed AICC(I) general secretary, met a similar fate in his encounters with the press.

Thus the press has stood united. Hardly anyone among the senior journalists, has responded to the government's call for a dialogue even though there are many who believe that the government is on the retreat and is desperately looking for an honourable way out. But indications are there that the government is bent on creating cracks within the media in a bid to diffuse the crisis. The Prime Minister himself in the recently concluded AICC(I)-sponsored workshop on "Party Building" in the capital outlined the strategy in the days to come. P. Shiv Shankar, widely believed to be one of the architects of the Bill, has been asked to prepare a document enumerating clause by clause the 'merits' of the Bill. This document, in turn, would be distributed to party workers at the block level whose job it would be to go out and defend the government's point of view. The aim is to alienate the press from the public. Apart from this, other legal experts in the party have been asked to launch a counter-campaign against the media. As if this is not enough there is talk of winning over a section of mediamen to the demand for addition of the vexed Bachawat Award to the withdrawal of the Defamation Bill. Through this it is hoped that proprietors-publishers would be alienated from the rank and file of mediamen. But luckily for the press, it has resisted all temptations so far.

Patraleikha Chatterjee/New Delhi

THOSE WHOM YOU RELY ON, **RELY ON THE JEEP.**



Most calamities are not within human control. But relief certainly is. Provided it gets there in time.

Which is why those whom you – and the nation – rely on, have always trusted the Mahindra Jeep.

Safe and sturdy, with amazingly low fuel and maintenance costs.

And that unique Jeep styling which has set an ageless trend. Worldwide.

The Mahindra Jeep.
For you, it's performance you can rely on.

Mahindra Jeep®

Performance you can rely on.

THERE IS NO OTHER JEEP MADE IN INDIA



SUNDAY SPECIAL

Portrait of a peasant as

Despite his long years in politics, Devi Lal remains a peasant at heart

Devi Lal is a quintessential Jat. Frank to the extent of being outspoken, he exudes a child-like simplicity coupled with the proverbial peasant cunning which knows where his interest lies. He has a basic distrust for paperwork and is wary of urban intellectuals. His entire worldview is centred around the rural/urban divide and his contempt for urban domination is obvious. In his youth, he had received training in wrestling and in a way, he still remains a wrestler. Only his arena has changed. The way he deals with his political opponents reminds one of a freestyle wrestling bout, where no holds are barred.

His strength lies in his close contact with the masses. Like a village patriarch, he sits among them, listens to their problems and tries to solve them. He obviously enjoys his popularity but behaves as if he is one of them. Naturally, his rustic ways win him followers. He is aware that his unity efforts have made him a political figure of national importance. To top it all, he never misses an opportunity to heap ridicule on other Opposition stalwarts like Chandra Shekhar and H.N. Bahuguna. In his typical phraseology, they are nothing but "paper tigers" as they are strong only on paper and not on the ground.

Born on 25 September, 1914, in Tejakheda village near Fazilka. Devi Lal did not have a happy, carefree childhood. When he was very young, his mother died and his father, Chaudhary









The many moods of Devi Lal

politician

Lekhram Sihag, married again. There was not much communication between father and son while the stepmother turned out to be true to the age-old image. No wonder he became largely indifferent to his family and was soon attracted towards nationalist politics. While he was only 15, he decided to attend the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress. That was the historic session during which Congress president Jawaharlal Nehru declared that total independence was the political goal of the party. Devi Lal was studying at Moga at that time. His father was not at all happy about his son's behaviour but had kept quiet.

The displeasure of Devi Lal's father was quite understandable, considering the fact that he was one of the big landlords of the area. According to Devi Lal, he owned nearly 4,500 acres of land. The area was largely semi-arid and the kind of prosperity one witnesses today as a result of the Bhakhra water, simply did not exist. Still, it was a large *zamindari* and, therefore, the fact that Devi Lal and his family even today own quite a big chunk of land with orchards should not surprise anyone.

Soon, he was expelled from his school. Afraid of his father's wrath, he did not inform his family about his expulsion and continued to stay at Moga. It was around this time that he travelled without a train to reach Amritsar where Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was sup-

...Y AN ALLW... ...RTH PAY... ...TTLE MORE F...

LLWYN IS IN A CLASS BY ITSELF

Years of trouble free performance of an Allwyn makes it the best investment for your savings.

An Allwyn offers a lot more for that little extra you pay.

Take a look at its features and find out why so many people are willing and happy to pay a little more to get a lot more.

ITACHI DESIGNED COMPRESSOR

For silent, smooth and trouble-free efficiency.

O VOLTAGE STABILISER NEEDED

Because it is built to take voltage fluctuations from 170 to 250 volts in its stride.

OLL BOND FREEZER

For quicker ice, fresher vegetables and fruits.

ELF DRAINING SYSTEM

For non-messy and quick defrosting at the touch of a button.

TORES MORE

Allwyn has the highest crispator/chill tray volume among all refrigerators.

LIM, TALL AND ELEGANT

It occupies lesser floor area than others.

IDE RANGE

Allwyn comes in 165 and 300 ltrs double door and single door models with a choice of attractive colours.

ONFIDENT 7-YEAR GUARANTEE

For years of trouble-free service.

ATION-WIDE SERVICE NETWORK

For prompt service at a phone call.

LLWYN OFFERS A UNIQUE PROTECTION CONTRACT*



IS 1476
ALL SINGLE DOOR ALLWYN REFRIGERATORS BEAR THE ISI MARK

ALLWYN



* For further details please contact your nearest Allwyn Area Office.

An Allwyn is for always

HYDERABAD ALLWYN AREA OFFICES: Ahmedabad. Ph: 463 18 1, Bangalore Ph: 23 8885, Bhopal Ph: 64 122, Bhubaneshwar Ph: 5227 1, Bombay Ph: 4927575, 4927586, 4934 178, 492 105 1, Calcutta. Ph: 440437, 446853, 433576, Chandigarh. Ph: 4 194 1, Cuddapah Ph: 2230, Ernakulam Ph: 368002, Gauhati Ph: 32691, Ghaziabad. Ph: 843204, Hyderabad Ph: 43407, Jabalpur. Ph: 22665, Jaipur. Ph: 65729, Kanpur. Ph: 245249, Karnal Ph: 2480, Madras. Ph: 86 140 1, Nagpur Ph: 45 125, New Delhi Ph: 734740, 730715, Patna. Ph: 32745, Pune Ph: 39029 Vijayawada. Ph: 62544, Visakhapatnam. Ph: 6 1652.

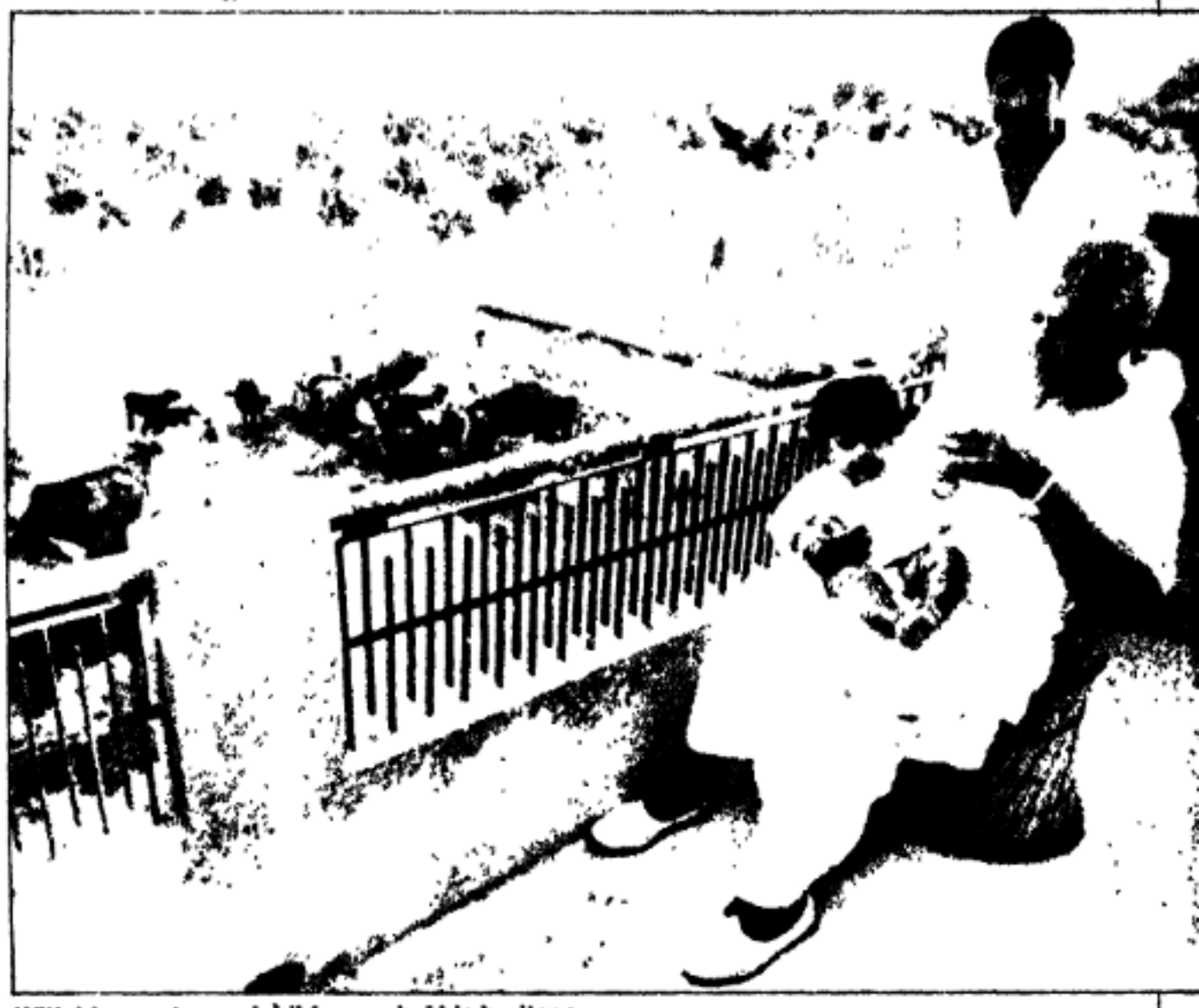
posed to address a public meeting. "I also took part in picketing in front of liquor shops and attended political meetings and demonstrations but the police arrested only the leaders. Kazi Abdur Rahman used to be the Amritsar dictator those days," he recalls. It is interesting to note that even at that tender age he knew that publicity was as important as political action. He returned from Amritsar soon as "I thought it would be pointless to get arrested there as nobody would come to know about it. So, I decided to go to my area so that when the police arrested me, it would have some impact." His wish was fulfilled but only after he had held two or, three meetings. From that point on there was no looking back for him.

Devi Lal's baptism in electoral politics took place in 1936 when he supported Rai Sahab Lala Atma Ram in the elections to the Punjab Assembly. Rao Sahab Nand Ram was the main opponent of Lala Atma Ram and his musclemen had been preventing Atma Ram's supporters campaigning. Atma Ram appealed to Devi Lal who took a busload of *pahalwans* to the various polling stations. They beat up Nand Ram's goons as well as the voters. Result: Lala Atma Ram had no difficulty in winning the election. But as the police managed to confiscate the bus carrying *lathis* and boxes of sweets, Rao Sahab Nand Ram won the election petition against Atma Ram. It was only after this that Devi Lal fielded his elder brother, Sahab Ram, as the Congress candidate. It was a wily move since he could not contest because he was under-age.

In 1952, Devi Lal became a member of the Punjab Assembly and got a second term in 1957. In 1962, he left the Congress and contested as an independent and won. During 1956-57, he served the then Punjab chief minister Pratap Singh Kairon as his parliamentary secretary. During 1962-66, he was very active in voicing the demand for the division of Punjab. When Haryana came into being in 1966, he came back to the Congress fold, only to leave it five years later. Devi Lal does not seem to be a good judge of people as he crossed swords with everybody whom he had supported at one stage or the other, be it Kairon, Rao Birendra Singh, Bansi Lal or Bhajan Lal. Even with the late Charan Singh, he often did not see eye to eye on a number of things and in 1982, Charan Singh went to the extent of expelling him from the Lok Dal. He is quite unrestrained in his utterances as evident from the Ajit Singh episode. For more than a year, Devi Lal continued to publicly dub him as a Congress agent who had taken rupees two crores from the ruling party to wreck the Opposition unity moves. Today, he is forced to hug the same person forgetting his earlier views. But if these inconsistencies and eccentricities were not there, Devi Lal would not be Devi Lal.

Devi Lal does not like spending much time in his chief ministerial bungalow in Chandigarh. Of his three political sons, Om Prakash Chautala, the eldest, virtually runs the state administration and is widely perceived as the *de facto* chief minister. He is also a member of the Rajya Sabha and is said to be the brain behind Devi Lal's political moves. Pratap Singh, who claims to be the only intellectual in the Devi Lal household by virtue of having studied at Delhi University, has been a rebel. His main grievance against his father has been that he changes his colour fastet than a chameleon and that he is in the clutches of Om Prakash. "Devi Lal *to buddha bachcha hai* (Devi Lal is a child who has aged). He is like a caged lion under total control of Om Prakash," says Pratap Singh. Ever since he separated from his father in 1967, Pratap Singh had been supporting the Congress and till the Haryana elections were announced last year, he was seen paying court to the likes of Makhan Lal Fotedar and Bansi Lal. Yet, soon after emerging victorious in the electoral battle, Devi Lal thought it fit to appease him by appointing him chairman of the Haryana State Small Scale Industries and Export Corporation. The third son, Ranjit, is second only to Om Prakash in his political clout in the state and heads a rival faction within the Lok Dal to counter Om Prakash's ever-growing influence. And like a true patriarch, Devi Lal watches all this. In fact, a few months after he was elected chief minister, he had candidly justified the appointment of his relatives to plum positions by saying that in politics, what one needed most was trustworthy people. So, he had to appoint his relatives to various positions as he trusted them.

If one wants to see the real Devi Lal, one has to meet him at his Tejakheda farmhouse, surrounded by farmers from the area. He knows each one of them by



With his great-grandchild: proud of his heritage

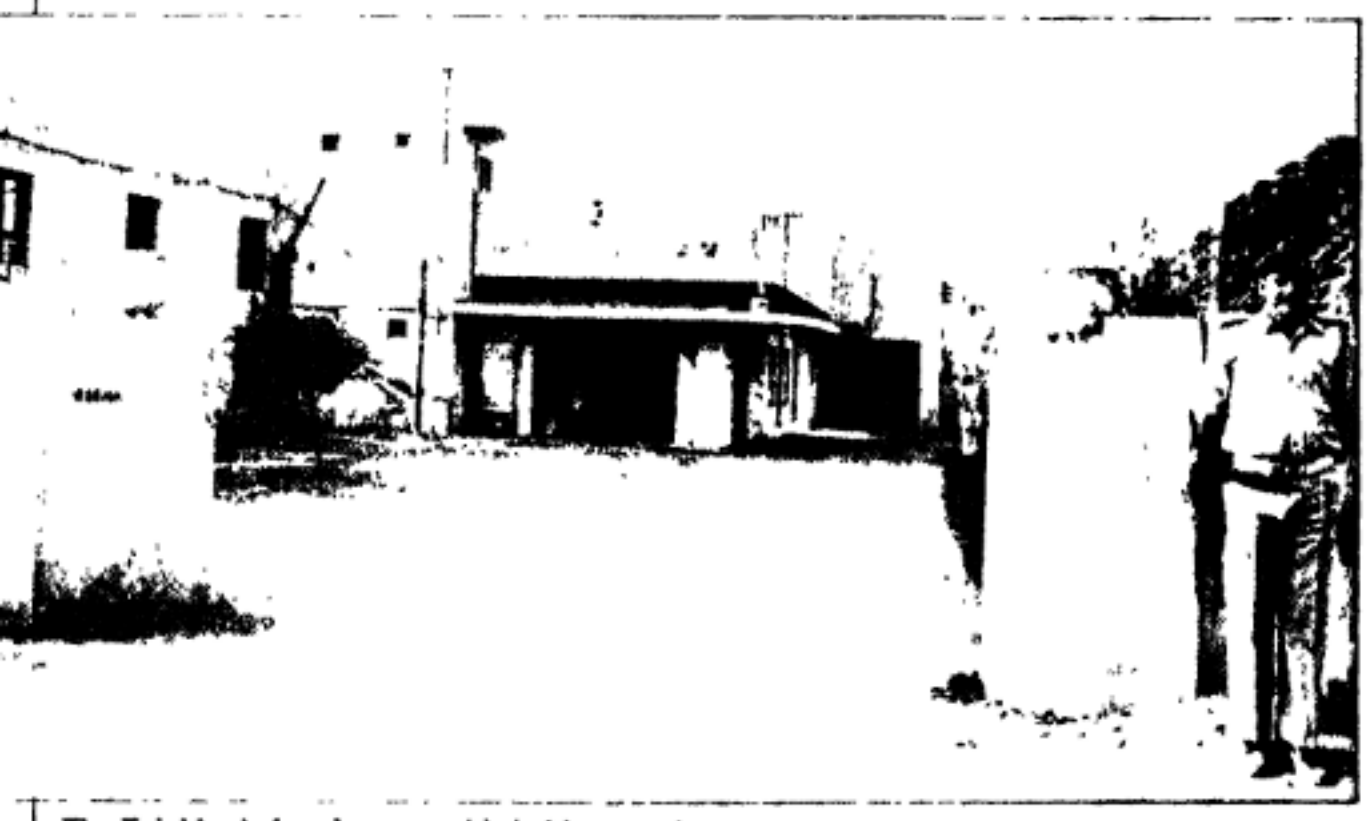
Devi Lal launches a tirade against Rajiv Gandhi's anti-worker, anti-farmer policies and then asks: "Do you know Rajiv Gandhi?...Can you tell me Rajiv's paternal grandfather's name?" There is silence all around. And a beaming Devi Lal continues: "Nobody knows his grandfather's name. But look at me. This village Tejakheda, is named after my great-grandfather Teja Ram..."

name, cracks jokes with them in his characteristic style and asks them about their problems, family members and so on. He moves among them as a fish in water, yet he maintains a distance. He looks like a benevolent *zamindar* who is tied with his ryots through traditional bonds.

On *Rakshabandhan* day, Devi Lal is on a visit to his village to spend a quiet week-end. The house is surrounded by securitymen and 30 or 40 villagers are sitting on *charpoys* on the lush green lawn. Rishi Raj, Devi Lal's PA, informs us that the chief minister is having a siesta. We wait for a while and then request him to find out if Chaudhary Saheb has woken up. He gets up, takes a quick glance around and sits down again saying the CM was asleep. Intrigued by his behaviour, I ask him how he could find out about the CM without going into the house. He points towards a corner of the lawn. We look. There was Devi Lal sleeping on a bare *charpoy* without even a bed sheet or a pillow.

As photographer Rajesh Kumar starts clicking away, Devi Lal opens his eyes.





The Tejakheda farmhouse: pride in his ancestry

He seems quite pleased with the idea of being photographed. After a quick wash inside, the CM is back. And the informal *durbar* begins.

He calls each one of the farmers by name and asks them their problems. Somebody's son is appearing in an interview and he wants help. Devi Lal enquires about his other family members, shares a past memory or two, and asks his PA to note down the case. He then tells all those present how serious the problem of unemployment is and how even he cannot provide jobs to everybody. Somebody else comes forward with a local problem and Devi Lal assures him that he will do something to solve it. This goes on for an hour. I go up to him and ask if I can interview him. He retorts angrily: "Then why didn't you do it? *Ab tak kya kar rahe the* (What were you doing all this time)?" I tell him I would like to speak to him inside his house so that there is no disturbance. He smiles and asks me to accompany him to his village Tejakheda, barely two km from his farmhouse.

The moment the chief ministerial convoy reaches Tejakheda, a crowd collects. Devi Lal sits on the *chabutara* of his house and holds a mini-*durbar* once again. After half-an-hour, he calls out for me and the interview begins in public view and with public participation.

He begins by talking about his youth and how he, despite being from a very big landlord's family, launched an agitation against the then prevailing "Tenants at Will Act" which the landlords used to resort to in order to evict tenants whenever they liked. He stops suddenly and asks an old man in the crowd: "*Kyon re chhore, yaad hai tere dade ka khalihan badmash uttha kar le gaye the* (Do you remember, my boy, how the landlord's

If one wants to see the real Devi Lal, one has to meet him at his Tejakheda farmhouse, surrounded by farmers from the area. He knows each one of them by name, cracks jokes with them in his characteristic style...





goondas looted your grandfather's crop)?" The old man nods his head and both have a hearty laugh. He is obviously a childhood friend of Devi Lal and they both exchange some old memories in their native dialect, Bagari. Devi Lal informs me that because of his anti-landlord movement, all the tenants became landowners. He points towards two or three men saying that they used to be his tenants but today own big orchards with an annual income of more than Rs one lakh. In unison, they agree on the amount they earn.

That Devi Lal has always seen Jats as his primary constituency is clear from what he says about his early days in politics. In 1936, he held a series of public meetings in his area and sent a telegram to Sir Chhotu Ram, the tallest leader of the Jats at that time, daring him to field his candidate there. "I informed him that we will oppose his nominee by fielding a Congress candidate and then he would know who the Jats were with," Devi Lal says with obvious pride.

Today, however, Devi Lal is full of admiration for Sir Chhotu Ram. When I remind him that Chhotu Ram was the leader of the pro British Unionist Party, he justifies Chhotu Ram's stand by saying that he fought the British while supporting them. Initially, Chhotu Ram was president of the Rohtak District Congress Committee but he was driven out because of the urban-dominated politics of the Congress. "What I understood so late in my life, Chhotu Ram was able to see as early as in 1932 when he cautioned me against the *shahanis* (urbanites). He had told me at that time: *Chhore, mere baal dhoop mein dhore nahin huai hain. Angrez jayega, Congress ka tar avega par usme tu nahin hoga* (Boy, my hair has not turned grey in the sun. The British will go and the Congress will come to power, but you will not be there in the power structure). What Chhotu Ram fought against then, I am fighting against now. My fight today is against the Congress-type party constitution."

He complains bitterly that even though there were 85 Lok Dal MLAs from Haryana, he happened to be the lone member on the national executive representing the state by virtue of being the president of the Haryana unit. But there are two members each from Andaman and Nicobar, West Bengal and Tripura where the Lok Dal hardly has a presence. On the other hand, there is only one member from UP, which has 24 Lok Dal MLAs. "Can you beat this," an angry Devi Lal asks, "that there is not a single office-bearer of the party from Haryana which is the biggest stronghold of the Lok Dal? They are all nominees of Bahuguna, a leader who cannot win even in his own city."

He turns to me and asks why he is always called a Jat leader by the press. "*Bhalemanuson, mujhe kisan neta hi kah do* (At least, call me a peasant leader)," he tells me and addressing the crowd, breaks into derisive laughter. "Do you hear? I am merely a Jat leader while Chandra Shekhar and Bahuguna who cannot win even in their hometowns are national leaders. What a joke!."

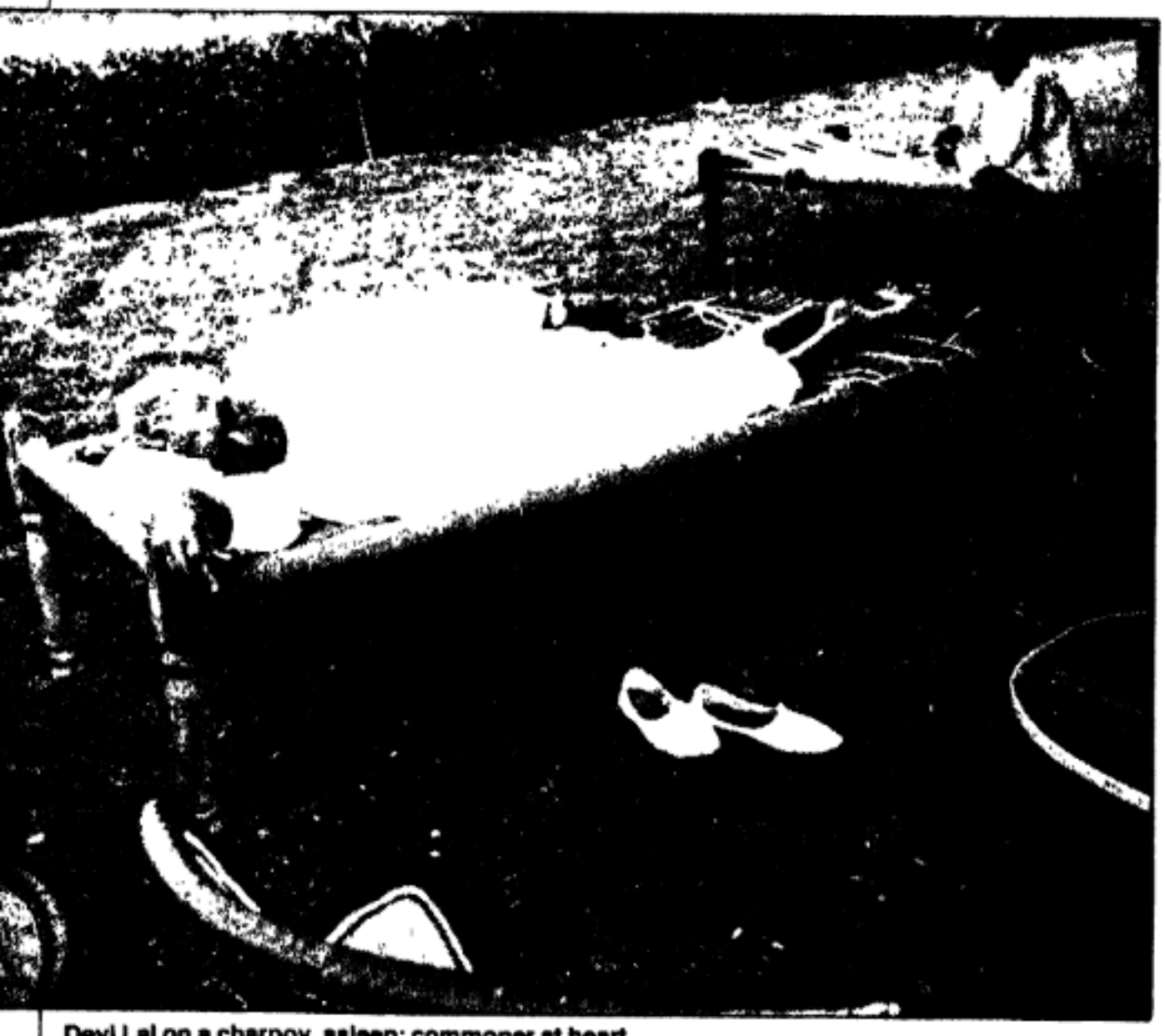
Devi Lal explains his Opposition unity moves by saying that among the Opposition leaders, Hegde symbolises Karnataka, Biju Patnaik represents Orissa, Chimanbhai Patel is the undisputed leader in Gujarat, George Fernandes symbolises workers' interests, Madhu Dandavate leads the parliamentary group, while he is the tallest leader of the peasantry. "Where are Chandra Shekhar and Bahuguna? They are strong only in paper-

(Left) At his orchard: keen knowledge of agriculture (Below) With his followers: patient listener



work through which they take control of the party apparatus. That is why, I call them paper tigers," he declares with disdain, adding that he could never understand how such rootless people manage to become all-India leaders.

Devi Lal also knows how to turn a word or a phrase. In his view, regional parties should be called 'original parties' because they represent the basic aspirations of the people of their area. The proposed seven-party front will see to it that proper coordination is established with regional parties and a direct contest is given to the Congress(I) candidates. He is confident that eventually, one



Devi Lal on a charpoy, asleep: commoner at heart

united Opposition party will be formed. "The peasants of this country will support only that party where I am present," he announces loudly and the villagers make an approving noise.

Devi Lal launches a tirade against Rajiv Gandhi's anti-worker, anti-farmer policies and then turning to me asks: "Do you know Rajiv Gandhi?" I nod. "What was the name of his mother?" I keep quiet. So, he asks me to loudly repeat Indira Gandhi's name. "And his maternal grandfather's?" he demands. I say Jawaharlal Nehru. Then, comes the denouncement. With a twinkle in his eyes, he asks, "Can anybody tell me Rajiv's paternal grandfather's name?" There is silence all around. And a beaming Devi Lal continues, "Nobody knows his grandfather's name. But look at me. This village Tejakheda, is named after my great-grandfather Teja Ram. But who knows Rajiv? Whose Chaudhary is he? He is married to an Italian. Whose Chaudhary is he?"

Having proved his superiority over Rajiv Gandhi in this unique way, Devi Lal adjourns his *durbar*. He tells me that he wakes up at 4.00 am and is ready by 6.00 am. So, if I visited his house the next morning around 6 o'clock, he would take me around his orchard.

The next morning, he is in the same exuberant mood. Wading his way through mud and slush, he walks for at least five km, all the while asking his grandson, Ajay, about the condition of each and every type of plant. "Does Rajiv know anything about fields and agriculture?" He asks me but does not wait for an answer. Suddenly, he decides to test my knowl dge about horticulture. Pointing towards a plant, he asks me what it is. It could be a lime. "No," Devi Lal corrects me with a grin on his face, "this is politics. This orchard gives me Rs 2.5 lakhs a year. I do politics with this money. I do not sell tickets like Chandra Shekhar. Otherwise tell me, what does Ram Jethmalani have to do with Karnataka? And who is this Subramaniam Swamy? One is not even sure whether he is from Delhi, Bombay or China. Then, there is one IAS officer, Yashwant Sinha. All rootless like Chandra Shekhar. But they were given Rajya Sabha tickets. Do you know for how much? For Rs 20 lakhs each. Now all of them are afraid because I will distribute tickets in the next elections."

The irrational side of Devi Lal's personality expresses itself in his megalomania. He firmly believes that it was he who brought stalwarts like Gopi Chand Bhargava and Pratap Singh Kairon into politics. He talks of his hold over Haryana but never does he mention his double defeat in 1971 when he contested from Tosham and Adampur against Bansi Lal and Bhajan Lal. He claims that Giani Zail Singh used to request him to recommend his name to Kairon for deputy ministership, and so on.

Devi Lal lambasts Rajiv Gandhi's government for corruption (in fact, Bofors was a major issue in the Haryana election), but keeps his eyes closed to the corruption flourishing in his own regime. He has issued a statement condemning the Defamation Bill but he himself has dragged Prof. D.R. Chaudhary, editor of the Hindi weekly *Peeng*, before the Privileges Committee of the State Assembly as he published news stories exposing corrupt deals of his deputy chief minister Banarasi Das Gupta.

However, one thing has never been in doubt and that is his ability to campaign tirelessly and establish an instant rapport with the masses. At the same time, it is also true that he has not been such a great hit outside Haryana and his influence in the Jat belts of western UP and Rajasthan is nothing to write home about.

Facing such odds, will a man who comes from a state which controls only 10 Lok Sabha seats, be able to bulldoze the entire Opposition into accepting his terms of unity? Only the future will tell.

Kuldeep Kumar/*Tejakheda*

"Does Rajiv know anything about fields and agriculture?" asks Devi Lal. "This orchard gives me Rs 2.5 lakhs a year. I do politics with this money. I do not sell tickets like Chandra Shekhar"

Photographs Rajesh Kumar

The taming of the press

J.B. Patnaik manages the media with an iron hand

Janaki Ballav Patnaik started his career as a junior reporter, rose steadily from the ranks to edit two publications simultaneously—the Oriya daily, *Prajatantra*, and the now defunct English weekly, *Eastern Times*. The people of Orissa still remember Patnaik's bold editorials defending the freedom of the press and the right of the media to inform the masses. But once the political bug bit him more than two decades back and he chucked up journalism to become a politician, his views about the role of the media underwent a sea-change. Today, as chief minister of Orissa, J.B. Patnaik and his Congress(I) government have taken upon themselves the responsibility of determining what the people should know and how much.

When J.B. Patnaik was sworn in as the chief minister on 9 June, 1980, many had expected that since Patnaik had been a newsman himself, the media, which was then under considerable pressure from the Janata government, would get a fair deal. But ironically enough, Patnaik, perhaps aware that the press had the powers to make or mar his political career, adopted a carrot and stick policy towards the media. Journalists who refused to toe the official line were harassed while largesse was showered on the favourites. The infamous Chhabirani episode which rocked the state soon after Patnaik took over the reins of the government first sent warning signals to journalists who began wondering about the real intentions of the ruling party.

Chhabirani was the wife of Nabakishore Mahapatra, a Bindi journalist who freelanced for a number of Oriya newspapers and periodicals. Chhabirani too, used to help out her husband with occasional news reports. But the husband and wife team soon ran into trouble as their stories angered the local Congress leaders. On 3 October, 1980, as Nabakishore and Chhabirani were leaving their village under threat from the block Congress(I) president, they were surrounded by hoodlums, all of them later identified as Congress supporters. Nabakishore managed to run away with his kid but Chhabirani was savagely gang-raped and murdered. Embarrassed by the incident, especially since it involved people from his own party, chief minister Patnaik first tried to paint Chhabirani as a woman of easy virtue. When the national and a section of the local press kept mounting pressure on the government by exposing the culprits, the administration did make a number of arrests but the accused were let off without proper prosecution. The incident at the start of his chief ministership must have angered J.B. Patnaik but it also helped him to identify his adversaries in the press who were promptly branded as "anti-Congress" and "anti-Patnaik". One of them was the influential Oriya daily, *Samaj*, and its editor, Dr Radhanath Rath.

Eastern Press Service



J.B. Patnaik: influencing the press

Samaj wields considerable influence in the politics of the state particularly since it moulded public opinion on a number of occasions in the past. Known for its impartial reporting, *Samaj*'s editor, who is a veteran freedom fighter and a former minister of the state, is a respected litterateur. Naturally, when J.B. Patnaik came to power, he tried to gain the support of the newspaper. "But when we refused to be influenced and continued to publish damaging exposes of the government, *Samaj* became an eye sore to the chief minister and all through J.B. Patnaik's tenure, our newspaper has come under attack from the administration and the ruling party," complained the 93-year-old Radhanath Rath, perhaps the oldest editor of the country. And the "attack" has come in the form of physical assaults, threats and harassment of journalists and discrimination in the matter of releasing government advertisements. Take for instance the incident on 12 August, 1984.

Two days before the Opposition-

sponsored Orissa *bandh* on 14 August, a van carrying more than 15,000 copies of the *Samaj* was attacked by miscreants near the Cuttack railway station. The hoodlums lobbed hand grenades, damaged the vehicle, pulled out the newspaper bundles and made a bonfire of them. Even the driver of the vehicle was severely assaulted. It is widely believed that the miscreants had the support of the ruling party whose purpose was to prevent the people from knowing about the issues behind the *bandh*. Three weeks later, on 2 September, armed hooligans once again pulled out bundles of the newspaper from a bus and set fire to them. Two days later the act was repeated at Jeypore.

The continued attacks on the *Samaj* and the failure of the police to bring the culprits to book, prompted Banka Behary Das, a former minister, to petition the Press Council of India against the Patnaik administration. On 6 March,

J.B. Patnaik adopted a carrot and stick policy towards the media. Journalists who refused to toe the official line were harassed while newsmen who held brief for the government were showered with largesse

1986, the Press Council gave it verdict : the state government was guilty of failing to ensure the freedom of the press. However, the Council did not take any action against the administration in view of the assurance given to it by the state counsel. But the assurance was honoured more in its breach than in its observance, for, barely a fortnight later, *Samaj* editor Radhanath Rath miraculously survived a murderous attack on him.

Recalled Dr Rath: "On 18 March, 1986, I was returning to Cuttack after attending a public meeting in Gadamanitri in my trekker. The former CPI MLA, Gangadhar Paikrai and *Samaj* correspondent Asok Das were also with me. On the way, my vehicle was stopped by a group of people, later identified as supporters of the local Congress(I) MLA, Kailash Mohapatra. The group attacked us with *lathis* and bombs causing injury to all of us."

"Physical attacks apart, the state has been discriminating against the *Samaj* in the matter of advertisement," complained Radhanath Rath. Though no detailed statistics were immediately available, in the month of April 1988, for example, *Samaj*, which sells more than all the language dailies taken together, received 5,262 cms of advertisement from the government. Compare this

The Rs 1 crore question

It is the country's most expensive libel suit. In May 1986, *The Illustrated Weekly of India* published a sensational cover story exposing the scandalous sexual escapades of the Orissa chief minister, J.B. Patnaik. The article, which created an unprecedented furore in the state, comprised short interviews with boys and girls whom the chief minister allegedly sexually abused.

A month-and-a-half after the article appeared, Patnaik filed a record Rs 1 crore defamation suit in the court of the sub-judge, Bhubaneswar, against the proprietors of the *Weekly*, Bennett, Coleman & Company Ltd, its editor, Pritish Nandy, the author of the article, S.N.M. Abdi, and S.S. Mahapatra, a former MP who had given an interview to the magazine suggesting that J.B. Patnaik was a sexual pervert. The case moved over to the Orissa High Court in Cuttack following a petition filed by the *Weekly*.

Around the same time, another case was filed by the Orissa police against the *Weekly* following a complaint from a Rourkela lawyer, Umakanta Mishra, in the court of the sub-divisional judicial magistrate, Panposh (Rourkela), for publishing scurrilous material.

It is over two years since the two cases were instituted but the trial has begun only last month. The delay is a result of the *Weekly* challenging many of the interlocutory orders of the High Court in the Supreme Court. First, the magazine filed a petition in the Supreme Court praying that the case be transferred to some other High Court in the country as its correspondent, S.N.M. Abdi, was being harassed by the government during his visits to the state. The Supreme Court rejected the petition on the ground that the complainant had failed to substantiate the allegation. Subsequently, the *Weekly* filed a number of other petitions including one requesting the quashing of the case in Rourkela, but all of them were disallowed by the Supreme Court.

Even after the trial began on 9 August this year, the *Weekly* sought three weeks' adjournment on the ground that S.N.M. Abdi was sick. The trial judge, K.P. Mahapatra, rejected the petition and went ahead with the case. After the rejection of the *Weekly*'s adjournment petition, the lawyers appearing on behalf of the *Weekly* boycotted the court proceedings.

But the trial soon got bogged down once again as a group of lawyers challenged the High Court's order for *in camera* hearings of the case. Earlier, Justice Mahapatra had granted J.B. Patnaik's prayer for an *in camera* trial but he had limited the private hearings to only the alleged libellous matters. A division bench consisting of Justices P.C. Mishra and D.P. Mahapatra has completed the hearings of the petition but they have reserved their judgement.

Though the *Weekly* lawyers were absent from the trial proceedings, the advocates representing S.S. Mahapatra were present during the brief period and have cross-examined chief minister Patnaik. Bennett Coleman, meanwhile, has taken the stand that the management does not interfere in editorial matters and allows full freedom to editors.

The *Weekly's* contention that Patnaik is generally hostile to the press has been somewhat vindicated by a

The issue that created a storm



with the advertisements received by the two other major papers, *Prajatantra* (6,209 cms) and *Sambad* (8,509 cms), both pro-Patnaik, the latter owned and edited by the chief minister's son-in-law, Soumya Ranjan Pattanaik.

The flagrant anti-*Samaj* stance adopted by J.B. Patnaik and his officers have not only invited adverse comments from the Press Council. Recently, a team of the Editors' Guild comprising senior journalists Kuldip Nayar, K.R. Malkani and S. Sahay visited Bhubaneswar to study the plight of their fraternity in Orissa. Their report, appropriately titled, *Carrot and the Stick*, makes a damaging comment about the Patnaik administration as far as the *Samaj* issue is concerned: "We hold that *Samaj* and its editor are being attacked and harassed by the Patnaik government and party men for pursuing a policy the government finds unpalatable."

But it is not only influential publications like *Samaj* and important mediamen like Radhanath Rath who have incurred the wrath of the government. Small fries working for obscure publications, but critical of the chief minister and his Cabinet, have not gone unnoticed by the government hawks. The case of Ramesh Chandra Mishra is particularly interesting.



Radhanath Rath (left) and Mishra: victimised

Mishra is the Keonjhar correspondent of *Dharitri*, an Oriya daily published from Bhubaneswar and edited by Tathagat Satpathy, son of Nandini Satpathy. He had written several articles in *Dharitri* exposing the inefficiency of the local police and the corruption in the Keonjhar municipality controlled by the Congress(I). This enraged the local cops, SP N.K. Parija in particular, who instigated an electricity department worker to file an FIR against Mishra and then made the complaint a ground for handcuffing the journalist and parading him in public.

Mishra was acquitted in the case and the magistrate's observations are important. The judge pointed out that seven witnesses were produced by the police in order to show that Mishra had trespassed into the complainant's house and tried to assault him. But all of them had to be declared hostile. The judge also expressed surprise at the fact that though the incident was alleged to have taken place on 6 February, 1987, the FIR was lodged after more than two months, on 20 April. Mishra's woes really began after his acquittal by the court. "The police became more vindictive and they pick me up on any pretext. Though my family enjoys social respectability in Keonjhar, I am always rounded up as a bad character on the eve of the chief minister's visit to the district," lamented Mishra.

The harassment did not stop there. Recently, the police once again registered a case of fraud against Mishra and were all set to arrest him when Mishra fled Keonjhar. He returned to his native place only after the court granted him an anticipatory bail. "The charges are all cooked up. The local Congress leaders are threatening me, asking me to stop writing investigative reports. When I go to the police to lodge an FIR, my complaint is not accepted. I have written to the chief minister and the director general of police, but nothing has been done so far," complained Mishra. The case of Ramesh Mishra was investigated by the Editors' Guild team who felt that the journalist was "unfairly arrested and illegally handcuffed, which in any case, is against the Supreme Court's ruling".

Since cheap government accommodation is a handy weapon in the hands of the authorities to influence the press, J. B. Patnaik has used it liberally to favour his friends and fix his enemies. Prashanta Patnaik, senior correspondent of *Newstime* in Bhubaneswar, has learnt it the hard way what it means to oppose the Patnaik government. As a correspondent of *Patriot* and *Link*, Prashanta Patnaik was among the few journalists to bring to light the facts of the Chhabiram episode. He followed it up with a number of hard-hitting pieces against the present government including a sensational expose involving the chief minister and his son-in-law. "The chief minister had called me personally several times and asked me to stop writing against him. When I refused to yield, the CM and his officers began to harass me. And when my name was listed as one of the witnesses in the *Illustrated Weekly* case against Patnaik, they became more vindictive and were waiting for a chance to throw me out from the government quarters," Prashanta Patnaik said.

The administration got the opportun-



Prashanta Patnaik: harassed

Eastern Press Service

---

report prepared by a team of the Editors' Guild of India which visited Orissa to study the plight of journalists in the state.

The report said: "There is no doubt that the press in Orissa is under pressure. The state government, especially chief minister J.B. Patnaik, overlooks those who do not toe his line. Journalists following him or writing copy in such a way as does not show him in a bad light, have benefited from the state, but the ones who have written against him or divulged events not to his liking have suffered... The chief minister has created in the state an atmosphere where journalists think many times about the repurcussion before writing even an objective report."

Such severe indictment notwithstanding, J.B. Patnaik has clearly won the initial rounds of the court battle. Most of the *Weekly*'s petitions have been rejected by the Supreme Court and its lawyers are yet to draw up the list of witnesses to be produced. Justice Mahapatra has observed that if the list is not submitted soon, he would not allow the witnesses to be produced during the trial. As the outcome of the battle between J.B. Patnaik and *The Illustrated Weekly of India* is likely to have an impact on the press in general, media-watchers and politicians are keenly following the court proceedings of the libel suit.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay* and Rajiv Bagchi/*Cuttack*

ity they were looking for when the newsmen resigned from *Patriot* last May to join *Newstime*. He surrendered his accreditation card and applied for a temporary card which was promptly denied. Since only accreditated journalists are eligible for government accommodation, the government hastily initiated eviction proceedings against Prashanta Patnaik and on 23 November last year, threw him out from his quarters.

The incident caused a furore in media circles of the city. Biju Patnaik, the fiery Opposition leader of the state, took up Prashanta Patnaik's cause with the chief minister. Though the government now maintains that Prashanta Patnaik was evicted solely because the journalist did not pay his rent for the last ten years and the action had nothing to do with his accreditation, J. B. Patnaik's written reply to Janata leader Biju Patnaik's complaint says nothing about the rent arrears. "If somebody ceases to be an accreditated correspondent he is required to vacate the government accommodation and if he does not do so, legal action is taken for his eviction. This is what has precisely happened in the case of Prashanta Patnaik," wrote the chief minister to Biju Patnaik. But there are numerous instances where correspondents have been allowed to retain their flats when they switched jobs. While observing that Prashanta Patnaik should have cleared his rent arrears, the Editors' Guild report noted: "We are convinced that the government has been vindictive towards Prashanta...He was unjustly and untarily thrown out of his house."

The Editors' Guild team also felt that the question of qualification for accreditation should be reviewed, as upright journalists are often threatened with cancellation of accreditations by vindictive state governments. The two Bhubaneswar correspondents of the *Indian Express*, Ruben Banerjee and Nageswar Rao, for example, have been denied accreditation on the ground that they are not qualified for it as they do not have five years' experience in the profession. The government would have been perfectly justified in its action had it applied the rules uniformly for all. For the "friends" in the media, the government has found a way out even if they lack the mandatory "five years in the profession". They are treated as freelancers and extended accreditation. Regarding the *Indian Express* jounalists, the government is deliberately delaying action due to the newspapers' anti-Congress(I) stance.

If J. B. Patnaik has been unusually harsh with his critics, he has been equally liberal in granting favours to newsmen who hold brief for him and his government. There is the case of Gopal Mishra, correspondent of the Calcutta-based daily, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. His physically handicapped son was given a plot of land in Bhubaneswar to construct a printing press by the former Janata government of Nilamani Routray. When J. B. Patnaik came to power, Mishra was obliged with a larger plot of land to start a hotel. At the gala opening ceremony of the hotel, prominent ministers of the Patnaik ministry were present. In his speech delivered on the occasion, Basant Kumar Biswal, then the number two in the ministry, publicly described Gopal Mishra as a friend of the government. R. P. Bagchi, correspondent of *Deccan Herald*, was similarly rewarded with prime land in Bhubaneswar to construct shops. Akshay Pati, the Bhubaneswar correspondent of the Oriya weekly, *Dainik Asha*, has wrangled for his brother a licence to deal in foreign liquor. The list could run on.


Eastern Press Service

Soumya Ranjan Pattanaik: facing criticism

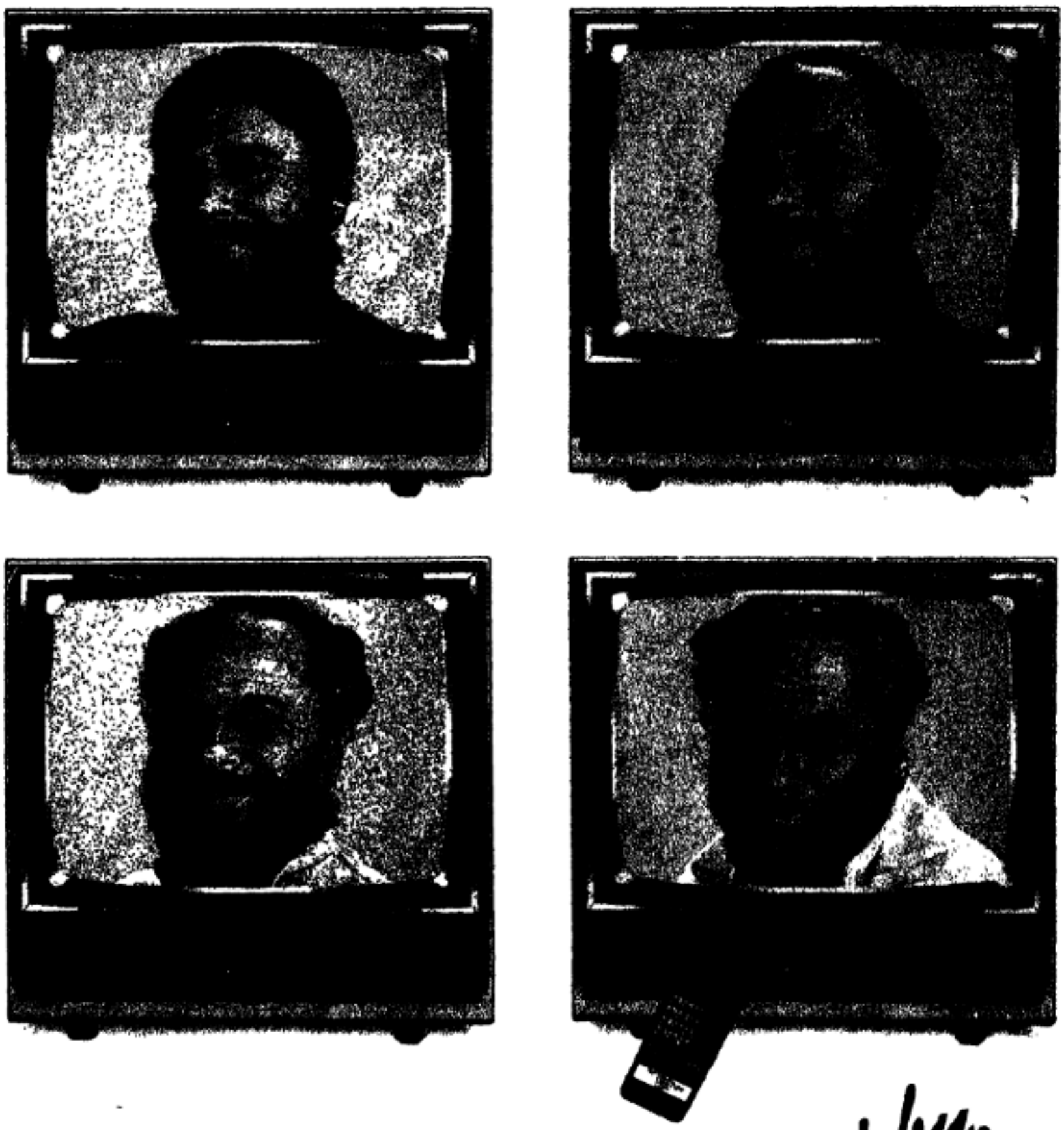
The scramble for government favours among journalists in Orissa has led to a proliferation of newspapers and periodicals. When J.B. Patnaik came to power there were no more than eight dailies and a handful of magazines. Today, within a period of eight years, the figure of the dailies have trebled while countless periodicals have mushroomed throughout the state. Most of them have little or no circulation but are generously patronised by the government as they are all avid admirers of the chief minister and the ruling party. The Opposition has raised this point in the Assembly several times and has demanded that the government disclose the details of advertisements released to newspapers ad magazines but the government refused to oblige on the pretext that the subject was a "state secret".

Newspapers being an effective weapon to settle political scores, many ruling party and Opposition members of Orissa own or have stakes in newspapers and periodicals. The precedent was set by the legendary H.K. Mahtab. Biren Mitra, Nandini Sathpathy and Biju Patnaik, all former chief ministers, followed suit. Though J.B. Patnaik vehemently denies that he has anything to do with *Sambad*, it is alleged that the newspaper enjoys the patronage of the government and was launched four years back to counter the "anti-Congress campaign" of *Samaj*. *Sambad* has come to be looked upon as a "Congress paper" especially because the daily is edited by the chief minister's son in law, Soumya Ranjan Pattanaik. "My paper cannot be branded as a pro-establishment publication just because I happen to be the son-in-law of the chief minister. In fact, we have published many anti-government stories. Moreover, the government gives us more ads because *Sambad* is better produced and our rates are low," said Soumya Ranjan Pattanaik.

Whatever be the truth, the meddling by politicians in the affairs of the media, certainly poses a danger to the freedom of the press. The three senior journalists from the Editors' Guild who spent three days in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack have recorded their experience: "We came back with the impression that the Orissa press is a sharply divided house. Journalists either side with the government or are opposed to it...Everywhere the government tends to win over journalists by showing them favour but in Orissa this is more pronounced." Did J.B. Patnaik go through the report?

Rajiv Bagchi/*Bhubaneswar*

EC Colour TV



Real value... as time goes by.

ECTV

SAPTEC Electronics Corporation of India Limited (A Government of India Enterprise), Hyderabad 500 762.



When we launched the Hero Honda CD 100 in 1985, we knew it was a good thing. What we didn't know was just how good. Today, while figures speak for themselves, a vastly more satisfying story is told by the owners.

Fill it. Shut it. Forget it.

Some are moved by the economy. (80 km* is a long way to stretch a litre.) Many are ecstatic at the low maintenance it needs. Some always wanted to own a Honda. And a few can't get over the riding pleasure of India's only 4-stroke 100 cc bike.

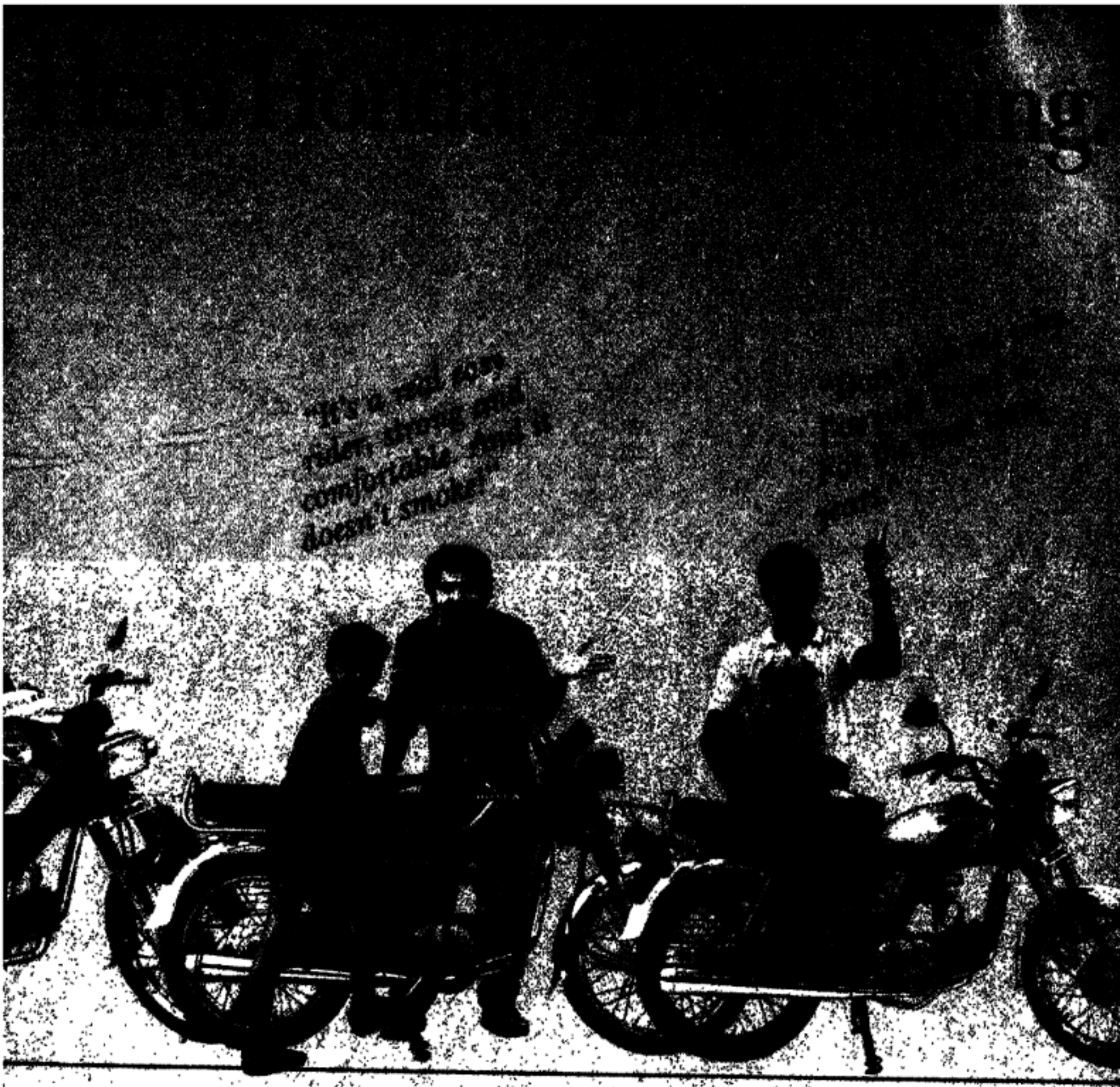
All of which is really a consequence of Hero's vision—the choice of Honda engineering.

Over 200,000 happy owners.

What it finally means is more than 200,000 owners, each with his own reason for feeling good about his bike. To all of you, we can certainly say one thing. You've got a good thing going.

**At 40 KMPH/150 kg*

HERO HONDA



All said and done...

You've got a Good thing Going!

HTA 6115

Take the world in your stride.



HI-COMFORT
WOOL

dinesh

Exclusives ▲ Suitings ▲ Co-ordinates ▲ Safaris

The choice of leading fashion houses, internationally.

THE SECOND OLDEST PROFESSION

Spying is almost as old as civilisation but virtually nothing is known about India's intelligence services. This is the definitive account of our security set-up; its triumphs and its failures

It was James Angleton, the legendary former head of counter-intelligence for the CIA, who said it best. The spy world, he noted, is a wilderness of mirrors. Some things strike you in the face, others appear nearer than they really are; and nothing is ever what it seems.

Likewise for the Indian intelligence services. At one level, they are spectacularly successful, pulling off covert operations with an elan that would make James Bond blush and exposing foreign agents with a perception that would do George Smiley proud. At another level, they are no more than bumbling bureaucracies, staffed by squabbling government servants and run solely for the benefit of the *babus* themselves. It depends, really, on which mirror you choose to look into.

Certainly, the successes tend to speak for themselves.

- In 1971 as Pakistani troops launched a reign of terror in what was then East Pakistan, 90 lakh refugees streamed across the border to India and Awami League politicians begged for assistance. By July, it was clear that India would have to intervene militarily but General Maneckshaw told Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that the army would not be ready till December.

Worried, Mrs Gandhi turned to the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the country's foreign intelligence service, for help. RAW was ready. Its officers used a few refugees to set up a Mukti Bahini or 'freedom army'. Using this outfit as a cover, Indian para-military forces sneaked into East Pakistan, blew up bridges, damaged Pakistani troop morale and gathered invaluable intelligence. When war finally came, India had won it almost before it began.

- The Intelligence Bureau (IB) was informed by a mole in the Jamait-i-Islami that a crucial meeting of the body's executive would take place at its offices in Delhi's Chandni Chowk. Aware that



Priyaranjan Rakshit

elements in the body have a pro-Pakistan tilt and fearful of communal disturbances, IB resolved to penetrate the meeting.

Its mole was given a small disc-shaped bugging device and told to plant it under a cushion of a sofa set in the room where the meeting was to be held. A specially-equipped van was parked one kilometre away from the Jamait office and IB technicians inside it used a sophisticated receiver to tape the bug's transmissions.

After the meeting was over, the van drove to IB headquarters where three hours worth of tape-recorded deliberations were transcribed and then analysed. It took three days but by the end, the bureau knew exactly what the Jamait was up to.

Those are the success stories, the anecdotes that Indian secret agents love telling and retelling. But then, there are the other tales: instances that the spies would much rather forget.

• In 1984, the government decided that it had no alternative but to clear the Golden Temple. The Intelligence Bureau was asked to assess the strength of Bhindranwale's forces. In its report, IB said that the terrorists had hand-guns and other light weaponry; and were therefore unlikely to offer much resistance.

This report was shown to General K. Sundarji, who had been entrusted with the operation that was to be called Bluestar. Chuffed by IB's estimates of Bhindranwale's strength, Sundarji declared that his troops would clear the Temple in five hours. He had never been more mistaken in his life.

When the army entered the Temple, it was attacked by rockets and missiles from bunkers. The map of the Temple's interior supplied to troops was also faulty, one column entered an obvious ambush and was cruelly mowed down. Finally, Sundarji's five hours stretched to nearly five days and he had to use tanks and destroy the Akal Takht. Nearly 120 soldiers died in the operation. Said General Brar who had been in charge of the fighting when it was all over: "Yes, there was a total failure of intelligence."

• A RAW agent in London noticed that two Kashmir liberation terrorists had flown in from Paris. He was certain that this meant that a major operation was underway. He sent a message to RAW headquarters in New Delhi asking the Pakistan desk to tap its other sources to find out what such an operation could be.

The matter went up to a joint director of the agency who suspected at once that one of three things was planned: a hijacking, a kidnapping or an assassination. He sent a message to the director urging that he contact the foreign ministry and issue a red alert. Air-India should be required to step up security and all diplomats should be asked to take precautions. His concern was pooh-poohed.

Two days later, the Kashmiris struck. They kidnapped R. Mhatre, an Indian diplomat and later killed him. It was a senseless murder and one that could easily have been avoided if RAW had listened to its agents.

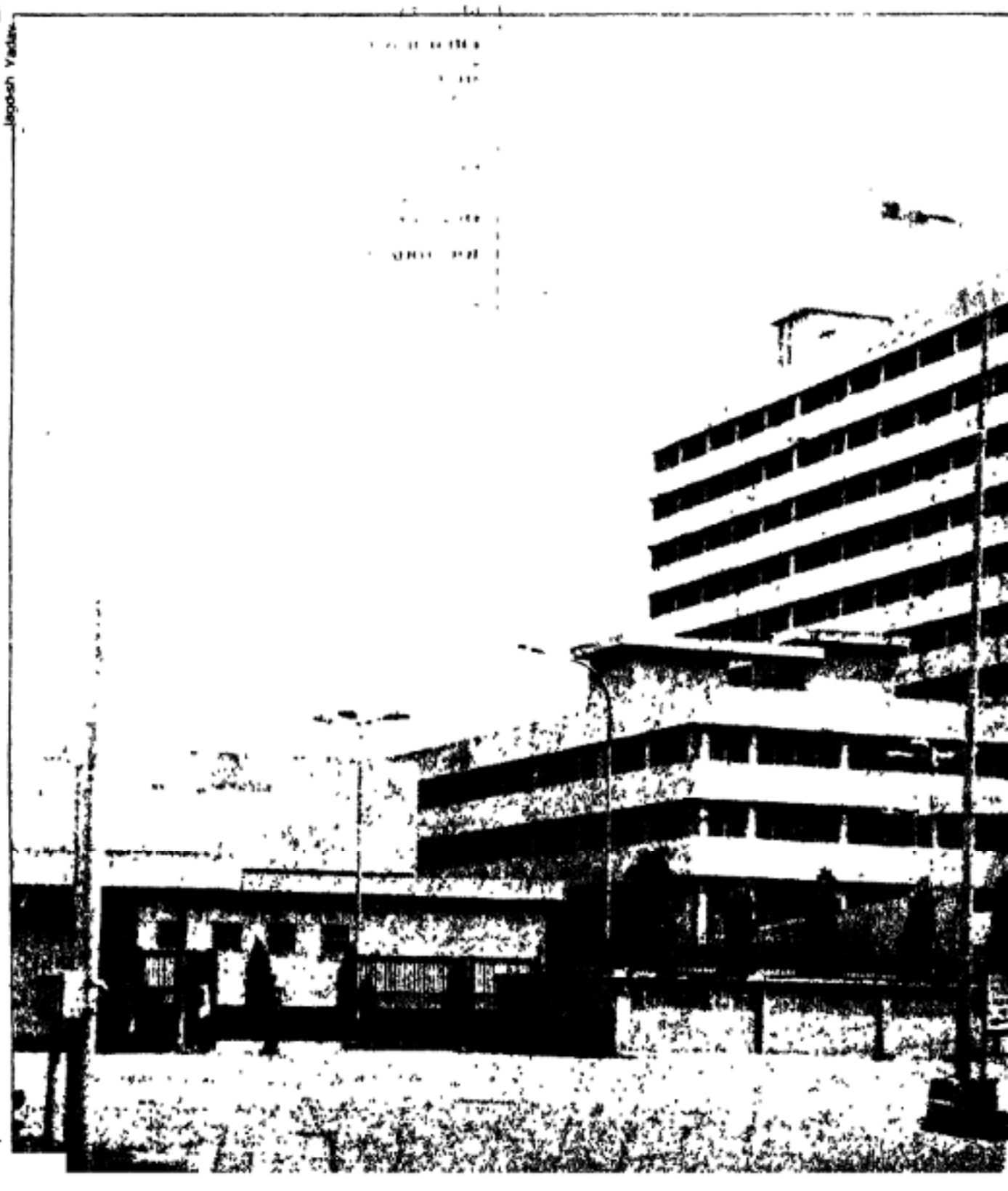
So, for every story about the ingenuity of India's spymasters, there exists another one about their incompetence. And in this wilderness of reflections, it becomes nearly impossible to work out what the truth is. Is our security in the hands of latter-day men from UNCLE? Or are we pinning all our hopes on the Keystone Cops?

Because our politicians spend so much time talking about our Russian friends and blame many of our misfortunes on the dastardly agents of British and American imperialism, India's spies find it convenient to not remind us that they are—in fact—in direct descent from the Brits and the Yanks.

The Intelligence Bureau has its origins in the Directorate of Intelligence Bureau, created by the Raj in November 1920 out of the old Criminal Intelligence Department (CID). In 1933, the bureau's responsibilities were increased to include the collection of intelligence along India's borders and it was treated as a sister service by the two British spy outfits: MI5 and the Secret Intelligence Service (known variously as MI6 or SIS). During the war, it worked in close tandem with both services and with the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the forerunner of the CIA.

In 1947, the Brits went home: many to MI5 and SIS where they rose to positions of high authority. And the Indians inherited the machine they had set up. Sanjeevi Pillai, IB's first Indian director, tried to run the bureau along MI5 lines. Young men, fresh out of university, were picked up and intellectuals offered well-paid jobs. Both Pillai and his successor, B.N. Mullick, were determined that IB should not become

RAW headquarters in New Delhi: premier foreign intelligence agency



just another police force.

IB took its present shape under Mullick who was, in many ways, the Indian counterpart of J. Edgar Hoover. An ambitious, hectoring man, Mullick ran the intelligence set-up like a private fiefdom, maintaining a direct relationship with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, pushing ministers around and ignoring reports from his agents when they did not suit him. He kept up the MI5 style at the organisational level but grabbed power in a manner that no British director-general would ever have been allowed at MI5.

Because IB was also in charge of foreign intelligence, it was to Mullick that Nehru turned when he began to have doubts about Chinese intentions. While there is some dispute over what Mullick actually advised, it seems clear that he got the timing and direction of the Chinese offensive all wrong and was in disgrace after the 1962 war. Mullick, unfortunately, did not see things that way and decided that he wanted to be director for life. When he was eased out in 1965, he took his removal with bad grace and refused even to attend a farewell party thrown for him.



The IB got the timing and direction of the Chinese offensive all wrong and was in disgrace after the 1962 war. The government then decided to set up a foreign intelligence service. Thus, RAW came into being under R.N. Kao

By then, however, the Chinese debacle had made it obvious that India needed to reassess its security set-up. Tiring somewhat of the MI5-SIS pattern, and perhaps because both these services were now revealed to be heavily penetrated by the Russians (Burgess and Maclean in MI5; Philby in SIS), the government turned to the CIA. The agency was already extremely active in New Delhi and had begun operations in Dharamsala after the Dalai Lama fled to India. The Indian government collaborated with the CIA to set up Establishment 22 and all gathering of intelligence pertaining to China became a joint IB-CIA operation even as the left-wing of the Congress party was blaming the CIA for India's ills.

The second and most important phase of Indian intelligence began with the eclipse of Mullick and the rise of an astute (some would say brilliant) Kashmiri Brahmin called R.N. Kao. After the China war, the military intelligence services, which had been marginalised by Mullick ("Their operatives can't tell the difference between an Assamese and a Chinaman," he would scoff), chose this opportunity to run down IB. Their persistence led the government to agree to set up a foreign intelligence service, independent of IB, and to also establish the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis to provide a fresh perspective into security questions. In 1965, when Lal Bahadur Shastri was Prime Minister, a foreign intelligence cell was set up in South Block. But it was not till 1968, after Indira Gandhi had taken over, that it was decided that a full-fledged second security service was needed. R.N. Kao, then a deputy director of IB, submitted a blueprint for the new agency and while this document is still classified, it is believed to have recommended a move away from the SIS-style to a CIA-type approach. Kao's blueprint was accepted, and he became the first chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW).

At one level, RAW's charter was straight-forward enough: to obtain intelligence about foreign countries (the 'research') and then to apply it to India's advantage (the 'analysis'). But Kao seems to have promised more: covert operations, for instance. And he had a Prime Minister who was very interested, indeed.

The first years of RAW demonstrated Kao's clout. His men gathered useful intelligence for the Rann of Kutch operation and RAW functioning in the forward Nathula area gave valuable insights into



R.N. Kao: RAW was his brainchild



Chinese reinforcements and preparedness. There was also a successful covert operation: RAW organised and trained Tibetan refugees for the Kampa rebellion against the Chinese

By then, IB was becoming an adjunct of the IPS and Kao was able to persuade Mrs Gandhi that RAW had to be different and pick its agents from all spheres Naturally, the best and the brightest would not join up for IPS type salaries and so they were paid much higher wages, many from RAW's secret funds Kao was always travelling abroad and if he ever came across a bright spark, he hired him on the spot For instance, there was Ghanshyam Mehta, an Indian research scholar who, in 1980, had procured Chinese maps in which Indian territory was shown as part of China After the 1962 war, Mehta went to live in America, and it was at the University of California in Los Angeles that Kao found him. Mehta was signed up at once for a RAW assignment.

By 1971, Kao was special secretary, security, and virtually unstoppable He persuaded the government to set up the Aviation Research Centre (ARC) out of the old Establishment 22, which had, of course, been launched jointly with the CIA. The ARC's job was aerial reconnaissance and by using modern CIA technology, it replaced the Air Force's old reconnaissance aircraft. By the mid-70s, RAW, through the ARC, had high quality aerial pictures of the installations along the Chinese and Pakistani borders

By 1976, when Kao became secretary, security, reporting directly to the Prime Minister, his rise had made RAW India's premier intelligence agency There were RAW agents in virtually every major embassy and high commission and in addition to these operatives, who had diplomatic cover, scores of others were run as "illegals", or clandestine agents Its budget in the early

James Bond *ki hartal*

Trade unionism is rampant in the security services

The year 1979 was an eventful one for intelligence employees. Apart from the growing strain between deputationists and direct recruits, the police agitation also affected the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and other agencies. Sensing trouble, the government made a bid to initiate a dialogue between the lower staff and the top brass of the IB. To facilitate negotiations, staff councils were set up in each state, and an apex council was set up for the entire country. In June 1979, the members of the apex body met the then home minister, H.M. Patel. Soon after, the disaffection among the lower staff increased. They accused the government of swamping the staff councils with their own "agents". In protest, many of them quit the staff councils and set up the Intelligence Bureau Employees Association (IBEA) on 23 June, 1979.

The IBEA's influence grew alarmingly. Employees started joining it in droves. Some of their demands were the creation of a separate IB cadre and well-defined promotion and transfer policies. The thrust of the IBEA's attacks was, of course, against deputationists, who had allegedly converted the organisation into their "empire". Within months, the IBEA had 52 units all over the country, with a total membership of 8,000. Association members issued press releases about the manner in which senior IB officers were misusing office vehicles. Some anonymous complaints were even made to IB authorities.

By the time Indira Gandhi returned to power, the IB was a very different organisation from what it had been during the Emergency. Two parallel groups of employees, the "dissidents" and the "loyalists", were engaged in a tussle, all the while watching the political situation with enormous interest.

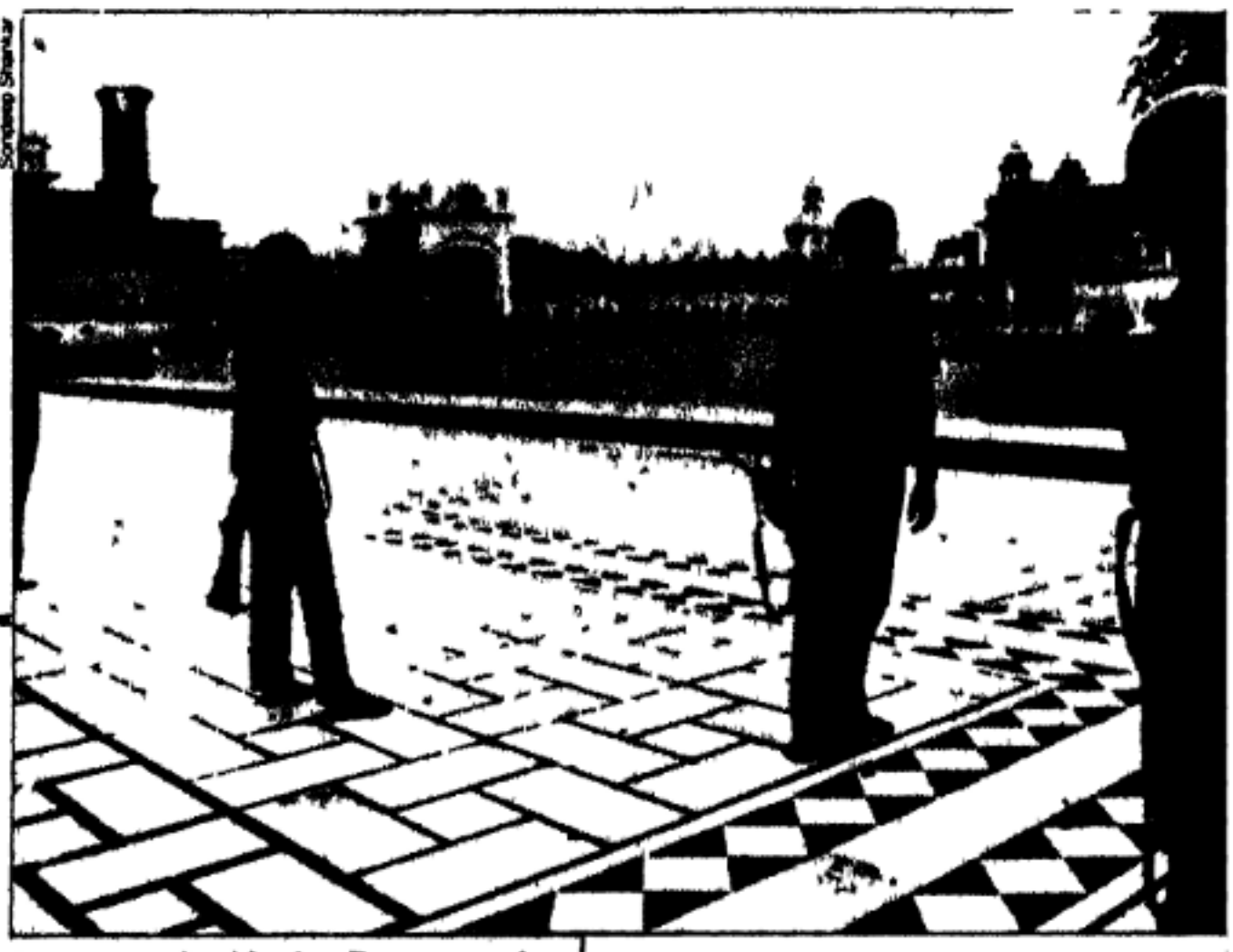
T.V. Rajeshwar, 56, of the IPS (1950 batch) was appointed director of IB. He had been Andhra Pradesh's special commissioner in Delhi during Channa Reddy's stint as chief minister and was known to have assisted Indira, Rajiv and Sanjay during the Janata days, through his informal intelligence network. After he was brought into the IB, a large number of officials in the organisation were re-transferred to undo the "damage" done by the Janata government. This only worsened relations between the IB and the government. At one point in 1982, the IB director had gone to inaugurate a new office in Trivandrum only to find that it had already been opened by a section of irate IB personnel, who had decided to preempt him.

This incident was part of the feud between the loyalists and the dissidents in the organisation. The dissidents, largely members of the IBEA, were opposed to Rajeshwar. The loyalists, however, wrote him a letter praising him for "all that you have done and are doing". In 1980, the loyalists formed a parallel association, the Intelligence Bureau Employees Welfare Association (IBEWA), to counter the influence of the IBEA. Members of the IBEWA got favours from the top brass, while the IBEA members were treated callously and even transferred to break up the association. Some of the IBEA's grievances related to the lack of facilities like toilets, canteens, drinking water and recreational arrangements. But the government's antipathy towards them stemmed from political reasons: in the IBEA



pre inflationary Seventies was Rs 30 crores a year On the other hand IB's was under Rs 2 crores! And while IB directors remained career policemen who came and went, Kao seemed to go on forever

In retrospect old intelligence hands date the decline of India's intelligence set-up to the Emergency According to IB veterans the Bureau's then director A Jayaram advised Mrs Gandhi against promulgating the Emergency Then, say the IB men the Prime Minister went to Kao who overstepped his foreign affairs brief, interfered in domestic policy and



Sandeep Shankar

Operation Bluestar total failure of intelligence

supported the Emergency (For the record, RAW sources strongly dispute this assessment) Mrs Gandhi saw Jayaram as an ill informed policeman while Kao was the hero of the Bangladesh operation her own George Smiley and, besides, told her what she wanted to hear So, Jayaram was sidelined and Kao took over as intelligence overlord, overseeing domestic security operations as well

By Mrs Gandhi's own account, this was to prove a disastrous mistake While IB was expected to catch foreign spies and keep a watch on potential subversives, by the late Sixties it had entered the business of political intelligence Now it tapped the phones of Congressmen and Opposition members alike, read their mail and reported on their political activities IB heads in state capitals filed regular reports informing their political masters about the public mood

During the Emergency as other sources of information dried up Indira Gandhi came to rely, more and more on intelligence reports She said later that these were misleading and suggested that the Emergency was popular and that there were no excesses IB sources claim that fed up of being pushed around, they simply reported what she wanted to hear Kao, they said, could have told her the truth but chose not to

By then RAW had a major failure on its hands Its operatives claim now that they had advance information about Mujib-ur-Rehman's assassination but in

were men who had won favours and plaudits from the Janata government for their "good" work in Operation Kuber (the raid on Indira Gandhi's Mehrauli farm) and other such campaigns

Once Indira Gandhi returned to power, the authorities took a firm stand on indiscipline in the IB But if the authorities' attitude hardened, so did the employees The IBEA's chief grievance was the official patronage extended to the parallel association, the IBEWA The IBEWA, meanwhile, accused the former of raising "alluring leftist slogans and false hopes" and misleading IB staff In January 1981 it issued a circular criticising the manner in which the IBEA was getting communist MPs to raise questions in Parliament about the goings-on in the IB Matters came to a head on 20 September, 1980, when two IB officers were assaulted. Kailash Chander, a scheduled caste employee, was attacked in front of the IB's RK Puram office while he was reading out a notice Another officer was assaulted at the IB's Man Singh Road office. Several officers, including B.B Raval, were later dismissed and trade unionism entered a period of relative lull.

Even the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) has not been free from trouble. For the police, the 1979 agitation had died a natural death after the Congress(I) returned to power in 1980. But in the intelligence services—the IB, RAW and the Central Bureau of Intelligence (CBI)—the disaffection continued. Intelligence men found themselves at loggerheads with the new government throughout 1980. On 14 February, 1980, disgruntled RAW employees formed the RAW Employees Association and by 30 June, even had it registered with the Registrar of Societies, Delhi administration.

Towards the end of 1980, the situation in RAW worsened. On 25 November that year, when various RAW offices were being shifted to their new premises in the CGO complex near Lodi Road, an assistant director happened to slap an employee for accidentally damaging some furniture. Members of the association met the deputy director and demanded that action be taken against him. On 28 November, a section of RAW employees gheraoed some senior officers. The police were called in and cases registered against 31 of them. The employees then went on a wildcat strike. Within days, work at all RAW establishments in Delhi, Patna, Lucknow, Amritsar and Srinagar came to a virtual halt. Even the intervention of M.L. Fotedar, the political secretary in the PM's secretariat, did not help. By 2 December, about 90 employees were suspended. The association claimed that it had the support of 5,000 Class II, III and IV employees. The government began talking of an "outside hand" behind the stir. Four RAW employees went on a fast outside the Modi Road office. The matter went up to the Delhi High Court. And on 19 December, the court issued orders restraining the government from dismissing 50 RAW employees until further orders.

[illegible]

that case, they certainly did nothing to prevent it. Given that RAW's greatest triumph had been in Bangladesh, this was an embarrassing bloomer. Nine heads at the top of the organisation rolled as Kao struggled to remain on top of events.

Kao's friends say that much of the speculation about his role during the Emergency is misconceived. He had, they say, serious reservations about Sanjay Gandhi and disapproved of much that went on. They deny, too, that RAW tortured the regime's political opponents (it was IB and the Central Bureau of Investigation) or that Kao told Mrs Gandhi that she would sweep the polls in 1977. There's no doubt that IB reported that the Congress was certain to win but its agents claim that the bureau suggested that there be a gap of six months between the release of the Opposition leaders and the elections to allow their halos to wear off. Mrs Gandhi rejected this advice and lost her own seat.

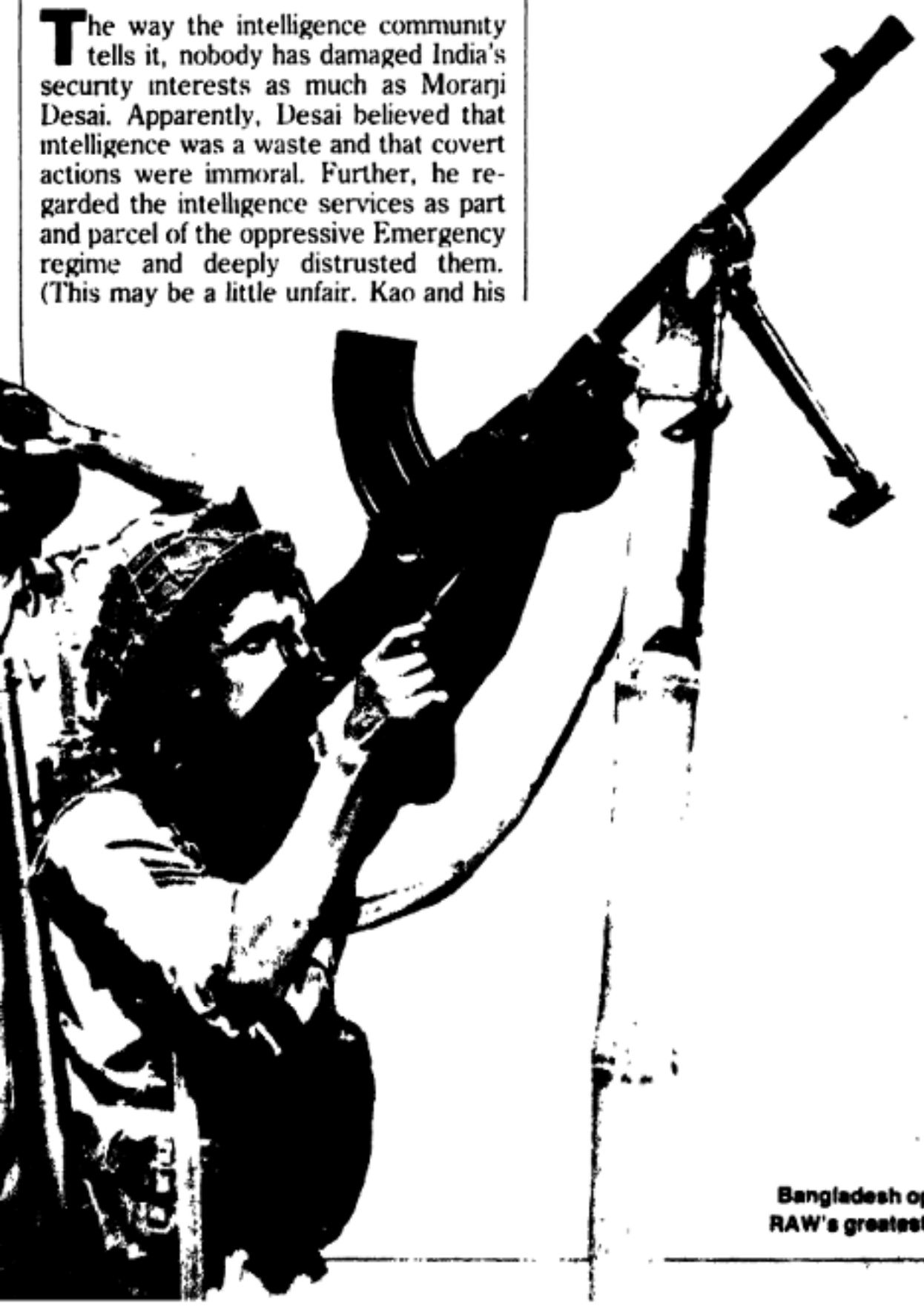


Zia-ur-Rahman

According to Subramaniam Swamy, RAW was on the verge of assassinating Bangladesh's General Zia when Morarji stepped in and aborted the operation. Zia was killed after Mrs Gandhi returned but RAW pleads innocence

The way the intelligence community tells it, nobody has damaged India's security interests as much as Morarji Desai. Apparently, Desai believed that intelligence was a waste and that covert actions were immoral. Further, he regarded the intelligence services as part and parcel of the oppressive Emergency regime and deeply distrusted them. (This may be a little unfair. Kao and his deputy Shankaran Nair deposed before the Shah Commission *in camera* but not a word was recorded against them in the final report.)

During the Janata period, intelligence budgets were slashed, clandestine operations closed down, sources were allowed to dry up and veteran intelligence men were transferred out. Recalls one RAW operative: "What made RAW special was that we had flair. Morarji halved our budget, shut down many of our overseas offices and reduced M.F. Santookh, Kao's successor, to the level of a *babu*." Desai would repeatedly tell the heads of IB and RAW that he wanted no intelligence gathering beyond what went on in the Fifties. In effect, this meant that the security services became police bureaucracies.



Bangladesh operation: RAW's greatest triumph

RAW agents are still bitter about one of Morarji's decisions which they consider the greatest blunder in the history of Indian intelligence. In early 1978, one of RAW's most reliable Pakistani assets approached the agency with the entire blueprint and the plans for the Kahuta nuclear plant. All he wanted was $10,000, something that RAW could easily afford, even with its severely curtailed budget. The agency was thrilled with this unexpected breakthrough and Santookh went to Morarji Desai for his approval. Desai heard Santookh out and then, dismissed the proposal out of hand.

RAW was outraged but powerless. But worse was still to come. Morarji then bragged to Pakistani diplomats that their security was so bad that he could have procured the plans for Kahuta had he so desired! The Pakistanis at once launched an investigation to see where the leak could have come from. As very few people had access to the plans, it wasn't difficult to isolate the RAW agent. Having found him, they shot him dead.

Says a RAW operative: "If India had indeed obtained that crucial Kahuta blueprint at that stage, then we could have done something about it and ensured that Pakistan's nuclear programme never existed." Moreover, after that incident, other RAW agents began to fear exposure and were reluctant to part with sensitive information.

Not everybody shares RAW's view of Morarji Desai. Subramaniam Swamy,

RAW agents claim that they were about to obtain the blueprint of the Kahuta nuclear plant but Morarji refused to sanction the $10,000 payment. He talked about the offer to the Pakistanis who caught and killed the RAW mole



Morarji Desai

the Janata MP, was close to Desai in 1978 and says: "It is unfair to claim that during the Janata period, irreparable damage was done to the intelligence superstructure. There was not much of a cut in budgets. What did happen is that many of the IB officers who had come to RAW on deputation were sent back." Adds L.K. Advani, information and broadcasting minister during the Janata period: "We weeded out three officers loyal to Indira Gandhi: Kao, Shankaran Nair and Rajeshwar. And we put an end to political espionage. That's all."

Swamy claims that Morarji scuttled—with some justification—one attempt at covert action. He says that Kao and Shankaran Nair, upset about Mujib's assassination, plotted to kill General Zia-ur-Rahman. The scheme was already at an advanced stage (with Mrs Gandhi's approval) when the Congress government fell and Shankaran Nair then briefed Morarji about it. Desai was appalled that RAW would want to assassinate a neighbouring head of state and stopped the murder. Shankaran Nair warned the Prime Minister that it was too late to back out now and that many RAW assets would be endangered if the plan was aborted at this stage. Morarji was adamant and finally, RAW abandoned the assassination.

General Zia continued to rule Bangladesh for many more years. He was assassinated after Indira Gandhi returned to power but India said that she was not involved.

In 1980, when Indira Gandhi regained office, the intelligence community was delighted. Kao was retrieved from limbo and appointed her security adviser, Shankaran Nair was entrusted with a cadre review of the spy services. RAW once again became the government's favourite child and its headquarters at the impressive Central Government Office (CGO) complex in New Delhi buzzed with activity. New equipment was also imported for the agency's monitoring unit spread over 100 acres in Delhi's Mayur Vihar.

It is debatable, however, how well RAW performed during Mrs Gandhi's second reign. The monitoring complex managed to tap most secret communications but these were usually in code and therefore of little intelligence use. The biggest breakthrough, perhaps, was the agency's success with Pakistani telecommunications: at one stage, the monitoring unit was listening in to all phone calls made by important Pakistani leaders.

But there were innumerable failures. Mrs Gandhi had invested a great deal in India's relations with Mauritius. RAW set up its overseas headquarters there and India went to great lengths to ensure that Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam continued to be its Prime Minister, even, on some accounts, helping finance his re-election. (Says Subramaniam Swamy: "RAW had T-shirts saying 'Vote for Ramgoolam' printed and sent to Mauritius.") But the effort was in vain. By the early Eighties Ramgoolam lost power and the new government was less hospitable to RAW.

There were other failures too. RAW prided itself on its network of 'illegals' in Pakistan, yet it remained largely ignorant about the progress of that country's nuclear programme. It had many agents in Sri Lanka but when ethnic strife first broke out in 1983, it was taken by surprise.

The most important failure, however, was over Punjab. In theory, the Punjab operation should have been an IB concern because it was domestic in nature. But RAW was pulled in nevertheless. There were many reasons. Firstly, the job was entrusted to Kao as security adviser and he felt more comfortable with his old service. Secondly, Mrs Gandhi regarded RAW as the better agency. And thirdly, there was a foreign element because of the involvement of Pakistan and of overseas Sikhs.

By 1983, RAW had notched up some minor successes in Punjab. One of its moles had penetrated Bhindranwale's inner circle (later, he would be glorified as 'the Falcon') and it had agents within every important overseas Sikh community. But it is doubtful if any accurate intelligence came out of this. RAW failed to predict quite how militant Bhindranwale would get or to accurately estimate the strength of his arsenal. Instead, its intelligence inputs continued to harp on the Pakistani role and to make out that the entire movement was run from across the border.

Its overseas agents were even less successful. In London's Southhall, a vast network of RAW 'illegals' tried to penetrate the local Sikh community and to spread dissension among militants. In Toronto, undercover RAW operatives tried the same approach. And yet, overseas Sikhs became more and more extreme and RAW's agents were unable to come up with any information on the group that bombed Air-India's Kanishka airliner.

Stung by its failures in Punjab, RAW attempted to make up in Sri Lanka. Kao was told by Mrs Gandhi to repeat his Bangladesh success and RAW went looking for militants it could train to destabilise the regime. Camps were set up in Tamil Nadu (with the consent of chief minister M.G. Ramachandran) and old RAW guerrilla trainers from the Mukti Bahini days brought out of retirement. That this destabilised Sri Lanka is indisputable. But then, so is the fact that it created Prabhakaran and led to the mess we are in today.

During Mrs Gandhi's second reign, though RAW remained the favoured service, the old anti-IB bias vanished. This was partly because Kao was no longer merely RAW director but overall intelligence overlord and mainly because Mrs Gandhi's domestic intelligence requirements quadrupled.

IB had always been used to spy on political opponents. Justice J.C. Shah passed severe strictures against its functioning during the Emergency, declaring that it was a "travesty of democratic institutions if the government constituted by one political party is entitled to watch the activities of other political parties and even of members of its own party". During the Janata period, it attempted to curry favour with Morarji Desai by keeping him informed of what his rivals within the party were doing. Ever the moralist, Morarji ordered an end to political surveillance and stopped telephone tapping. (On the other hand,

V. Nagarkar, IB's Janata-supporting director, nearly resigned out of frustration because of Morarji's refusal to sanction a raid on Indira Gandhi's farmhouse till it was too late.)

When Mrs Gandhi came back, so did telephone tapping and mail surveillance. After Sanjay's death, virtually half of IB's resources were devoted to keeping track of his widow and her perceived friends. Menaka Gandhi's phone was tapped; Akbar Ahmed was routinely followed by a posse of agents and two operatives stood outside A.R. Antulay's Marine Drive residence noting down the names of all his callers.

Unfortunately by then, IB had become just another bureaucracy. There were constant squabbles between the IPS officers (who manned the top 50 posts) and the direct recruits (who manned 90 per cent of the low-level posts). There was resentment too of RAW, perceived as the glamorous service which got foreign postings. To try and mollify IB officers, high-fliers were sent off to MI5 for training. As the British parted with nothing of value, the spies learned little, but the London jaunts were most welcome.

The *babu*-isation of the IB reflected in its work. The BJP MP L.K. Advani recalls how he first found out that his mail was being intercepted: "Sometime in 1982, I was struck by the fact that all my letters were arriving late. My parcels came on time but my envelopes were delayed by at least a day. One day, I got a letter which was correctly addressed to me on the envelope. But when I started reading it I found that it began with the words. *Adarniya Lalaji.* I am usually addressed as Lalji not Lalaji, so I was surprised. When I read further, I discovered that it was meant for Lala Hans Raj Gupta who lived nearby. Obviously, the interceptors had been opening both my mail and Lalaji's; and this time, they had mistakenly put one of his letters in the wrong envelope!"

It was during this period that IB became renowned for keeping a watch on politicians. It also acquired a reputation for playing rough. Its main interrogation chamber is located inside the Red Fort and those who have been there have horrifying tales to tell. The central interrogation room is large and sparingly furnished. The target sits on a wooden stool and is questioned by a joint interrogation team in front of him. On one side of the room is a one-way mirror from behind which senior intelligence officers watch. The room is always [illegible] even when it is empty) and the target is hectored and bullied into confessing. If this does not work, he is

The spies who never were

The 'master spies' who turned out to be small fry

In the high-security wards of Tihar Jail, they were called members of the prison's "spy club". There was Major General F.D. Larkins and his brother, K.H. Larkins, both sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for trading defence secrets with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Coomar Narain, incarcerated for masterminding a pernicious espionage ring with roots in the Prime Minister's and President's offices. If the Larkins brothers sold documents pertaining to defence equipment and the Planning Commission over a period of five years, Coomar Narain and his moles in South Block passed on RAW reports and central cipher bureau (CCB) codes, in exchange of, as the courts said, "a peg or a leg". There was also Rama Swaroop, the country's first self-confessed double agent, who, while on the payroll of the IB, was also serving American interests.

Where are all these prize catches of the IB now? Suprisingly enough, each master spy caught after sustained undercover operations is out on bail. The grant of unconditional bail, the IB and the police might point out, is not in itself an indication of the innocence of the accused. But an examination of the charges against them and the legal proceedings show that the much publicised espionage cases of the Eighties have, in fact, fallen through.

Even before the fallacies in these particular cases surfaced, the IB (which provides the tip-off) and the police (which culls the evidence) had an unenviable record of convicting alleged spies. In 1978, Captain Ranbir Singh Rathore and 39 others were arrested in the famous Sambha spy case. Rathore was awarded a 14-year sentence for being an agent of the Pakistan Field Intelligence Unit (FIU). Rathore is still in Tihar Jail but it is widely believed (B.M. Sinha's book makes this clear) that he was framed to hide the collusion between the FIU, the Indian intelligence and the Border Security Force (BSF).

Rathore's prison term will probably be reduced as was the Larkins brothers' recently. While some believe that the latter were let off on account of exemplary conduct the truth lies elsewhere. Frank Larkins, convicted by the Sessions Court,was granted bail by the High Court due to his wife's ill health. Kenneth Larkins, who started physical training and education classes inside the prison, was allowed out on parole even though he had never applied for bail. Says Frank Larkins now: "There is no doubt that getting interim bail like this weakens the case. My lawyers have assured me that the chances of my going back to jail are dim." There is also talk in legal circles that judges are hesitant to take up the Larkins case in the High Court because the evidence against the accused is weak.

LTTE supremo V. Prabhakaran: a creation of RAW?



tortured; Coomar Narain, whom the IB called a "master spy", says that he was questioned for days in this chamber by a tall and intimidating Sikh. When he did not crack, the officer threatened him with violence. Next he was told that he would be stripped and sent out in the rain. The threat was followed by action: he was indeed stripped. And so on. Finally, Narain agreed to say whatever the IB wanted him to.

How much good all this heavy stuff does is far from clear. Many of the IB's so-called "master spies" have obviously been framed and its fabled domestic intelligence capacity is dubious. According to politicians, little of tactical value emerges from its offices in North Block and 25, Akbar Road. And, in any case, it failed completely to predict the plot that led to Indira Gandhi's assassination.

The intelligence apparatus has had



Rama Swaroop : self-confessed double agent



Coomar Narain : guilty or framed-up?

This is precisely the point that Coomar Narain, the managing director of the now-infamous SLM Maneklal company makes. Narain was arrested in January 1985 and suffered acute psychological imbalance during his two-year-long imprisonment (some say his illness was feigned to get bail). But in the three years since the spy ring was smashed, the government has been able to examine only 30 of the 130 witnesses in the case.

Today, Coomar Narain talks of blatant frame-ups, of statements he was forced to make in dank interrogation chambers and of torture at the hands of the IB. So does Rama Swaroop, out on bail for over a year now.

Explains Swaroop, at his heavily-guarded defence colony residence: "Is it a crime to be pro-American in this country? There is a very powerful lobby working in the IB, who is masterminding this case. Since they have been able to prove nothing in the courts they are keeping me under surveillance so that I cannot tamper with the remaining witnesses."

With the passage of time the government's cases against the super spies get even weaker and their allegations of a frame-up become more vehement. The prosecution seems to be struggling to sustain the charges. And Indian intelligence, in not convicting the Coomar Narains and Rama Swaroops as yet, only bolsters the view that anti-espionage operations in India are only part investigation and part witch-hunt.

Ritu Sarin / *New Delhi*

three watersheds: the 1962 war with China, the 1975-77 Emergency and most recently, the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984. Right after Bluestar, in an attempt to make up for its disastrous failure, the IB recommended that all Sikhs be removed from Mrs Gandhi's security guard. This–it is now clear–was not due to any advance information but on purely communal grounds. Indira Gandhi went along with this.

Then, 11 October, she relented: R.K. Dhawan called the deputy commissioner of police (DCP) and said that Mrs Gandhi wanted the Sikhs back. The police were dubious and meetings were convened at 1, Safdarjung Road to discuss the move. Kao argued forcefully in favour of reinstating the Sikhs. There was, he said, no evidence of a plot involving them, but, as a precaution, they should either be covered by armed security or be asked to remain on the premises without guns. The Delhi police continued to object but were overruled. So, on 19 October, the duty charts at the PM's residence were changed and Beant Singh, Satwant Singh and the others returned to VVIP security. Somewhere along the line, the old reservations about not arming them were forgotten and on 31 October, they seized their opportunity. Kao resigned within 24 hours of the assassination.

Rajiv Gandhi, after he became Prime Minister, made it clear that he regarded the decision to reinstate the Sikhs as an appalling lapse and thought that the security services were inept. (His brother Sanjay used to sneeringly refer to RAW as 'Relatives and Wives Association' after the nepotism of its bosses.)

Arun Singh, then Rajiv's most trusted aide (and a spy and army buff) was assigned the job of overhauling the intelligence machinery. The government's solution was to set up a Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) in the Cabinet secretariat and to curtail the direct access to the Prime Minister, traditionally enjoyed by the directors of RAW and IB. The JIC has, as its members, the directors of RAW, IB, the three military intelligence units and two secretary-level officers. Of the latter, one is called secretary (external intelligence) and is in charge of RAW, the ARC and the Special Security Bureau (SSB), which handles border intelligence and VVIP security. And the other is called secretary (internal intelligence) and has the IB and CBI in his charge.

The purpose of the JIC (now headed by Govind Rajan) was to encourage greater coordination between the services and to discourage the growth of Kao-type intelligence overlords. Kao was briefly recalled as a member of the Policy Planning Committee of the Cabinet but his position was undermined by officially sponsored rumours that the Thakkar Commission investigating Mrs Gandhi's assassination had passed severe strictures against him (these were never confirmed) and many of his operations, including the Tamil training camps, were wound up.

Now, the directors of the security services can see Rajiv if they wish, but rarely does he meet them alone. Usually such members of the Prime Minister's office as Sarla Grewal and Meera Shankar sit in on meetings. On matters pertaining to Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, Gopi Arora is often called in. And, the intelligence grapevine has it that Sam Pitroda has been assigned the job of modernising the technological base of the intelligence network. Pitroda denies this. "I have nothing to do with the intelligence agencies. C-Dot is working on communications proposals for the police but that is it," he told SUNDAY. ("Well, he'd have to say that, wouldn't he?" counter intelligence operatives.)

It is probably too early to assess the performance of the new-look security set-up but, at first glance, it seems to have had a mixed record. Over the last four years, IB's performance in Punjab has improved substantially. In 1984, in the aftermath of Bluestar, nearly 500 young Sikhs crossed into Pakistan. Aware of this traffic, IB planted its own agents among them. Their reports confirmed the stories about training camps run by the Pakistanis but these were often disguised as emanating from captured terrorists for fear of betraying the moles.

Over the last three years, IB has set up a smuggling racket as a cover for its

spying. Its agents pose as smugglers, carry genuine contraband across the Pakistan border and then report back to headquarters. Recruitment has also been stepped up and local agents are given code names, weapons and pocket cameras for photographing sensitive installations and documents.

This operation has helped identify the Pakistani connections of many terrorists, though IB's current stand is that there are no large-scale terrorist training camps. "When terrorists cross over to Pakistan, they are given sanctuary; that's all," says a senior IB official. This is at odds with the government's position that virtually the entire Punjab problem is a Pakistani creation.

IB's record on Sri Lanka, however, is not as good. The intelligence inputs to the core group set up to plan the Indian



Menaka Gandhi: IB's main concern after Sanjay's death



Patrolling the Indo-China border during the '62 war: IB misjudged Chinese intentions

Peace Keeping Force's (IPKF) operations suggested that the LTTE's total strength was under 1,000 and that the militants could be easily disarmed. When the IPKF landed in Jaffna, it found that this was an underestimate and had to rethink its entire strategy after many soldiers had lost their lives. IB blames RAW for the mistake; RAW, in turn, blames military intelligence. Nevertheless, despite this being a 'foreign intelligence' operation, IB shares RAW's turf.

RAW is, in fact, on dangerous ground in Sri Lanka because it has trained many of the men the IPKF is now hunting down. Prabhakaran regards RAW's present role as betrayal and the agency's officers, many of whom know and like him, have been engaged in an effort to win him back over the last few months. Oddly enough, they have adopted a high public profile while doing so, happily offering details of their negotiations to the press. In the process, RAW has emerged as the legitimate representative of the Indian government and such RAW officers as N.L. Chitwal have been named by the press. This, surely, is hardly the low profile that Rajiv Gandhi had intended for the agency!

Other RAW operations continue in Bangladesh where the agency maintains a substantial presence; in Afghanistan where it liaises with KHAD, the Afghan intelligence service; and in Sind where it offers low-level assistance to the rebels.

Its operations outside South Asia, however, are limited and virtually all its senior officers are well known to foreign intelligence services. (This is easier than it sounds. A non-IFS officer in an Indian embassy is at once suspect.) To beat the immigration computers at foreign airports, RAW now sends its agents out under pseudonyms. This creates hilarious mix-ups when RAW officers run into friends from India in the street who insist on addressing them by their real names.

The Intelligence Bureau has had some triumphs and there have been times when it has performed excellently. IB operatives still gloat about their success in recruiting a third secretary at the Pakistani embassy in New Delhi. The diplomat reported to his IB controller that a serving colonel in the Indian army was a Pakistani spy but failed to identify him.

Then, late one evening, he told his controller that the colonel was in the Pakistan embassy at that moment, getting secret documents photographed. An IB team rushed to the embassy in Chanakyapuri and posted men at all the exits. At 11 pm, a car driven by a Pakistani agent and containing the colonel emerged. The IB team tailed it. Unfortunately, the Pakistani noticed the tail and drove around Delhi for three hours, trying to shake it. When he failed, the car returned to the embassy.

For three days, IB watched the embassy waiting for the colonel to appear but the Pakistanis kept him inside. Finally, the Pakistani agents took the highly unusual step of asking the ambassador for help. When he agreed, they hid the colonel in the boot of his limousine and drove him out to the ambassador's residence, reckoning, correctly, that the IB would not break protocol by either stopping the ambassador or searching his house. Late that night, the colonel escaped from the ambassador's residence through a back door.

But he had already given himself away. All IB had to do now was to check with the army and find out which serving colonel had suddenly gone missing for three days. Investigations revealed that a colonel's wife in Mathura had reported her husband missing but that he had subsequently returned. It turned out to be the Pakistani spy.

Under interrogation he told the bureau that he had been a mole for some years now. His *modus operandi* was to take a train from Mathura to Delhi, to deliver the documents in the evening and then return the same night.

Unfortunately such spectacular counter-espionage coups are rare and IB spends most of its time collecting political intelligence. Says L.K. Advani: "In 1985, I ran into a senior intelligence officer who happened to be in possession

of a number of transcripts of conversations that had taken place between politicians and journalists, between the Chief Justice and others and even between the President of India and certain people. I checked the transcripts of my calls and found they were accurate. This convinced me that there was large-scale telephone tapping."

Advani's conclusion is shared by nearly every other politician. Giani Zail Singh, for instance, believed that the rooms of Rashtrapati Bhavan were bugged (they were) and conducted all his conversations on the lawns. And as the Hegde scandal shows, even state intelligence departments can tap phones. Of course, they lack the sophistication of IB which now needs only 30 seconds to tap a phone.

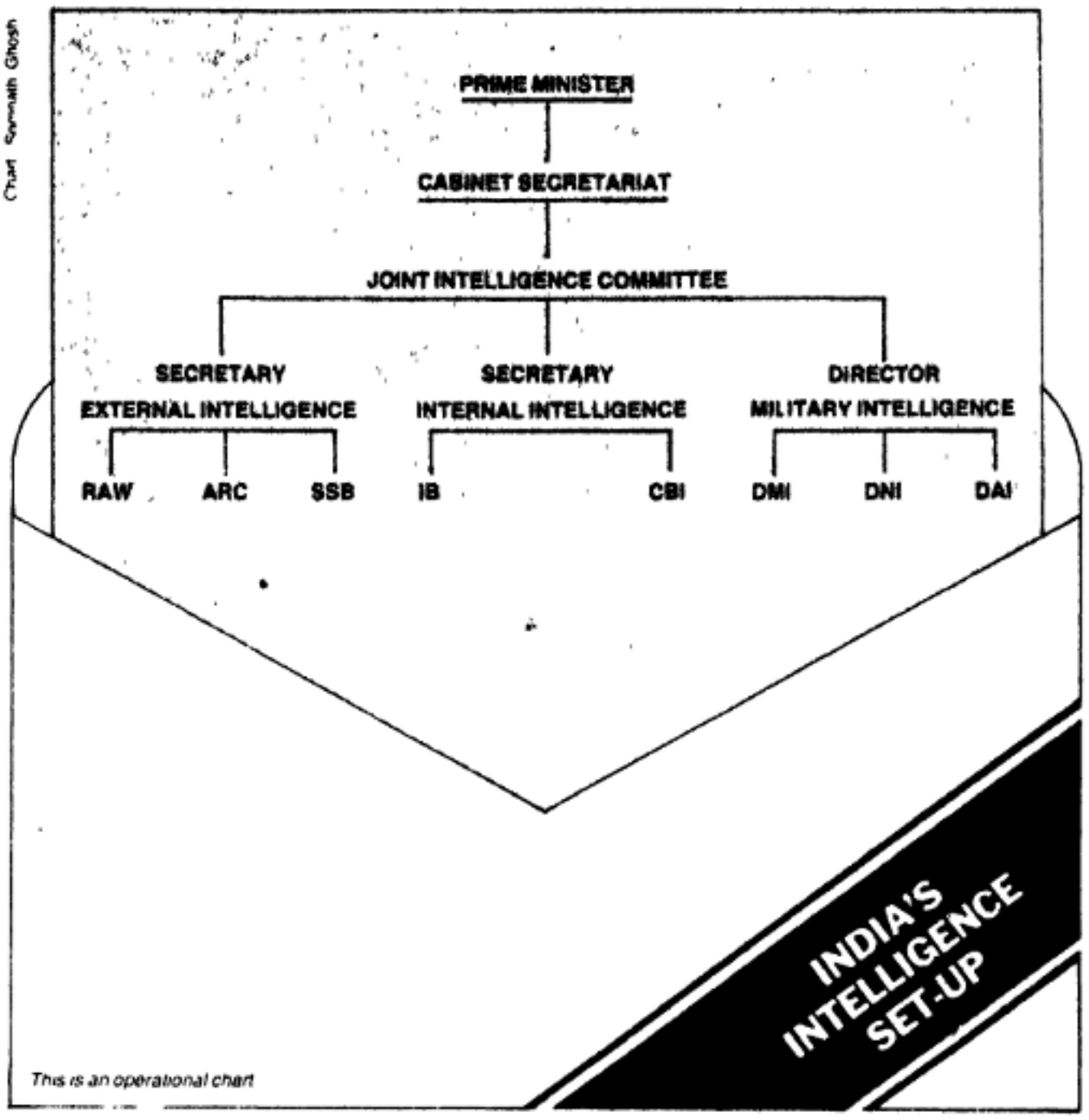
Generally, the telephone department is asked to make a line faulty. Then, an IB officer, disguised as a telephone technician, visits the house or office and installs a bug the size of a ear stud with a one centimetre-long antenna inside the receiver. Some bugs of this type pick up only phone conversations. Others can pick up all conversations in the room. The bug then transmits to a receiver in an IB safe house where the conversation is tape-recorded.

This is an expensive method of phone tapping compared to the usual parallel-line operation but it is foolproof and requires no paper work or permissions. It is for such purposes that IB has safe houses in Vasant Vihar, Kaka Nagar and Anand Niketan. These houses are used to monitor bugs, to meet agents secretly and to conduct clandestine interrogations. They appear on no list of IB addresses and their rents are paid from secret funds. (Inevitably, many are owned by IB officers who rent them to the bureau at fancy rents!)

Most security services are obsessed with mole-hunts. One such hunt nearly destroyed the CIA in the early Seventies, and MI5 and SIS have never recovered from the Russian penetration scandals. Strangely, the Indian secret services seem immune from such fears.

Perhaps they ought to worry more. Says Subramaniam Swamy: "According to me, only 60 per cent of RAW is independent from foreign powers. There is a 25 per cent penetration by the KGB and 15 per cent by the CIA." There are grounds for concern. Last year RAW discovered that V. Unnikrishnan, in charge of its Sri Lankan operation, was a CIA agent. He had been seduced by a female American spy and then given lots of spending money: that, apparently, was all it took. Most worrying, RAW only caught on when questions began to be asked about Unnikrishnan's flamboyant lifestyle. A few months ago, the BSF discovered that Balvinder Singh, known as the 'Giani' (see SUNDAY 17 July, 1988), an Indian intelligence agent, had been a Pakistani spy for years. There are many such instances but usually, they are hushed up.

Chart: Somnath Ghosh



This is an operational chart

In most cases, the inducement is not money or women. The problem lies in the bureaucratisation of the security services. Now, like all other government departments, they are full of disgruntled elements, furious at having been passed over for promotion or frustrated at having lost a foreign posting. Such men are prime candidates for recruitment by foreign agencies. Generally, they are at the end of their careers, see no hope of promotion and can only look forward to an unhappy retirement on an IPS pension. It does not take much to turn them, particularly as the fear of detection is largely absent.

If India is to develop a first-rate intelligence capability then, obviously, the security services will have to be given a certain degree of freedom and their officers will need to be selected on the basis of flair rather than seniority. But, can any government allow such freedom to its spymasters without ending up with the dictatorial style of a Mullick or the individualistic approach of a Kao?

As Rajiv Gandhi copes with the intelligence failure in Lanka and ponders the need to obtain inside information about India's enemies, these are questions that he must ask himself.

Nirmal Mitra and Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*



At one level, the Indian intelligence services are spectacularly successful, pulling off covert operations with an elan that would make James Bond blush. At another level, they are no more than bumbling bureaucracies, stuffed by squabbling government servants

Driven to tears

Bruce Springsteen, Peter Gabriel and Sting aim to move New Delhi audiences into acting for human rights

Place: Wembley Stadium, London. Date: 2 September, 1988. Time: 4 pm. Some megastars of the rock world—Bruce Springsteen, Tracy Chapman and Peter Gabriel take the stage. Peter Gabriel comes on with an acapella version of Bob Marley's freedom song *Get up, stand up*. For five hours 80,000 people sit spellbound as the first show of the "Human Rights Now" Concert gets underway. Then, as the chill of the evening sets in, Boss takes the mike. With the opening bars of *Born in the USA* Wembley Stadium is transformed. Thousands of candles are lit and 160,000 hands go up in ecstacy. This concert also featured Youssou N'Dour, E Street Band and Sting and has, some say, surpassed anything that Bob Geldof has ever done.

Place: Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi. Date: 30 September, 1988. The best the West has to offer by way of music and entertainment will come to India. Nearly one lakh people will witness a performance, which the organisers claim, will have the mind of Dylan, the soul of jazz, the beat of reggae and the distinction of rock and roll. The electrifying power of 60,000 watts of music, psychedelic strobe lights and the macho appeal of Springsteen will come to the Asiad venue. And the countdown has begun. Delhites (who have seen Osibisa and Boney M in action, so far) have decided to be around on the 30th, for such a show may not be held in India for decades to come.

The Human Rights Foundation and the Reebok Foundation had signed on the stars who were to perform on tour and wanted to hold one of the 18 shows in Delhi. They, apparently, contacted some hotel chains for sponsorship and later approached Bennet and Coleman, celebrating their 150th anniversary in 1988. (Earlier, there had been press reports that *The Times of India* would be inviting Madonna—at a fantastic price—to sing at the grand finale of their anniversary celebrations.) *The Times* grabbed the chance to host the show. It will provide the logistical back-up for the show and the gate money will later be donated to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund or to a social organisation.

The show would come to Delhi *en route* London, Paris, Budapest, Barcelona, San Jose, Toronto, Montreal, Philadelphia, Los Angeles and Tokyo. Staging it will, no doubt, be a gargantuan effort. Momentum has already built up in the Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg head office of Bennet and Coleman. Telephones ring continuously: "What do you mean by saying that one of your friends has already got a VIP pass? Since it is a charity show there will be no invitations. And the tickets have not even been printed as yet." The marketing department is showing foreign posters and souvenirs to companies for publicising the concert. But the host company has made it clear that no picture of Springsteen or of any other rock star can be used.

Members of the Reebok Foundation and some Indian committee members have inspected the venue of the concert, as also the seating arrangements. Springsteen, apparently, wants to be as close to the audience in New Delhi as possible. The safest, the organisers were told, would be to keep enthusiasts holding Rs 500 tickets, at least 15 feet away from the stage. A strong barricade was essential to prevent the crowd from surging towards the performers. There was also the problem of positioning the six large visual screens around the stadium so that they did not block the view of the Rs 100 ticket-holders in the stands. Adequate security would also have to be provided for the celebrities and VIPs, including the Prime Minister, who might attend the concert.



The Amnesty performers address a press conferenc

Since the release of his first album in 1972, 'Boss' (as Springsteen is also called) has become America's best-loved folk/rock musician. Springsteen who passed up a multi-million dollar contract to join the Amnesty tour will perform with the legendary E Street Band. The new Bob Dylan of the American working classes, Springsteen turns 39 a week before he comes to New Delhi. Says Anil Gupta, adviser to Bennett and

Tracy Chapman

With Springsteen around, there are chances of Peter Gabriel, Tracy Chapman and Sting being relegated to the ranks of the "also-sangs" of the show. And for no fault of their own



efore their London performance: music for a cause

The Secret Policeman's Balls

Amnesty used rock stars way before Live Aid

The idea of a concert for Amnesty pre-dates Live Aid or Band Aid or any other of Bob Geldof's concepts. The first Amnesty show was held in London in 1981, at a time when rock was not perceived to be the potent political force it now is. At the time, the stars of the show were such comedians as Peter Cook and John Cleese and the musicians (including The Who's Pete Townshend) appeared between skits to do individual songs. The success of The Secret Policeman's Ball (geddit, geddit?) as the show was titled, led to The Secret Policeman's Other Ball the following year which followed roughly the same pattern and boasted such rockers as Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck.

It was only after the success of Live Aid that Amnesty began thinking in terms of huge football stadium type shows. A world tour with Sting and U_2 was a grand success, helped raise funds for Amnesty and awakened the organisation to the possibilities of a second such tour. But this time, the emphasis seems to be on raising awareness of human rights issues and not so much on collecting money.

Of the stars in the New Delhi show two are Amnesty regulars. Sting appeared solo at the first Secret Policeman's Ball (performing *Roxanne)* and Peter Gabriel has always been on hand to raise money for good causes. Both singers are intelligent, articulate Brits and both have written and performed political material.

The big surprise of the current tour is the inclusion of American mega-star Bruce Springsteen. While Springsteen has appeared before at such benefits as The Concerts for a Non-Nuclear Future, he has never before taken a strong stand on human rights. He even turned down Live Aid on the grounds that his band was tired and he couldn't ask it to perform again.

By agreeing to take part in this tour Springsteen has made an important political statement and also elevated it into a major rock event: only Michael Jackson can draw crowds as big as his. ■

Coleman for the anniversary celebrations, who had witnessed the Wembley show, "During a live concert Bruce must be loosing thousands of calories He does not stand still for a second He is the most appealing, live wire rock performer today"

With Springsteen, there are chances that Peter Gabriel, Chapman and Sting could be relegated to the "also sangs" of the show And for no fault of their own. Gabriel is one of the forerunners of the show, with his experience of founding The Genesis in 1967 Sting, the former lead singer of Police has won several Grammy Awards Youssou N' Dour



Bruce Springsteen: crowd-puller

formed his own group in 1981 and his songs on Nelson Mandela make him a suitable inclusion for a human rights show. The only female star performer on the show, Tracy Chapman has received rave reviews in America and abroad.

Judging from the enquiries pouring in from all parts of the country, the human rights show will be sold out even before the last day of ticket-sales. The concert is expected to rake in over a crore of rupees (the Wembley concert netted more than five crores). There will be no television coverages of the show. So, as the rules for a Bruce Springsteen show go—be on time, don't take drugs, and catch the bus back home.

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*

The Point of no return?

The new plan to develop Bombay's plush Nariman Point-Cuffe Parade area is biased in favour of the wealthy and threatens to stretch the city's already strained resources

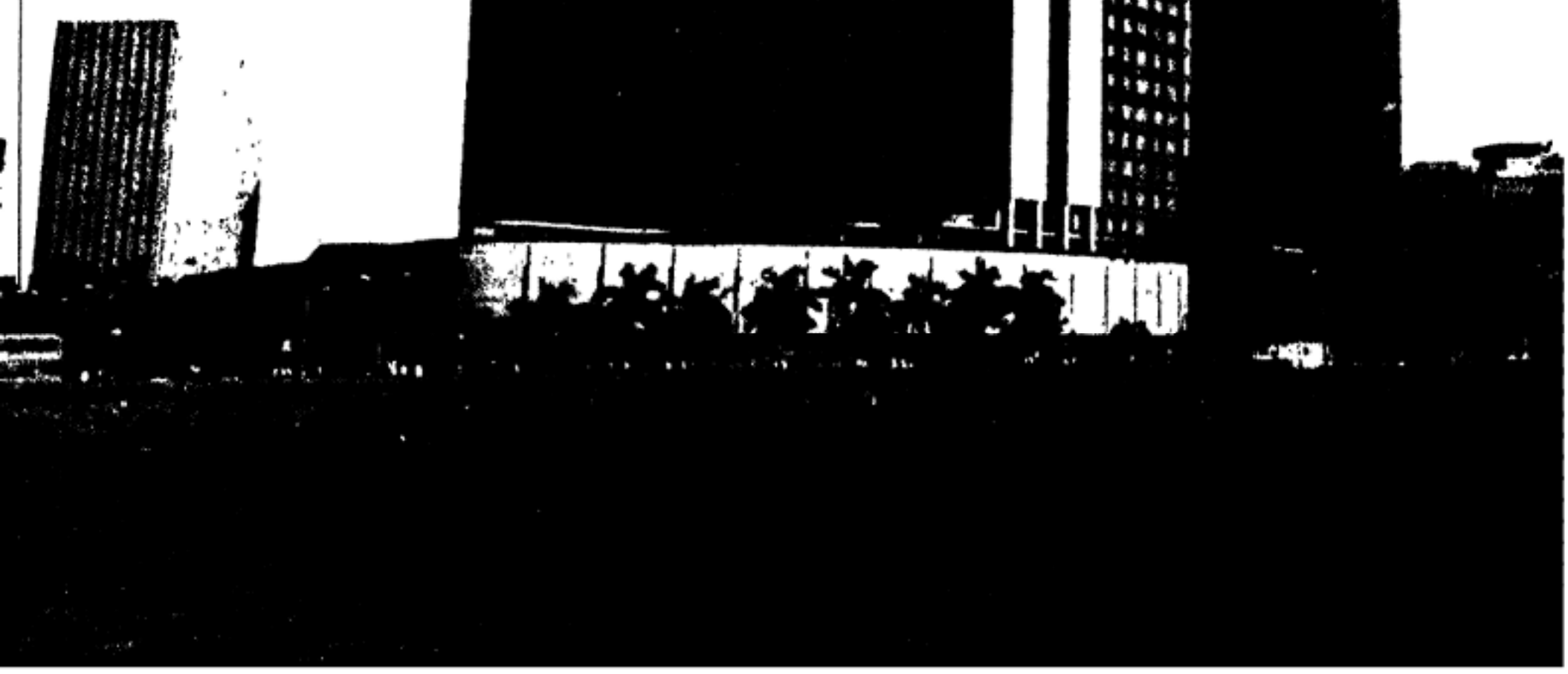
For the wealthy, the Nariman Point-Cuffe Parade area is the more acceptable face of Bombay. But from the environmentalist's point of view, it has always been a nightmare. Development of the area—much of it done under the Backbay Development Plan—has put the city under great strain: congested the southern part of Bombay, burdened an already stretched transport system and created water shortages.

All this seems like it's going to get much worse in the near future. A number of changes, 21 in all, in the draft development plan put out by the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) in 1983 have been accepted by the state government. What they will mean for the Nariman Point-Cuffe Parade area are, amongst other things, luxury flats, shopping arcades, departmental stores, expensive restaurants and clubs. Some of these will come up on land earmarked as 'no development zones', 'gardens' and 'housing for fishermen' *(see chart)*. Clearly, the changes are aimed at benefitting no one but the rich.

The deviations from the original plan have been promoted by the department of urban development under secretary D.K. Jain, ever since 1986. But it is only recently that the department succeeded in making the Sharad Pawar government accept the changes.

The changes are liable, some say tailor-made, for misuse. Take the provision for parking lots, for instance. The urban development department has prescribed that the parking lots be so designed as to be used for other commercial purposes. Thus, a person to who a parking lot is leased may build a departmental store or a restaurant on the plot he is allotted, ostensibly to ensure that he secures a reasonable return on his investment.

However, it is debatable whether these parking lots will be used at all, as the local administration permits free parking on the streets at Nariman Point and Cuffe Parade. "The provisions for parking lots are a hoax," says Chandrashekar Prabhu, MLA and member of the Bombay Metropolitan Development Authority (BMRDA). Prabhu is worried that the parking facilities may go the way of those that existed in some of the buildings at Nariman Point. Many of them have been converted into offices and recently a garage at one of the Raheja buildings was sold as an office for Rs 2.5 lakhs. "It doesn't require much imagination to forecast what will finally happen to these car parks," he says.



What the changes will mean for the Nariman Point-Cuffe Parade area are luxury flats, shopping arcades, departmental stores, expensive restaurants and clubs. Some of these will come up on land earmarked as 'no development zones', 'gardens' and 'housing for fishermen'

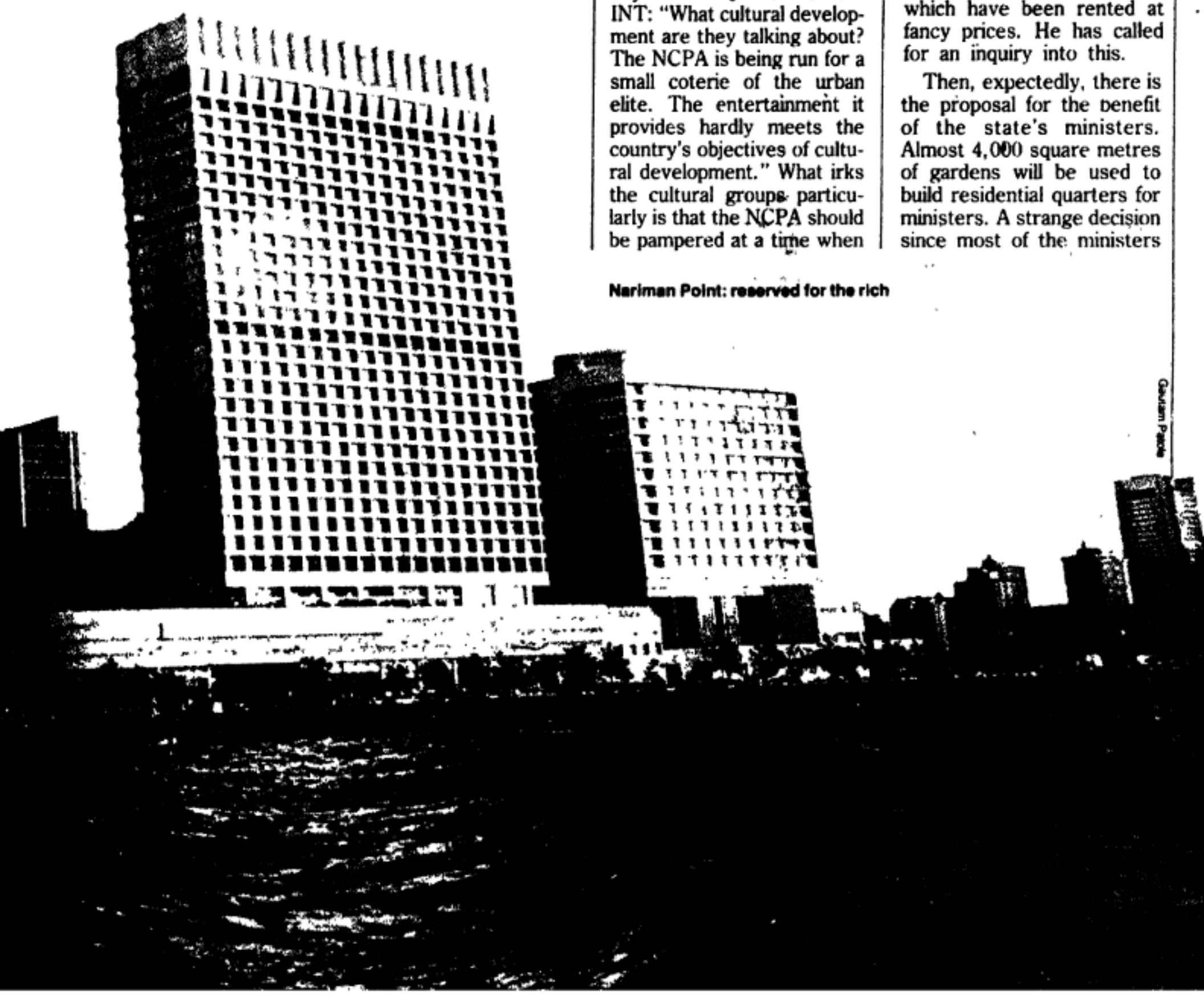
The money involved in these schemes is tremendous. For instance, one of the parking lots with an area of about 5,000 square metres is to be converted into a multi-storeyed car park with restaurant facilities and departmental stores on the ground floor. With a permissible built-up area of 70,000 square feet, the money involved amounts to about Rs 42 crores.

One of the most controversial changes that the new development plan makes relates to the decision to allow the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA)—a complex sponsored by the Tata group—to construct for sale a Rs 56-crore luxury apartment complex. The NCPA, which occupies land measuring 31,000 square metres bought at a nominal Re 1, has been allowed to use one-fourth of this area to construct the residential block. It is estimated that the sale of apartments will fetch it Rs 50 crores, out of which half will be given to the government as a kind of quid pro quo.

The arrangement is said to have been made to allow the NCPA to offset the massive losses that it has been making—which, according to some estimates, amounts to Rs 3 crores a year. Some believe that the NCPA did not foresee making such huge losses, but others argue that its administrators occupied the land with the intention of later requesting that it be allowed to build a hotel or apartment block in order to rake in money. Whatever the truth, various cultural groups in the city have come down hard on what they see as the government's undue concern for the losses the NCPA is making. Says Damu Jhaveri of the INT: "What cultural development are they talking about? The NCPA is being run for a small coterie of the urban elite. The entertainment it provides hardly meets the country's objectives of cultural development." What irks the cultural groups particularly is that the NCPA should be pampered at a time when other centres like the Prithvi Theatre and Shanmukhananda Sabha face financial problems.

Another plot has been earmarked to house a restaurant, garden, parking facility and a power station for the Tata Electric Company (TEC). Interestingly, the power station was originally to have been set up at a nearby plot. However, this plan was changed, and the plot handed over to a private housing society floated by members of the Atomic Energy Commission and officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). In a dissenting note to the BMRDA, Chandrashekar Prabhu has stated that most of the members of the housing society already have apartments within the city which have been rented at fancy prices. He has called for an inquiry into this.

Then, expectedly, there is the proposal for the benefit of the state's ministers. Almost 4,000 square metres of gardens will be used to build residential quarters for ministers. A strange decision since most of the ministers



Nariman Point: reserved for the rich

Gautam Patole

NEW PLAN FOR THE NARIMAN POINT-CUFFE PARADE AREA



Listed below are some of the 21 changes from the earlier development plan

Plot No.	Area (sq. metres)	Reservation in the draft development plan published by the BMC in 1983	Deviation from the BMC's 1983 draft development plan
1) NCPA	31,581	Public use	Institutional use
2) 240-240A	4,952	Parking lot	Multi-storeyed car park with eating facilities and departmental stores on ground floor
3) 148	3,840	Garden	Residential use (ministers' quarters)
4) Land between plot nos 151B	3,700	BEST and Green	Residential use (govt. staff housing and High Court judges)
5) Proposed reclamation to the north of 60 ft wide east-west road	27,396	No development zone	Eating house, garden/ parking and power receiving station for Tata Electric Company
6) 106, 107, 108	7,007	Police parade ground	Garden as per Backbay beautification proposal
7) 105	3,368	Police parade ground	Parking and departmental store as per Backbay beautification proposal
8) 120 (PT)	2,695	Housing for fishermen	Parking and departmental store
9) 120 (PT)	464	Housing for fishermen	Jhulelal Mandir Charitable Trust
10) Land surrendered by World Trade Centre	23,046	Playground / stadium	Playground / gymkhana to be utilised by govt. officers
11) 86 (PT)	1,225	Municipal dispensary	Garden
12) Land to the west of plot no. 87	1,925	Part of children's park	Parking
13) Land north of existing BEST depot	14,681	Included in 'R' zone	Police parade ground, police station, etc.
14) Reclamation to the south of World Trade Centre	12,462	Included in 13 zones. Reserved for car shed purposes	Residential use (transit camp for Housing Board)

are accommodated in bungalows at Malabar Hill, Napean Sea Road and Narayan Dabholkar Road. True, the government is in the process of demolishing 12 bungalows that were occupied by ministers on Foreshore Road but the land allotted at Nariman Point is large enough to accommodate 40 luxurious flats. The question being asked is why the need for extra residential space for ministers.

Ministers, of course, will not be the only beneficiaries in the new plan. Forty apartments will be built for judges at another plot, one originally intended for use by the local bus transport system. The largesse showered on the judges, cynics believe, is a move to influence their thinking in the event that a stay on the development of the area is filed.

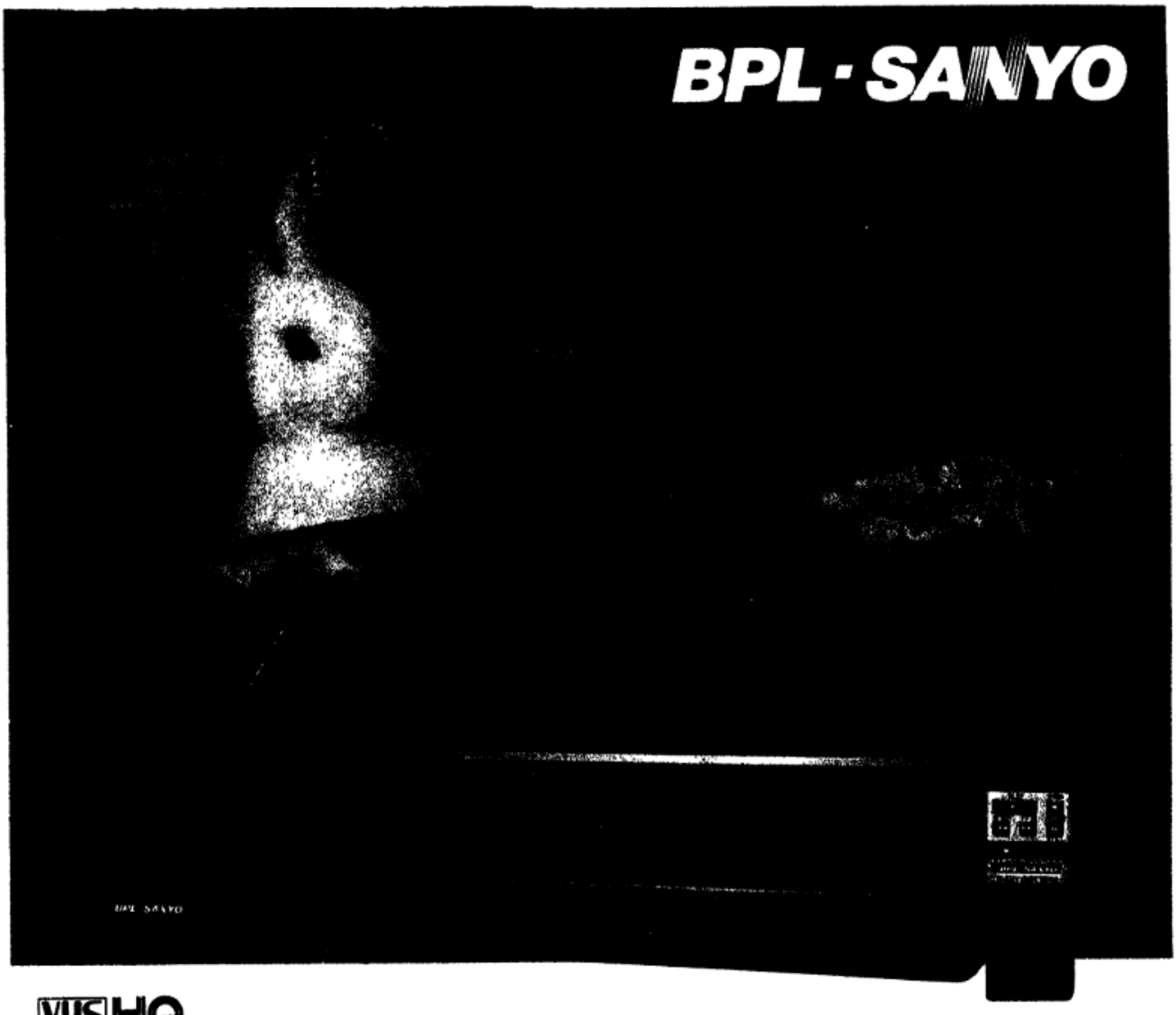
Fishermen, who have been traditional inhabitants of the Cuffe Parade area, have been severely affected under the new plan. Over 3,000 square metres of land reserved for them is going to be turned over for parking, departmental stores, a trust and a so-called beautification scheme.

There are other decisions which are just as controversial. The police parade grounds are to be used for parking and for departmental stores, a children's park converted into a parking lot; and some land originally allotted to the World Trade Centre now earmarked for a club for government officers.

But, according to some, the really scandalous decision is the one to utilise about 15,000 square metres of land for a police parade ground and station. The land was categorised as 'R zone', which means for use as a "transit camp"—that is, to temporarily house people who live in old buildings that have to be demolished before reconstruction. To be fair, the new plan does envisage transit camps, but the land earmarked for them has not yet been reclaimed from the sea. Says Prabhu: "There are no transit camps in south Bombay and people who live in dilapidated buildings here have to go to places like Ramabai Nagar and Vikhroli, where there is no electricity, water or schools. Even the police do not want their outposts in such places."

Given the scale of the money involved in the construction envisaged by the new plan, there is the feeling that there will be rampant corruption. Moreover, it is aimed at benefitting hardly anyone but the wealthy. One local government official said quoting the Bible: "To those who have, more will be given." As for the city, the new plan will only further exert its already strained resources.

Olga Tellis / *Bombay*



VHS HQ

Myth 1.

The imported VCR is better.

IT'S NOT. The truth is that 9 out of 10 imported VCRs are merely duplicates of well-known brands... their performance as bad as the dubious components used to 'assemble' them.

The VHR 1110, on the other hand, is **truly** built component by component. Using a world-standard video deck manufactured in India in collaboration with Sanyo, Japan. Incorporating 'HQ' picture technology for extra-sharp clarity.

Myth 2.

The imported VCR needs no servicing.

NOT TRUE. As a rule, every electronic equipment needs regular servicing of the right kind. Most imported VCRs are backed by no such assurance.

Whereas the VHR 1110 comes to you with the support of BPL's fully-equipped, nationwide service network. And a one-year warranty.

Myth 3.

The imported VCR is cheaper.

DEFINITELY NOT. In the long run, it could prove very expensive because of heavy maintenance costs. Add to it the risk of unpredictable performance, and you have a VCR just not worth its price.

In sharp contrast, the VHR 1110 is a dependable, world-class performer. Bearing the proven stamp of BPL quality. To give you full value for your money.

R K SWAMY /BPL/3504/R

BPL VHS VIDEO VHR 1110

The best on all counts:

Quality • Reliability • Service • And price





Colour, Form and Smell

On the trail of the lonesome Ganesh Pyne

"Humankind cannot bear too much reality."

—T. S. Eliot

No character in search of reality could do better than walk down the narrow lane called Kaviraj Row in central Calcutta. Walk he or she must, since the lane is too narrow for cars. And it requires some concentration to sidestep the occasional heap of garbage or the liquid spilling over from the open drains lining both sides of the lane. Half-way down this alley rises the narrow pink facade of a house with green doors and windows. Step over the drain, ring the doorbell and soon you will stand face to face with Ganesh Pyne, the artist of a supposed "mythical and unreal world."



Tarapada Banerjee

For more than a decade Ganesh Pyne has had the status of being one of India's top artists. Countless critics, reviewers and journalists have subjected him to their pens

Before the chaplet, 1978

But is it fair to say that his paintings—peopled though they are by strange, attenuated creatures in a world of shadowed light—are totally divorced from reality? For more than a decade Ganesh Pyne has had the status of being one of India's top artists. Countless critics, reviewers and journalists have subjected him to their pens. And the appraisals have always harped on the "fantastic" quality of his work. Even when a critic like Pranabendu Dasgupta makes the necessary distinction between realism and reality when he discusses Ganesh Pyne, he cannot help stressing the dimly lit mystery of the artist's work.

Pyne himself is somewhat tired of the repetitive categorisation of himself as the creator of a world of purely fantastic or mythical images. "I would be very happy if my work can be seen in a different light," he declares with quiet emphasis. And indeed to see him dressed in the *dhoti-panjabi* of a middle-class Bengali gentleman, sitting in that tiny room whose absence of decor provides such a stark contrast to the pictorial

universe of colour, light and shade which Pyne creates upstairs in his studio—is to wonder how such a person can escape or eschew reality.

But then one could always say that art is very often the chosen path to escape reality that is too painful or too grim, or simply unacceptable. Does Ganesh Pyne come across as someone who has problems either recognising or co-existing with the reality of his particular world? Much has been made of his reclusive nature, of his reluctance to travel (even short journeys out of Calcutta), his single state, his shyness. But none of these seems important as one listens to the artist talk about social systems, about the predicament of today's journalists doomed to write about disparate areas where they have no expertise,

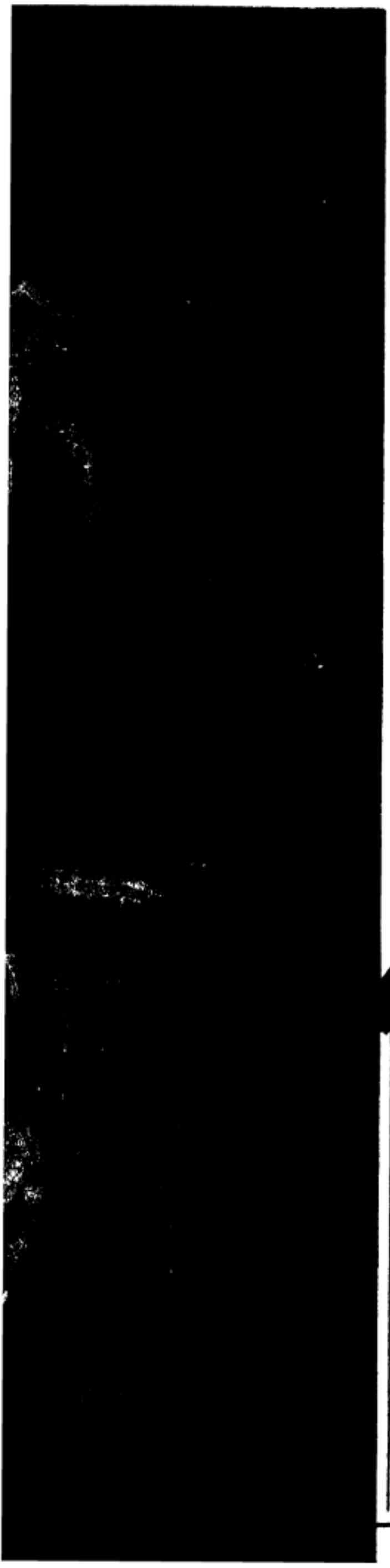


The Prince, 1982

about the vulgarity of many people's approach to the artist ("tell us how you perceive the female body"), about literature, history and art.

Perhaps the greatest handicap that Ganesh Pyne suffers from is his unassuming manner. It requires more energy and effort to resist the imposition of facile labels than Pyne is prepared to expend. Despite his status, critical and commercial, he is still a modest Bengali *bhadralok*, anxious not to transgress the limits of civility. He has fellow artists like M.F. Husain going gaga over his work. He has avid collectors in India (Victor Banerjee, Dilip De, Dr Prakash Kejriwal, Dr Mukund Lath and others) and abroad, waiting to pounce on his next painting. A slow worker, he paints under four pictures a year—even so, his work

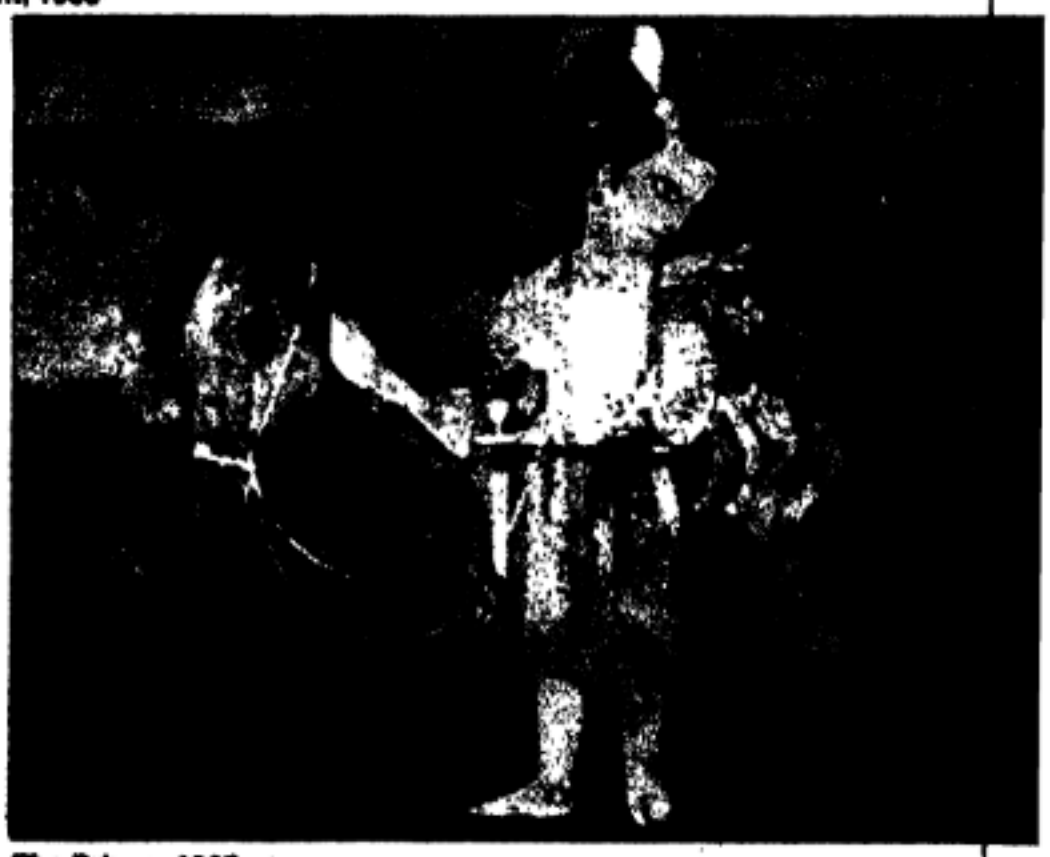






The Night of the Merchant, 1986

Metaphysics apart, the b[illegible] way to [illegible]stand [illegible] complex reality of Ganesh Pyne i[illegible] dely[illegible] his pa[illegible]



The Crown, 1967 (left) The Prince, 1967

sells before the paint can dry on his canvas, at prices as high as Rs 25,000 for a small tempera. And yet one of the first things he will tell you is that he has "not yet had a one-man show, anywhere!"

Asked about the reputed arrogance he is supposed to have displayed to journalists, Ganesh Pyne placidly answers, "Think about my situation, I cannot have anybody and everybody trying to get my opinions on every subject under the sun. And I too have been at the receiving end of misunderstanding and uncourteous arrogance." He recalls a recent interview in a Bengali magazine. "If you read that you will see that the interviewer was constantly trying to push me into making metaphysical admissions, and I was constantly trying to move away. The experience made me very uncomfortable, which is why I asked to see a copy of the interview before it was published."

IMPRESSIONS THAT LINGER... JCT

The Thapar Group



Contract: JCT.20103/TBI-1

Metaphysics apart, the best way to understand the complex reality of Ganesh Pyne is to let him delve into his past and excavate memories, associations and facts. As he says himself, "All my paintings are built around a story." For the Ganesh Pyne story too, one needs to "begin at the very beginning" a la *Alice in Wonderland.*

Childhood, like the present, was spent in this same house with its inner and outer courtyards, its small rooms, polished red oxide floors, its covered verandahs, and imprisoned smells. The premature death of a father was compensated by the joint family set-up and the essential loneliness of an imaginative child was both accentuated and alleviated by an affectionate grandmother who regaled him with the folktales and legends of Bengal. The child's imagination found its outlet in drawings—many of which he would stash away under his mattress to contemplate later.

From this haphazard and lonely creativity Ganesh Pyne graduated into the systematic training of the Government College of Art and Craft in Calcutta. In 1959 he was given a diploma in fine arts. Today Ganesh Pyne describes this experience as "stepping out of his own world to encounter the art of the entire world." This exposure, plus the discipline of training was a major landmark. Previously he had never had any standards to emulate and all his creative efforts had produced chaos. But now he had all the great masters of the world before him to set the highest possible standards.

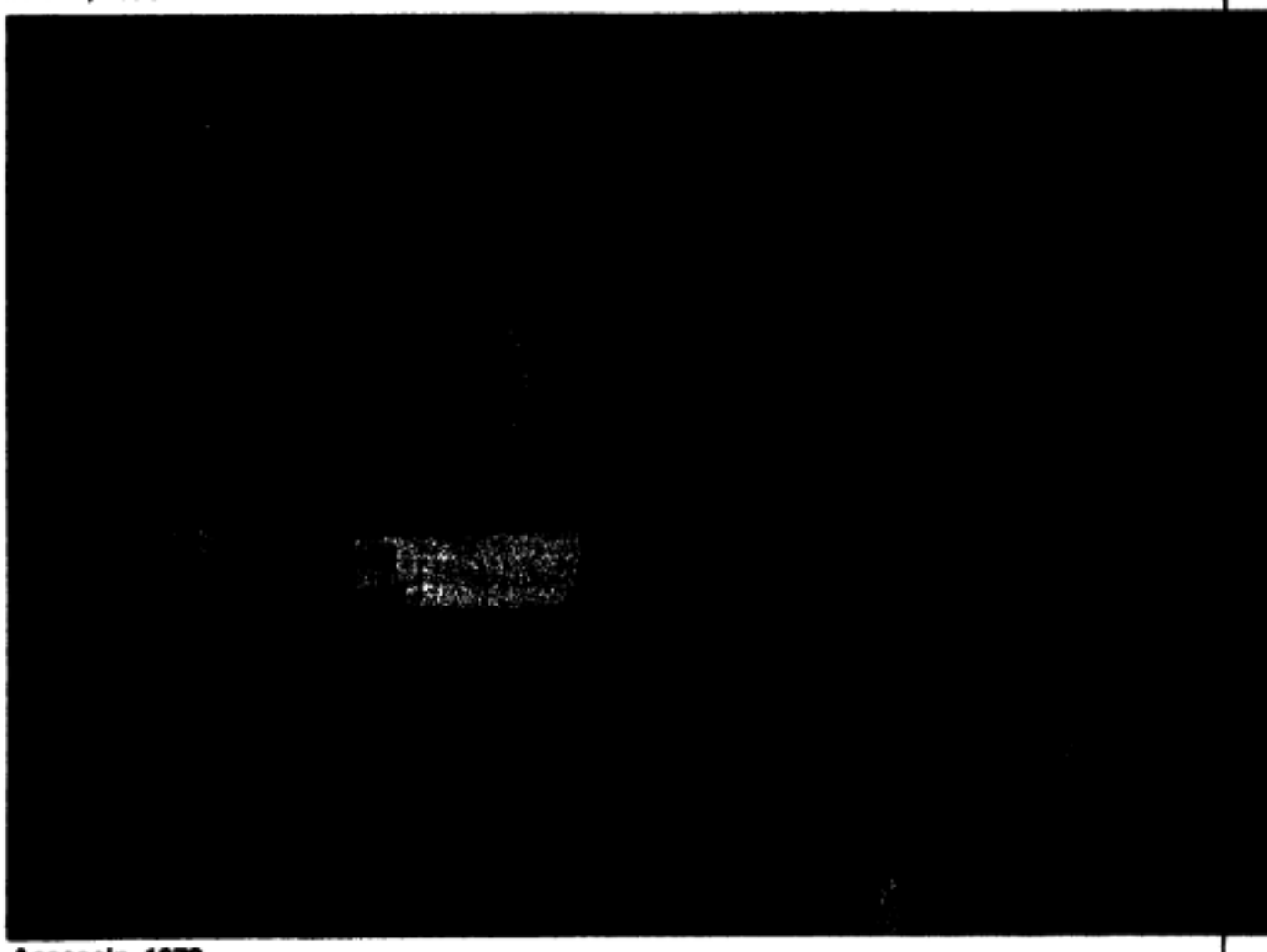
Discoveries of personal preference came, enriching his mind and influencing his work. Rembrandt became a revelation, and some of Pyne's paintings, with their dimly lit areas and sense of gloom and mystery, are very reminiscent of that master of light and darkness. Paul Klee is another artist with whom Pyne is supposed to have affinities. And though he once said that he had a hard time appreciating Western art from the time of the post-Impressionists to Marc Chagall, a later encounter with Chagall's paintings did move him to recognition and wonder. But despite all these examples, Ganesh Pyne does not feel he has reached the dizzy heights of greatness. "Of course one never reaches one's own standards. We are the mediocre artists who provide the base for the great artists who tower over us."

The early years after college were hard and full of struggle. For eight years he floundered and was lost. The world outside did not offer him a job and the inner world did not have the certainty of the artist who has found his medium. It was only the coccoon of the family, of the familiar house in the little alley that continued to provide support. The artist's diffidence increased—and all the success of the later years has not robbed him of that quality, thus perhaps saving him from complacence.

The Sixties brought good times and professional recognition. In 1963 he was elected a member of the Society of Contemporary Artists. By 1967 he had also worked out his chosen medium—



Relics, 1982



Assassin, 1979

Says Pyne, "In India there has always been a supernatural expression of reality. In Egypt you can never escape a sense of mathe[illegible]order



"I was impressed when my doctor said Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer really stops hair loss.

But I was convinced when I used it."

"My doctor told me Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer* is a unique scientific formula based on extensive research. He also told me it provides all the essential proteins, co-enzymes and vitamins for strengthening hair roots.

All I know is that it has certainly stopped my hair from falling and checked dandruff."

Here's an excerpt from the research report:

"66.66% gave excellent and 33.33% gave good results with complete disappearance of dandruff in all cases and nearly cent per cent stoppage of fall of hair...So, success rate with Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer may be stated to be cent per cent."

Indian Medical Gazette 118, 223 (1984)



The proven scientific way to prevent hair loss.

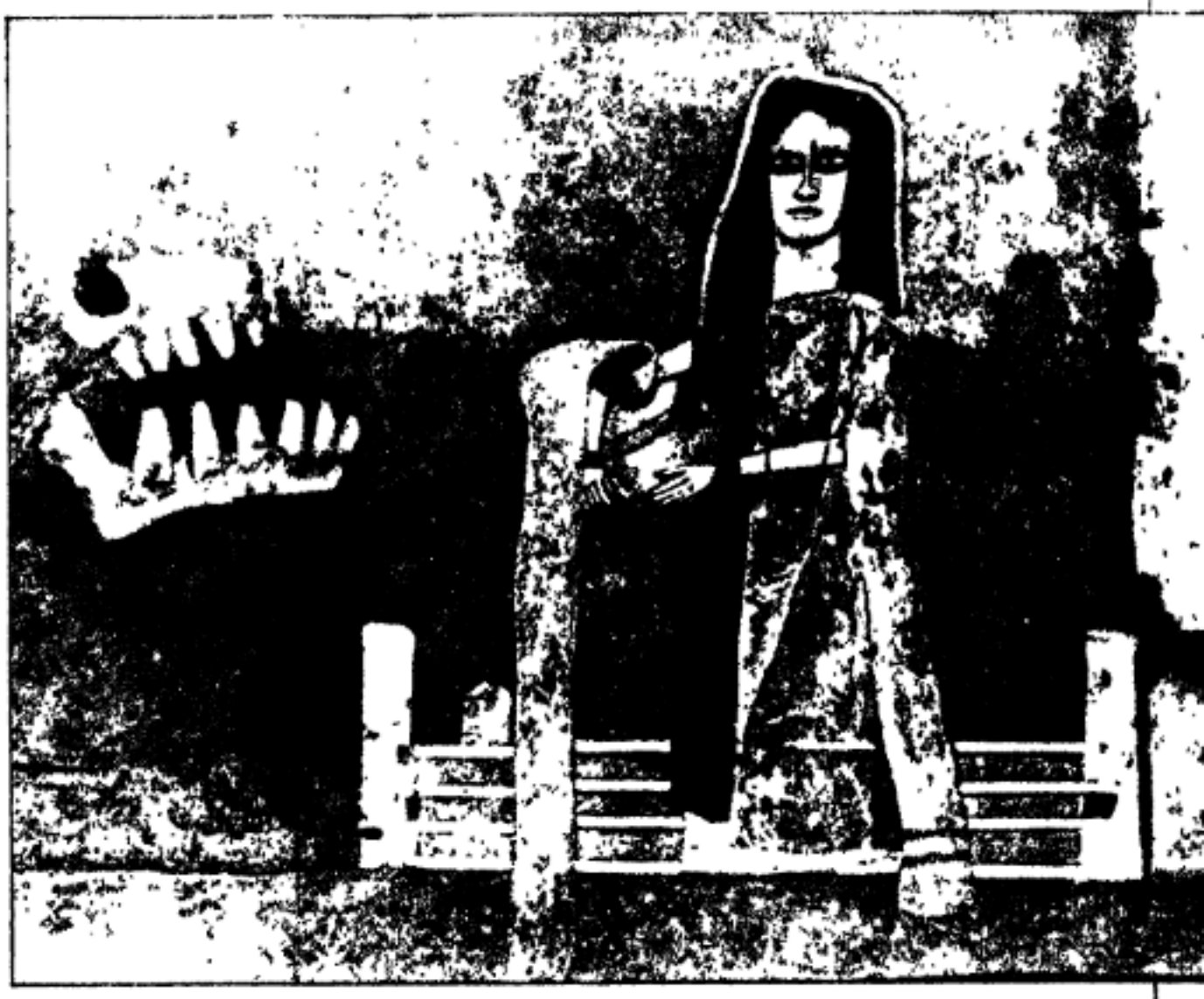
Dey's® Dey's Medical. Care you can trust.

*It is not a toilet preparation.

DMHV-4

tempera—after long and arduous experimentation. And his works began to sell. The Pyne pattern of painting—on small canvases (standard size 2'×2½') held close to his body—became synonymous with excellence. Pyne does not hide the peculiar enjoyment he feels in having close physical proximity to his canvases, in being able to take them on his lap to paint. All the supposed disadvantages of a small canvas—limited arm movement, the need for meticulousness in detail, careful planning—have only been challenges he has met with style.

In the Seventies and Eighties Ganesh Pyne's reputation increased even more. Numerous awards, including the Shiromani Purashkar, the Sangeet Shyamala Award (given to an Indian for the first time), the Bhuwalka Award and many more have been collected along the way. Exhibitions abroad have taken place—the 1970 Paris Biennale, and other shows in UK, West Germany and Japan. But Ganesh Pyne has never been tempted to set foot outside this country. When he is not painting he is content with his reading, his weekly *addas* with friends in Basanta Cabin or the College Street Coffee House and of course, his gentle interaction with his family. As for the world, he will meet (with perfect courtesy of course) only those who will take the trouble of negotiating the heat and dust of his undistinguished Calcutta bylane. The rest he can do without. Arrogance or reclusiveness?



The Pitcher, 1985

Whatever it is, when you do finally get a chance to talk to Ganesh Pyne, he shows himself to be a delightful exponent of the gentle art of conversation. Despite his lack of extensive formal education, he is a very literate man. There are many references to books he has read—"You must have read Kandinsky's *Reminiscences*. Remember how he talks about the way he registered colour, form and smell?" He will happily confess to a predilection for good science fiction, not caring if the admission marks him further as a "fantasy-maker."

The Actress, 1981



When you do finally get a chance to talk to Ganesh Pyne, he shows himself to be a delightful exponent of the gentle art of conversation

Or he will depict the duality of his inner world—the "individual path I have chosen and the commonality of art I share with every other artist." He discourses on the various artistic traditions of the world. "In India there has always been a supernatural expression of reality. In Egypt you can never escape a sense of inner mathematical order. The West has a great advantage, the continuity of the Hellenic tradition. We in India have become very detached from our tradition. That makes it doubly hard for the modern Indian artist. He is still a beginner." Ganesh Pyne gives credit to the Bengal School for "teaching us to think independently. But it is important to assimilate the past in order to deal with the present and the future."

And though he has protested so much against being labelled, he himself divides artists into several categories. Himself he would describe as an idealist. Such artists, he says, "are always motivated by a desire for eternal wisdom. They look at form and nature, and then recreate an idealised version on their canvas." This same idealism is what converts myth into reality.

And there we are—back again to myth, legend, fantasy and fairy-tale. Looking at paintings like *Evil Conversation* (where a woman converses with a figure with the body of a bird and the

face of a man) or *The Encounter* (where a woman faces an animal) or even *The Pitcher* (where the jaws of horror lurk behind a woman pouring water into a river)—one has to admit the presence of non-literal fantasy. But the anxiety, terror and dread evoked by such paintings are only too real aspects of today's world.

Ganesh Pyne's legendary or folk heritage does not necessarily find expression in horror or bleakness. In *Bhashan* he shows a woman floating downriver in a boat. The *sindoor* on her head and the fruitful image of green coconuts could be auguries for a romantic union with her husband. But to any Bengali this suggests the sad



The Fallen Fruit, 1984

image in the popular medieval legend about Behula whose husband dies from snakebite on their wedding night, and who then floats downstream in a raft with his dead body in her lap, to appease a vengeful gooddess.

That is why Ganesh Pyne never bothers to deny his heritage. "The colour, the content the form of my pictures are all grounded in the reality of secular Bengal. My paintings are centred around a story. This is something that an artist like Nirad Majumdar could never accept. For him construction was everything. But I don't agree."

Of course, there are always the exceptions. His 1982 painting, *Relics* was not motivated by any fairy-tale or legend. It was the expression of deeply felt grief and desolation after the death of his elder brother in 1980. And the 1979 painting, *Assassin* could well be a commentary on today's world of violence and death, much the same way as Picasso's *Guernica* was an indictment of war.

Fantasy or reality, one thing is always present in the works of this self-contained, self-sufficient artist. An impeccable discipline of thought, emotion and imagination. Pyne admits it himself. "Every time you start a painting you suffer from tremendous anxiety. You wonder if you can match your own standards and go farther. You work so hard for so long--but you never know until the very end. You have to present a

Fantasy or reality, one thing is always present in the works of Ganesh Pyne. An impeccable discipline of thought and emotion

calm exterior to the world, but all the time there is a storm within. Just think of an artist like Van Gogh, how he must have suffered over each painting. The only way to survive this excruciating agony is to fall back on the discipline you have acquired over the years."

He sighs over the folly of the world—particularly the middleclass Bengali world—in persisting in the preconception of artists as a self-indulgent, bohemian lot. "It is so hard for someone to declare he wants to be an artist. Painting, his family will say, is not *proper* work, like going to the office everday and earning a salary. Nobody understands what gruelling work it entails, and what self-discipline." At the same time he deplores the current trend of commercialisation in art, and the distrust or competitiveness that it breeds among artists. Nonetheless, it has not stopped Ganesh Pyne from selling his paintings at exorbitant prices to the highest bidder—who often happens to be a worshipper not of any muse but Mammon!

But then, the artist must live, and India is no welfare state. So one need not begrudge Pyne his material success as long as he does not lose the "integrity and sense of continuity" that M.F. Husain says he has. At one time a recurrent image in his paintings was that of Sri Chaitanya, that medieval figure who sought ecstasy from religion and made a lover out of divinity. For Ganesh Pyne, Sri Chaitanya was the ultimate symbol of the searcher after truth, knowledge, certainty or love. And the artist himself would say that his own search is not over.

To the observer, watching Ganesh Pyne in his unpretentious habitat, it does not seem that so far the search has led him to lose his grasp of reality. True, one can momentarily have zany visions of Ganesh Pyne standing before the old spotted mirror on the wall of his sitting room, muttering incantations, "Mirror, mirror on the wall " But all that the glass reflects consists only of walls and minimalistic furniture inside, and a solitary tree outside with a pile of moss-grown bricks heaped around its trunk. Hardly the trappings of a magical universe. Or are they?

Realisation dawns that the one character out of Ganesh Pyne's "painterly universe" who resembles him most is the melancholy figure in the 1967 painting, *The Crown*. He looks out of his windows on to the world and the crown on his head seems almost too heavy to bear. Perhaps it is the crown of knowledge—inescapable, burdensome, engendering solitude, silence and sorrow.

Chitrita Banerji/Calcutta

Photographs, courtesy *Visions*

An inevitable denouement

Mizoram is predictably placed under President's Rule. But to the dissatisfaction of both its major political players

MIZORAM

In the end it only seemed as if the inevitable had happened. There were enough hints that the Centre's response to the 10-day long political crisis in the state would be President's Rule. And on 7 September, the decision was announced to the transparent dissatisfaction of most of the state's politicans.

The crisis in the state began when eight front ranking legislators of the ruling Mizo National Front (MNF) defected to reduce the eighteen-month old Laldenga ministry to a minority. The eight formed a new party, the Mizo National Front (Democratic). Later, the breakaway legislators and the Congress (I), led by Pradesh Congress president and former chief minister Lalthanhawla, formed the United Legislature Party (ULP) and staked a claim for government.

The only intriguing aspect to the political drama was the manner in which the state Governor Hiteswar Saikia recommended that the Assembly be dissolved. He did not bother to wait for the Assembly Speaker J. Thanghuama to formally decide whether the eight MLAs attracted disqualification under the Anti-Defection Act. (The Speaker had already sent the MLAs showcause notices demanding why they should not be disqualified.) The decision led to criticism that the Governor was keen on preventing the government from remaining in power. Laldenga had called for a trial of strength on the floor of the House. It was a test that the he expected to win given that the dissident legislators would have certainly been disqualified under the terms of the Anti-Defection Act. His party then would have still held the majority.

Lalthanhawla came to know of the Centre's decision only on the same day (7 September). Saikia's recommendation that President's Rule be imposed came when he (Lalthanhawla) was in Delhi along with seven MLAs--a visit undertaken to convince the party high command of the legitimacy of his claim. The very next day the Centre accepted the recommendations and all that a crestfallen Lalthanhawla could manage was a wan smile and the remark that the decision was "unfortunate".

It is widely believed that the dashing and debonair former CM did not play his cards well. His links with MNF dissidents were forged much earlier and by the third week of August had already been consolidated. Aizawl 's political circuits were already buzzing with gossip of an imminent desertion and Lalthanhawla would have done well to wait till the number of dissidents had swelled. At least two ministers were toying with the idea of deserting the MNF when the eight made their move. Said a political observer: "Lalthanhawla was in too much of a hurry to topple Laldenga."

Moreover, Lalthanhawla may have misjudged the high command's attitude towards the question of toppling Laldenga. Intially though, New Delhi appeared warm to Lalthanhawla's move and even invited him for talks just before the MNF legislators switched sides. But later, the Centre developed cold feet and Rajiv Gandhi himself was reluctant to antagonise Laldenga, specially because of his unflinching support to the Mizoram accord. Anyway, as far as New Delhi was concerned the clincher came when the north-eastern states' Congress (I) coordination committee opposed the idea of a Congress(I) led coalition in Mizoram on 3 September.

As for Laldenga, his public reaction to Saikia's decision was moderate although he was privately very sore about it. The strongest word he used about the decision was "undemocratic". It is possible that he did not adopt a harder line because of the considerable dissidence within his party.



Lalthanhawla (right) with Ghulam Nabi Azad; (inset) Laldenga: unhappy

All in all, it appears that the political events in the state over the last fortnight were mainly the consequence of ego clashes between two old political foes—Laldenga and Lalthanhawla. And it is a rivalry that promises to turn even more bitter when the state goes to the polls next. Laldenga will try to gain electoral advantage by making out that President's Rule was nothing but an assault on the collective pride of the Mizos. Efforts are already on to project him as a victim of the Centre's machinations.

Santanu Ghosh/*Aizawl*

A political tremor, this

Bhagwat Jha Azad finds himself in the hot seat after a gaffe over the recent earthquake toll

BIHAR

It was a tremor that shook not just concrete structures all over Bihar but nearly succeeded in toppling chief minister Bhagwat Jha Azad. While the earthquake struck at 4.40 am on 21 August, in Patna's corridors of power the tremor was felt the next day. It was when Rajiv Gandhi reached the state capital and was on his way to the quake-hit areas that Jha made the mistake that nearly cost him his job. He told the Prime Minister that the newspapers had exaggerated the extent of damage that the earthquake had wrought. Taking his cue from Azad, Rajiv Gandhi announced to newspersons at Patna airport that the damage was not as extensive as the newspaper reports had made it out to be.

But as soon as the PM had uttered the words, veteran Congress(I) members like Sitaram Kesri, Tariq Anwar, L.P. Shahi and Jagannath Mishra realised that such a claim could backfire on the ruling party. And their fears were borne out: while the remark gave the impression that the Prime Minister had callously dismissed a grave situation, the Opposition parties did not lose the opportunity to make political capital from the Congress(I)'s gaffe.

The reports that the quake-hit victims were not receiving adequate relief only worsened matters for Azad who until recently had been perceived as a tough administrator in a hurry to drive out corruption from the state. But Azad's problems began as soon as word started getting around that in his zeal to punish corrupt officials and create an ethos for discipline, his behaviour with Congress MPs and MLAs was far from courteous. Mrs Krishna Shahi, minister of state for water resources, is believed to have complained to the PM that not only did Azad refuse to discuss the problems of her constituency, but also insulted her by asking her to talk to any of the ministers of his council.

Mrs Shahi was not only one to complain about Azad's alleged misbehaviour. In separate complaints to the PM, Union minister Abdul Ghafoor Baliram Bhagat and several Congress MPs have alleged that the chief minister was causing bad blood by abusing government officials.

Though Rajiv Gandhi ignored the complaints, he was forced to pay attention when Bihar Pradesh Committee chief Tariq Anwar resigned from the vice-chairmanship of the Twenty Point Programme Implementation Committee. The Prime Minister had a talk with Anwar and directed Azad to cooperate with the BPCC(I) chief. But soon after, Azad was back in the news: this time it was his failure to prevent the massacre of Harijans in Jehanabad that singled him out for criticism. As Azad's stock fell in New Delhi, the Assembly Speaker, Shiv Chander Jha, chose this time to teach his old foe, Azad, a lesson.

The Prime Minister sent for Shiv Chander Jha and on 20 August, had a talk with him about the political developments in the state. This was enough indication for Azad's supporters that the chief minister's stock had taken a nose-dive. Though they are putting up a brave face and insisting that a change in the state's leadership is not on the cards, Jha's supporters allege that during Rajiv Gandhi's interview with Jha, he had wanted to know who could be an effective alternative to Bhagwat Jha Azad.

Meanwhile, the chief minister also met Rajiv Gandhi while he was in Delhi to attend a party seminar and workshop between 3 and 7 September. But Azad's supporters claim that the Prime Minister had only inquired about the progress of various developmental projects in the state. According to reliable sources, however, Azad was pulled up for the haphazard and inadequate relief measures provided by the government to earthquake victims. Whatever the truth, Azad will have to watch his step and make sure that he does not rub any more Congress MPs and MLAs the wrong way.

Rajiv Shukla/*New Delhi*

Bhagwat Jha Azad (left) with Shiv Chander Jha: dissidence returns



Rajiv and Sonia Gandhi visiting a quake-hit area in Patna: misled



Words of disharmony

Riots break out between Bohras and Sunnis in Bombay's Bhendi Bazar after a controversial speech by the Syedna

MAHARASHTRA

He is India's very own Ayotallah Khomeini. Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin, the head priest of the Bohra community, a sub-sect of Shia Muslims, has so far been terrorising members of his own community with his edicts. But recently during the course of his Muharram discourse on 22 August in Bombay's Bhendi Bazar, he managed to rub the Sunni Muslims the wrong way by abusing their religious leaders including the holiest of the holy, Caliph Rashedin and Ayesha, the wife of Prophet Mohammed.

The Syedna disregarded the video cameras which recorded his speech and the loudspeakers that made sure that his every word reached the ears of his followers. But very soon the Syedna's scandalous pronouncements had also reached the ears of Sunni Muslims. The speech was prominently reported by the Urdu eveninger *Hindustan* and predictably enough, it roused the ire of the Sunni Muslims. Their leaders, like Haji Mastan, Yusuf Patel, Ahmed Zakaria, Bukhari and Alauddin Siddiqui of the militant organisation Tanzeem Allah-o-Akbar, held a meeting at Sabbu Siddiqui Polytechnic Hall to condemn the Syedna who was given the deadline of 1 September to render an apology.

But far from apologising, the Syedna called his followers at the Saifee Masjid on 2 September where he justified his speech by saying that he had made the same pronouncements in Egypt and Pakistan last year. That was not all. To show his contempt for the Sunnis' demand for an apology, he asked his followers to do *maatam* (the act of breast beating). As it was a Friday, and prayer-time for the Sunnis, the *maatam* was bound to disturb them.

And the inevitable happened. Riots broke out between the Sunnis and the Bohras and bottles, iron bars and missiles were hurled at each other by both sides. Large contingents of policemen streamed into the area to bring the situation under control, but the damage had already been done. While two persons lay dead and hundreds injured with incalculable damage done to property, the Muslim psyche too had taken a severe battering.



Manishoo



A policeman fires in the air in riot-hit Bhendi Bazar; (inset) Syedna: trouble over a speech

The Syedna's unwillingness to apologise for his inflammatory statements continues to rankle. But what instigated the Syedna to suddenly vent his feelings about the Sunnis' religious leaders still remains a mystery. However, there are many theories that are being circulated:

- It is claimed by many that the Syedna who owns vast properties in Bombay is keen on turning the Bhendi Bazar area—where many Bohras reside and where his father's Rs 4.5 crore mausoleum stands—into some sort of a 'garden paradise'. And by inflaming passions, he may have felt that the Bohras, who are a minority in the area, would be forced to flee to other parts of the city leaving him free to go ahead with his grand plans.
- Another theory has it that the Syedna's speech had more to do with his increasing political clout. He is already known to be close to the former chief minister Vasantdada Patil. And Patil may have deliberately used the Syedna to embarrass chief minister Sharad Pawar. Why else did Patil overlook the fact that all politicians in Maharashtra had decided to boycott the Syedna's functions following a plea by reformist Bohras in protest against the head priest's extortionist policies? So, eventually, only Patil went for the celebrations to which many politicians were invited by the Syedna. The Bohra leader also snubbed Sharad Pawar by turning down the chief minister's request to sign the apology letter.
- Besides, the Syedna is also known to have links with the Shiv Sena, a fact which does not come as a surprise. It is well-known that during the mayoral elections, the Shiv Sena's candidate, Dr Ramesh Prabhoo, had clinched the seat with the help of the three Muslim League votes obtained through the League's councillor Ziauddin Motorwala, who is the Syedna's right hand man. The Shiv Sena supremo, Bal Thackeray, too has an axe to grind with Pawar and it is more than apparent that all three—Patil, Thackeray and the Syedna—have decided to make trouble for Pawar.

So Pawar has a formidable task: that of containing Patil and Thackeray who will no doubt have the benefit of the Syedna's vast financial resources now that they have formed an alliance. Will he be able to face the challenge?

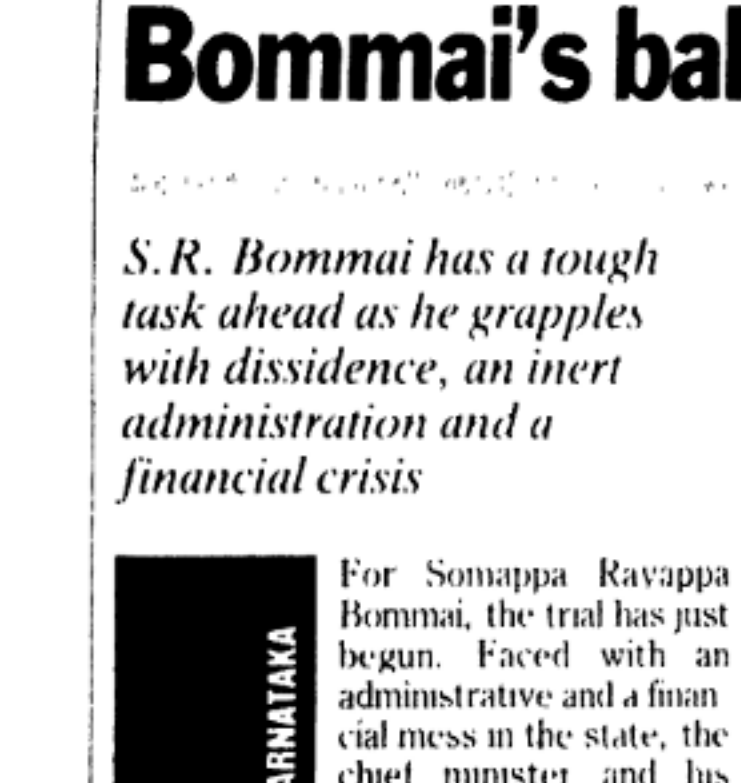
Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

Bommai's balancing act

S.R. Bommai has a tough task ahead as he grapples with dissidence, an inert administration and a financial crisis

KARNATAKA

For Somappa Ravappa Bommai, the trial has just begun. Faced with an administrative and a financial mess in the state, the chief minister and his skeleton Cabinet will also have to contend with eager legislators during a short session of the Legislative Assembly which will convene on 3 October. Bommai is already touring the state to test the reactions of party workers and gauge the sort of reception that he will get when the 10-day Assembly session begins. As it is, he will have his hands full. Having inherited a government with an inert administration and severe cash flow problems he will not just have to play full-time chief executive but party troubleshooter too. Besides, the state unit of the Janata Party is on the verge of a collapse as chronic factionalism has already crippled it.



S.R. Bommai: will he play safe?

Will he be able to overcome the hurdles? "Wait and see," says Bommai assuringly. For a start, the new chief minister has managed to win over the support of H.D. Deve Gowda, who is now the No.2 in the Cabinet. Deve Gowda who has got back his old portfolio of irrigation and public works, has also publicly declared that he is prepared to go to any extent to save the Bommai government. Bommai has also managed to keep fresh dissidence in the state Janata under wraps by postponing the formation of the full council of ministers.

But Bommai has been helped by circumstances. Dissident elements in the party will play their cards close to the chest until the national Opposition completes the unity shuffle. Moreover, what with rumours of former chief minister Gundu Rao's return to the Congress(I) doing the rounds and the reorganisation of the Pradesh Committee on the cards, the state Congress(I) is hopelessly confused to take any advantage of the situation. Even Bommai's trip to Manchester, to attend the Kannada Sammelan during the last week of August, helped to take the heat off the resignation drama of Ramakrishna Hegde.

On the political front, Bommai will be caught in a fierce battle for control of the party machinery. With Ramakrishna Hegde's aide and staunch supporter, Dr Jeevaraj Alva on one side and Deve Gowda camp follower Siddaramaiah on the other, fighting for the party presidentship, a compromise seems remote.

The Bommai government has also to cope with the controversial decisions of the Hegde government regarding the regularisation of revenue land that will affect thousands of Dalit farmers; urban land allotments for housing schemes; the obnoxious capitation fee; caste and community-based medical and engineering colleges; and excise policy. Although Bommai talks of economy measures in reviewing the need for the state's innumerable boards and corporations and in fixing a limit for expenditure on government vehicle use, the state is faced with a serious financial crisis which is bound to result in a massive cut in the annual plan. Bommai maintains that he is keen to retain the size of the budget at Rs 900 crores, but officials admit that there is talk of a 33 per cent reduction.

Facing a barrage of questions on the crisis in the administration at a meet-the-press programme on 8 August Bommai retaliated, "You (the press) never posed these questions to Ramakrishna Hegde. Not in these five years." Bommai will undoubtedly be at a disadvantage as he lacks the glibness and charisma of his predecessor. But Bommai has so far emerged as a chief minister who will play safe. And it is hardly likely that he will make a departure from the Ramakrishna Hegde-style of functioning.

Prakash Belawadi/*Bangalore*

K.M. Kishan



Shakilur Rahman (centre) with students: crusading against corruption

Campus capers

Six vice-chancellors are sacked,raising a storm in the state's academic circles

BIHAR

Subtlety has never been a virtue of politicians in Bihar. But when it comes to flexing political muscles, it is Governor Govind Narain Singh who beats the others hollow. Not only did the chancellor of the Lalit Narain Mithila University sack the institution's upright vice-chancellor, Prof. Shakilur Rahman ostensibly for failing to attend the vice-chancellors' meeting that the Governor had called–but also went ahead and fired four other vice-chancellors for their refusal to toe the line.

Shakilur Rahman was the first to go. The celebrated academician, whose no-nonsense approach had even earned him the wrath of education minister, Nagender Jha, was asked along with other vice-chancellors to give in their resignations by the Governor at a meeting in Raj Bhavan in early August. When Rahman and Ram Dayal Munda of the Ranchi University refused to oblige the Governor and pointed out that they had completed only eight months and a year respectively of their three-year tenure, they were summarily sacked. Then the others–S.N. Das of Patna University, Lalita Sinha of Bihar University, Mangal Dubey of Magadh University and

Brahmachari Surender Kumar of Kameshwar Sanskrit University–were shown the door.

Not one to take his sack order lying down, Rahman hit back by launching a crusade against the "rampant corruption, nepotism and casteism" that exists in academic circles in Bihar. And soon he discovered that there were many students and teachers who were willing to join him in his endeavour to "change the academic atmosphere". Prof. Rahman organised meetings and declared, "I was ousted because I had started exposing the black deeds of the education minister, Mr Jha."

And recently, he was even invited by the Patna University's Chattra Sabha to speak at a symposium on "corruption in education". But when the students turned up at the Science College hall on 31 August, they were greeted by a posse of policemen who stood guard at the locked gates. The Chattra Sabha president, Upender Prasad, later told SUNDAY that on 30 August the university registrar had informed the principal of the Science College of the decision to cancel the reservation of the hall which students had booked way back on 19 August.

However, that did not deter Prof. Rahman from castigating the government. He broke through the police cordon and standing on a rickshaw, he exhorted the gathered students, who numbered nearly 3,000, to fight against corruption. "I want to make you good citizens so that Bihar can be saved from backwardness and India could emerge as a strong and disciplined nation," he told them.

Now, the government will find it more difficult to rid itself of the image that it has created for itself: that of a corrupt regime. The reason for the vice-chancellors' removal still remains a mystery. Though the powers-that-be have tried to justify their action by claiming that the vice-chancellors were sacked for their incompetence to streamline the financial and educational acitivities of the universities, few believe this argument.

It is well-known that Prof. Rahman had been working towards eradicating corruption from academic circles. In fact, most academicians have begun to feel bitter and say that the government no longer needs an excuse to sack vice-chancellors as their appointments have become a purely political affair. As one senior professor said cynically, "The vice-chancellors should resign as soon as there is a change in the ministry as every government would like to oblige its own men."

Faizan Ahmad/*Patna*

Rage of the Brahmaputra

Floods are an annual phenomenon in the state but this time Guwahati and Dibrugarh too have been affected

ASSAM

The monsoon has two more months to go in Assam, but it has already wrought enough damage. In 1988 alone, Assam has been inundated four times, and each successive flood has left a longer trail of devastation than its predecessor. During the fourth wave of floods in end-August, all but one of the 18 districts of the state were deluged. Over 75 persons were killed and another six million displaced, while the damage that was done in the shape of livestock that perished, crops that were destroyed and dwellings that were swept away, brought life in Assam more or less to a standstill. A record number of 1500 relief camps were opened during this wave itself.

Floods being an "annual phenomenon" in Assam, these statistics doled out by the administration, would have been forgotten but for a surprise turn. For the first time in decades the two premier cities of the north-east, Assam's capital, Guwahati, and its industrial hub, Dibrugarh, were affected by the floods. Till now both places were always thought to be islands of safety even when the rest of the state was submerged under water.

But the deluge of 1988 washed away this fond belief once and for all. Dibrugarh (population: 1.25 lakhs) was the first to put out danger signals about the impending disaster. Dibrugath, being a low lying town, and resting about six feet below the normal level of the Brahmaputra which partially encircles it for a distance of about six km, is a potential target for floods. Dibrugarh's only protection is a 12-foot high, 20-km long earthen dyke.

The Brahmaputra, which had been rising since 22 August, reached an all time high of 348 feet, which is six feet above the danger mark of 342 feet, within 24 hours. If the dyke gave way, the entire town was in danger of being engulfed by the waters. The town's people watched with bated breath as the river rose even higher to 348.8 feet by the night of 25 August. Another two inches, and water would have gushed in from the dyke.

This is when the army swung into action. Summoned at a very late hour, the jawans got cracking immediately by bolstering the dyke with mud and sand-



Dwellings submerged after the recent deluge in Assam: an annual phenomenon



bags brought in from the army headquarters at Dinjan, 60 km away. The entire operation of laying 20,000 sandbags was completed within six hours, and Dibrugarh was somehow saved.

Not so fortunate was Guwahati, where about four lakh people, out of a total population of 11 lakhs, were hit by the floods.

While Guwahati, by virtue of being the capital of Assam, is likely to receive the attention of planners and administrators, it is doubtful that the rest of Assam, where floods are a perennial phenomenon, will benefit from their expertise. Experts aver that the magnitude of the problem is compounded by the peculiar topographical and ecological features of the state. For one, the Brahmaputra Valley is disproportionately narrow for a river of its size. For another, the slope of the valley is much steeper than required for a river of this size. Added to these is the fact that massive siltation has been constantly raising the river-bed and causing the Brahmaputra to break its banks.

Nonetheless, some short and long term measures have been suggested by the Brahmaputra Board which was specially created in 1980 to tackle flood control in the north-east. The board drew up a two-part 'master plan' for the control of floods and bank erosion. The first part which deals only with the main Brahmaputra River was submitted to the Centre on 31 December, 1986, and is presently being examined by Delhi and the concerned state governments. The second part which concerns the Barak Valley was given to the Centre only recently in May.

The main hitch is the exorbitant costs involved in the exercise. The Brahmaputra Board has estimated an outlay of Rs 650 crores for short term measures for the Brahmaputra river alone. The state is entirely dependent on the Centre, which has sanctioned only Rs 70 crores for flood control under the Seventh Plan. Officials feel that this amount is hopelessly inadequate, because almost an identical sum, i.e. Rs 66.90 crores, was allocated for this purpose under the Sixth Plan while the problem itself is assuming unmanageable proportions.

Given this state of affairs, it is clear that the administration would be helpless if tomorrow Assam were to be again threatened by another wave of floods. It has only one choice right now: summoning the army as the Dibrugarh experience has proved that only the army can effectively cope with such a crisis.

Radhika Rameseshan / *Guwahati*

Blacklisted!

The government refuses visas to cricketers with South African links

CRICKET

Hypocrisy is the name of the game. Last year it was the sub-continent's prestige that was at stake and hence the sporting policy of the Indian government with regard to South Africa was momentarily forgotten as India and Pakistan joined hands to stage the prestigious World Cup tournament. With the tournament over, the government, it seems, has decided to go back to its moralistic stand on South Africa and hence the announcement that visa would be denied to any cricketer with sporting links with the Forbidden Country. This has put the cricket tour of India by the England team in jeopardy as eight of its players have plied their professional trade in South Africa, including Graham Gooch, Allan Lamb and John Emburey.

At least three factors spurred the government to its present decision. In 1981 when Keith Fletcher's team was due to tour the country, the government had for the first time outlined its principle in this matter. The team included Geoff Cook and Geoff Boycott—both with active playing contracts in South Africa that winter.

When this was pointed out to the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB), the two players saved the tour by signing statements that they were opposed to apartheid in principle as well. India relented and the tour was flagged off. Ironically, immediately after the tour Boycott was flying to Springbokland with the first-ever 'rebel' team to tour that country.

The Indians stuck to their official insistence initially that players with South African connections would not be granted visas for the Reliance Cup in 1987. When it found the TCCB unyielding and equally insistent that it would not participate if India asked for a change in the team, India's policy-makers backpedalled. How could they jeopardise the Reliance Cup?

The third point which has rankled India is the TCCB seeking a clearance from Gooch's South African side, Western Province. In effect, it asked the Western Province if they would be kind enough to release Gooch for the winter to be able to lead England to India!

"Appalling," said the chairman of the South Africa Non Racial Olympic Committee, Sam Ramasamy. "I cannot imagine that the English Board had to seek the permission of a non-ICC member to name an England captain. This is not only a provocative act, but it seems they are intent on seeking a confrontation with India, and I hope India will give a befitting reply."

India has. But what cricket observers feel is that if Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the West Indies follow India's policy lead and act in a similar manner the next time England is scheduled to tour those countries, it could lead to a vertical split in the ICC. Consequently, England, Australia and New Zealand could group together on one side. If this schism forces England to play ball with South Africa because the 'conscientious' Third World countries won't allow it to tour them, then the anti-apartheid lobby in New Delhi would be effectively checkmated.

Mudar Patherya with bureau reports

Graham Gooch: driven off this time



Of princes and patrimony

The Nizam's heirs squabble over his prized collection of jewels

ANDHRA PRADESH

It is reputed to be one of the most fabulous collections of jewels anywhere in the world. And last fortnight, the 107 priceless pieces that formed the collection of the late Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last Nizam of princely Hyderabad, was once again the subject of a controversial dispute. On 26 August, Nawab Nader Ali Mirza, the husband of one of the late Nizam's grand-daughters, filed a defamatory suit against Prince Hashim Jah, one of the Nizam's many sons, claiming Rs 25 lakhs as damages. Mirza, the husband of Princess Fatima Fouzia, alleged that Hashim Jah, his three sons and the



Courtesy Uday am

Hashim Jah: one of the many claimants

secretary of the Nizam's trust, had defamed him through the "malicious statement" that his wife was only one of the many beneficiaries of the trust which holds the jewels, not a trustee herself and that he (Mirza) had no right to pose as a spokesman for the trust.

This is not the first time that the jewels have been the subject of controversy - the Supreme Court is yet to decide whether some of the pieces may be sold abroad.

The dispute over the jewels came to the forefront again when Mirza said on 4 August that there were only eight beneficiaries of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust, which was established in 1951: the two sons of the Nizam, the late Prince Azam Jah and the late Prince Mouzam Jah; his daughter, the late Princess Shezadi Pasha; his step-brother, Nawab Basalth Jah Bahadur; his grandsons, Princes Mukarram Jah and Muffakham Jah; and his grand-daughters, Princess Fatima Fouzia and Princess Ameena Marzia.

Hashim Jah contends that there are more than a hundred beneficiaries. At a press conference held on 7 August at Hyderabad to dispute Mirza's remarks, he said: "Princess Fouzia is only one of

Nawab Nader Ali Mirza and Fatima Fouzia, filing a defamation suit against Jah



Courtesy Uday am

The disputed legacy

The 107 pieces of jewellery that are in the custody of the Supreme Court were not collected by the last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan alone. Many of the pieces date back to the six Nizams who preceded him and together they form a rare and fabulous treasure. One example is sufficient to demonstrate how valuable the collection is. Christopher Armstead, in his book *Princely Paegant*, notes that the Indian government wanted to sell the 107 pieces in 1951. But the government changed its mind since it felt that unless the collection was sold piecemeal, it would result in the collapse of the jewellery market.

Part of the collection is the famed 182-carat Jacob diamond. The last Nizam is reported to have rejected an offer of a million pounds for it, preferring instead to use it as a paperweight. A necklace consisting of 22 emeralds is another masterpiece. Weighing 427 carats, the largest emerald in the necklace weighs almost 60 carats and was priced in 1950 at a staggering Rs 5 crores.

The Morarji Desai government cleared the sale of 65 items of the collection after declaring that they were not art treasures. The trust had then decided to auction 37 of these but the Janata government under Charan Singh prevented the move by withdrawing the non-antiquity certificate issued to the pieces. The decision was challenged in the Supreme Court by the trustees—and the Court is yet to pronounce a verdict.

According to Prince Hashim Jah, an expert committee formed by the Congress(I) government in 1980 certified that while seven out of the 37 controversial pieces were art treasures, the rest were not.

According to Princess Fouzia and her husband Nawab Mirza, the Supreme Court did uphold their contention that there were only eight beneficiaries in a judgement in 1980.

the numerous beneficiaries of the trust. Moreover, Mirza cannot act as the trust's spokesman as he is not even a beneficiary." This led to the defamation suit in which Mirza argues that being married to a genuine heir, he is entitled to act on his wife's behalf. His wife, Fatima Fouzia, said at a press conference on 27 August: "Hashim Jah and others were only the sons of the late Nizam's concubines and therefore cannot claim the right of inheritance. The will only considered the children of Queen Puran Begum."

Fouzia emphasised that it was she who filed a case in the Supreme Court contesting the Charan Singh government's decision to prevent the sale abroad of 37 pieces of the collection. If the Supreme Court does decide to allow the sale of the collection abroad, then the controversy over whether the beneficiaries number eight or more than a hundred is certain to intensify and turn even more bitter.

Mukundan C. Menon/*Hyderabad*

INDUSTRIALIST

Mallya gallops away

Has the flashy United Breweries boss become a non-resident to escape harassment from the taxman?

He spent years defending his funds abroad and fending off taxmen. And now, in a sudden move, the flashy, race horse-loving liquor tycoon, Vijay Mallya, after having suffered the heat of the Raid Raj, has decided to 'flee' the country. The moustachioed chairman of the United Breweries Group, who spent a lot of time on race courses and loved owning formula racing cars, is shifting residence to London to acquire non-resident status—perhaps the first leading industrialist to do so. Many in industry sniggered at Mallya as being a "corporate upstart", and true to his flamboyant style, he quipped about his shifting to London, "It will be great to be in the company of international industry leaders."

But more than the lure of rubbing shoulders with corporate bigwigs abroad, industry sources feel that what prompted Mallya to take this sudden decision was to avoid the harassment by central agencies like the Enforcement Directorate and the income-tax department. And being an NRI is a great help in such a situation.

The reasons apart, Vijay Mallya spoke enthusiastically about his decision to turn an NRI. Said he, "I can bring the best of technologies with my funds into the country." And his poser, when asked what prompted him to shift home to London, was, "Won't you be interested in jumping at an offer to become associate editor of Reuters?" (Incidentally, there is no such position in Reuters.) In Mallya's case, the offer is a directorship on the board of Hoechst Celenese International, which, he thinks, is like getting the highest award in international industry. "It was this offer which made me decide to become an NRI," Mallya confided. What is of added satisfaction to him is the fact that Hoechst, West Germany, had refused to make him chairman of its Indian subsidiary in which the UB Group has a large shareholding. Even his late father, Vittal Mallya, was a chairman of Hoechst India earlier. But, now, his new status as a non-resident has enabled son Vijay to go one better.

Whatever his detractors may say, there is no gainsaying the fact that

Vijay Mallya with one of his winning horses: flamboyant

Mallya loves owning race horses and formula racing cars. And his flashy lifestyle led many in industry to snigger at the UB chief as being a 'corporate upstart'

N Prasad

Mallya had set a searing growth path for the United Breweries empire. "They can't stop me. Nor can they stop my group's growth," he had said at the height of the Raid Raj. He had made the statement in early February 1985, just after coming out of a 24-hour detention when the Enforcement Directorate officials nabbed him for alleged FERA (Foreign Exchange Regulations Act). And the fact remains that Mallya perhaps faced the heavy hand of V.P. Singh's tax raiders more than any other industrialist. But, true to his word, the liqour tycoon not only survived the heat of the Raid Raj, but pushed UB's annual turnover from Rs 600 crores to Rs 1,000 crores in these four years. Since then, he has acquired two companies and has diversified his group into emerging growth sectors like petrochemicals and telecommunications. The UB empire is today 40 companies strong.

Not only that, Mallya has eventually come out clean in the FERA cases with the government withdrawing both the cases pending against him and the Chhabria brothers. (Incidentally, at the height of the takeover battle for Shaw Wallace, it was widely rumoured that Manu Chhabria was a 'front' man for Mallya which led to the raids on the UB chairman.) Even the income-tax raids on his empire earlier this year, including a personal search of Mallya while he was at Ooty attending a company conference, have not yielded any results.

There are many who have favoured Mallya's decision. A leading advocate in the city who specialises in handling FERA cases considers it a "prudent move". And a former officer of the Enforcement Directorate said, "He should have done this long back. It is a most sensible decision for a person like Mallya." A close aide of Mallya was more pithy: "He used to spend most of his time abroad even when he was a resident Indian. But now, with Mallya becoming an NRI, the Reserve Bank and the Government of India will accord him red carpet treatment." What they are hinting at is that his becoming an NRI will not alter his status back home: he would continue to hold an Indian passport which is allowed under Indian law. Earlier, Mallya had to seek RBI permission to go abroad; now he would merely have to intimate the RBI.

But who will look after Vijay Mallya's sprawling industrial empire while he is away in the cooler clime of London "rubbing shoulders" with the international corporate glitterati? The UB chief's close aides do not visualise any problems on this front, pointing out that over the years he has built up an efficient



N Prasad

Mallya with wife Sameera: shifting home

and trustworthy team of senior executives who have run the show while he has spent long stints abroad. "It is a tried and tested team," said a senior UB hand.

Mallya has an extensive international connection. His associate companies abroad include the Tentura group of companies with investments in manufacturing units in Hong Kong, Singapore, etc., besides the Ashoka Restaurant in Hong Kong and Carresco in Singapore. Tentura and Carresco, incidentally, were very much in the news in the thick of the battle for Shaw Wallace. However, UB spokesperson Nilima Verma maintained, "We don't have any associate companies abroad and the Singapore trade branch is closed since RBI refused to renew the licence." The UB Group also has offices in London, Singapore, New York and Zug in Switzerland.

Why did Mallya choose London as his new home? Why not a tax haven like the Isle of Man perhaps, which would have afforded greater scope for business transactions? Mallya's explanation is that he wants to retain his status of an "honest corporate boss". Said the UB chief with a straight face, "I mean business, and in a straightforward way."

Vijay Mallya had started as a trainee executive at Carew and Co. in Asansol. He was in his late twenties when he took over the reigns of a fairly large business empire when Vittal Mallya died. "I was at a loss to cope with the situation," he once said of his early years as head of the UB Group. But he learnt the nuances of the game that corporate bosses play faster than many had expected. He lived luxuriously, and often recklessly, and was always in the glare of media publicity for one reason or the other. And his latest move too has turned the media and corporate spotlight on him.

Yegati Krishnamurthy/*Bangalore*

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The high-wage islands

The contention of managements that labour is overpaid does not appear to be true

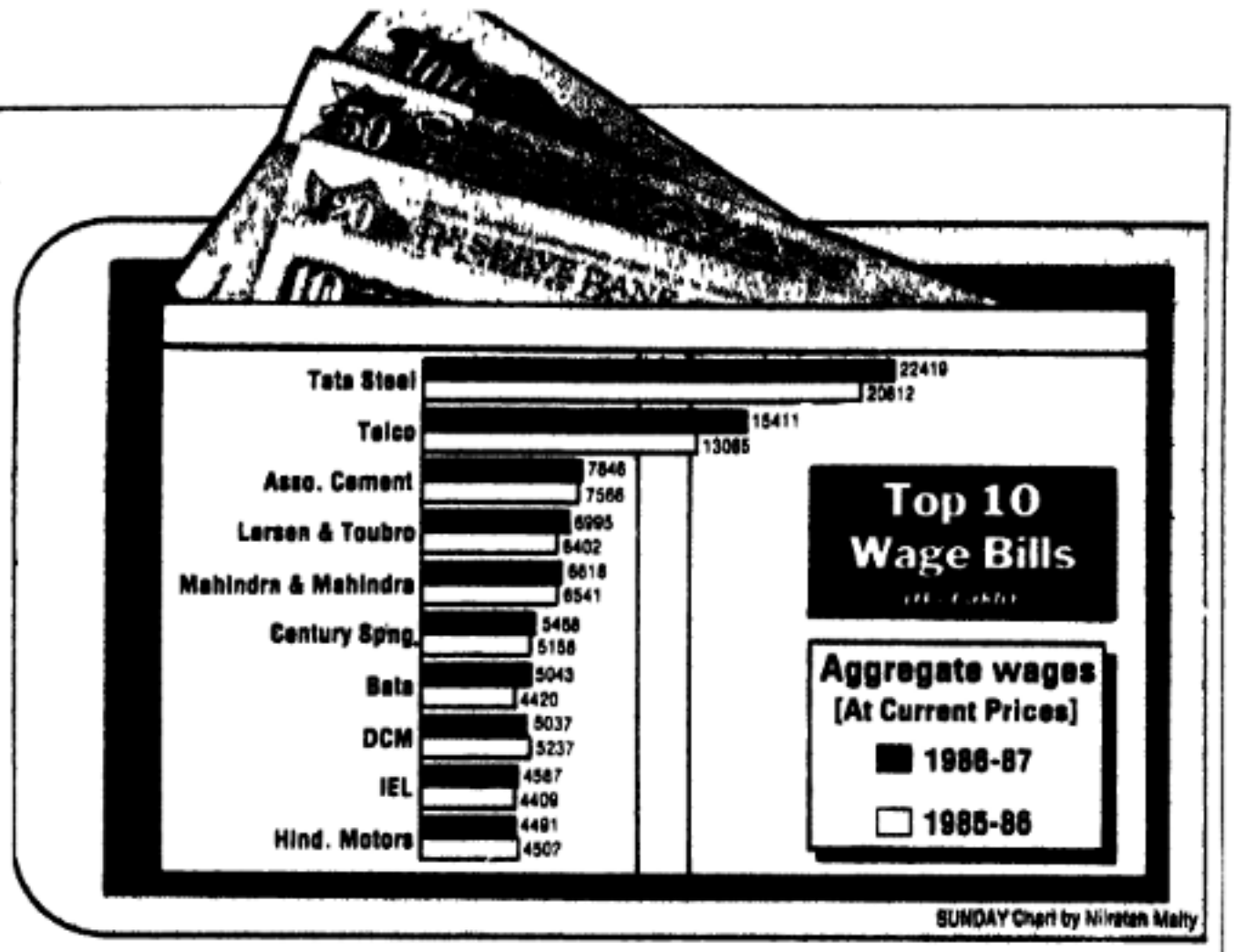
Labour's summer of discontent is far from over, and is showing portents of extending beyond autumn. Units of several premier private sector companies like Metal Box, GKW, Bata, Kesoram, Dunlop and Hindustan Lever, to name a few, continue to have their shutters down either due to lock-outs or strikes. And taking advantage of the prevailing situation, intransigent managements are pressing for wage freeze and voluntary retirement/retrenchment as pre-conditions for reopening their units. Evidently they are convinced that disproportionate increases in their wage bills were principally responsible for the poor performance of the units.

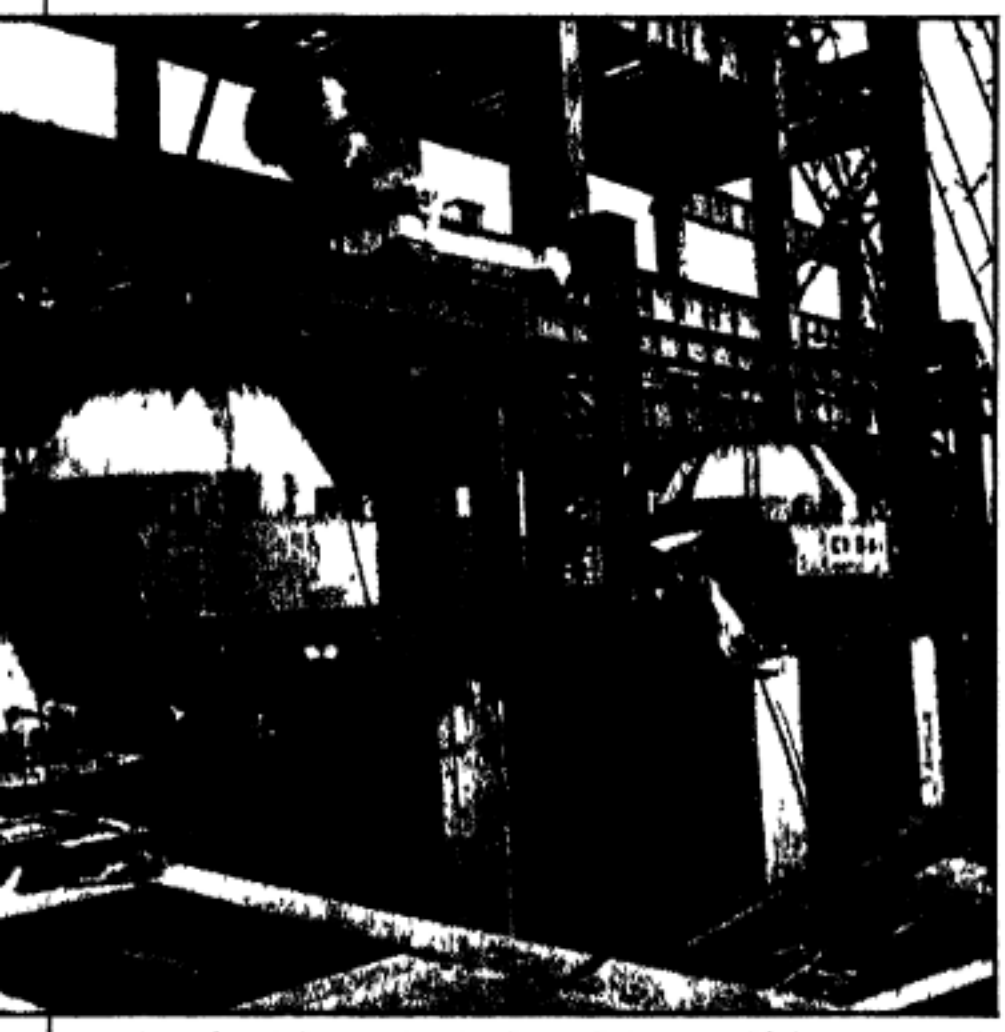
This may be true only in a few isolated cases. In 1986-87, while the sales turnover of Metal Box and GKW, for example, declined respectively by 14.5 and 1.3 per cent from the 1985-86 levels, their wage bills increased by 19.1 and 5.5 per cent. Consequently, the

share of wages in sales increased from 15.9 per cent to 22.1 per cent for Metal Box and from 18.5 to 19.8 per cent for GKW. In case of Bata, the share of wages in total sales rose from 22 to 22.9 per cent and in Dunlop it was up at 13.2 per cent from 11.2 per cent.

However, the individual experience of these companies did not hold good for a larger sample. During the same time, the aggregate salary payments of the top 25 private sector companies in terms of wage bill increased at a somewhat higher rate of 9.1 per cent compared to the 8.5 per cent rise in sales. The share of wages in sales income of the same set of companies, however, remained almost identical.

But more importantly, though the troubled companies are looking for a solution in retrenchment and wage





The Tata Steel plant at Jamshedpur: high wages, higher productivity

The general experience of the corporate sector does not suggest that labour cost is the main reason for the poor performance of any company. Much of the increase in their wage bills was due to the increase in the salaries of their highly-paid employees, mostly managers

freeze applicable essentially to their labour forces, in reality, this would, at best, touch only the surface of their problem. Indeed, as statistics reveal, much of the increase in their wage bills was due to the increase in the salaries of the highly-paid employees, mostly managers. For example, in GKW, while the total wage bill increased by 5.5 per cent in 1986-87, the salary bill of persons earning Rs 3,000 or more per month increased by 50 per cent, and their share in the total wage bill increased from 15 to 21.4 per cent. Likewise, Bata and Dunlop recorded increases of 51.1 and 73.2 per cent.

Most of the corporate heavyweights have shown this trend. Against an increase of only 9.1 per cent in the total salary payments of the top 25 companies in 1986-87, the aggregate wage bill of their Rs 3,000 plus earning employees increased by as much as 38 per cent. Their share in the total wage bill rose from 25.8 per cent to 32.5 per cent. The number of employees in this category, too, grew by about 32.5 per cent—from 69,723 in 1985-86 to 92,372 in 1986-87. These figures definitely prove the existence of the much talked about island of rich employees in the private corporate sector. They also establish that retrenchment of lower-level workers would not be a particularly effective solution to the problems of the troubled units.

In fact, the general experience of the corporate sector does not suggest that labour cost is the main reason for the poor performance of any company. The best example in this regard is perhaps Tata Steel. In 1980-81, after seven and a half decades of its incorporation, its wage bill exceeded the Rs 100-crore mark (Rs 100.37 crores). Thereafter, it took only five years to cross Rs 200 crores (Rs 208.12 crores in 1985-86). This doubling of the wage bill in only five years did not lead to any financial crisis for Tata Steel since the company was able to increase its sales turnover at a faster pace. Its net sales in this period grew by more than 2.5 times—from Rs 437 crores to Rs 1,143 crores. Significantly, Tata Steel's share of wages in net sales declined from 23 per cent to 18.2 per cent!

Viewed from workers' angle, a 9 per cent increase in salaries is hardly significant, especially in a developing economy like India's where the price rise continues unabated, thus neutralising the benefits of wage hikes. For example, in 1986-87 the average consumer price index for industrial workers went up by 8.7 per cent, an almost no-gain situation for the workers.

At the individual level, the experience of the 25 companies with the highest wage bills was even worse. The employees of 14 of these corporations recorded a decline in the real wages. However, amidst all the sufferers, employees of a handful of companies, like Bajaj Auto, Birla Jute and Dunlop, prospered. So, next time you hear a harassed proprietor or senior manager talk of a wage cut, salary freeze or retrenchment, tell him that the expedient is an eyewash—it doesn't work.

Tushar Mahanti / *Calcutta*

DCM'S KOTA COMPLEX.

Tatas lead the pack

While there are many heavyweight bidders, the premier business house has made the highest offer

Tata Tea chairman Darbari Seth is a man who knows a good bargain when he sees one. Last week it began to look as if Seth was within a stone's throw of getting the biggest corporate bargain of the season—DCM's Kota complex which is up for sale.

Whether Seth will actually pull off his corporate coup remains to be seen. The Tatas have offered around Rs 150 crores for the complex—and that is an offer which will take some topping.

Tatas appear to have pipped their competitors to the post. So far, about half a dozen corporate groups have already been taken to size up the value of the Kota complex. Amongst them are non-resident takeover tycoon Manu Chhabria and a bevy of other industrialists like Aditya Birla, Rama Prasad Goenka, S.K. Birla and Abhey Oswal from Ludhiana. DCM is still getting enquiries from other groups about the complex.

So far, however, only the Tatas have come up with a concrete bid to buy the five-factory complex for around Rs 150 crores. And even that is hedged with stiff conditions which DCM may never be able to fulfil. Oswal, who was the first off the mark, has made a tentative offer of around Rs 125 crores. Tatas are, however, well ahead of him. The others are still toying with the idea and have still not made firm offers.

But while Tatas may be the front-runners if DCM decides to sell, there are catches that may still prevent a deal from being clinched. Within DCM itself, there are still doubts whether the Kota complex should be sold or not. Managing director Bansi Dhar is still opposed to the idea of selling the complex. So is Charat Ram, the former managing director who still plays an active role in major decisions. These objections have been getting increased credence because the DCM Kota complex has suddenly, during the last few months, started making money—almost Rs one crore a month. And sources in the company reckon that it will keep making money as long as the power supply in Rajasthan—which has been hopeless over the last few years—stays good. Even products like PVC which is made at Kota is making money despite the fact that the factory has outdated equipment.

Besides, the company is also facing up to the fact that it will be left with very little if the sale actually goes through. On one hand, there will be the successful sugar and vanaspati divisions. Then there will be the textile division which is losing money heavily, and which will be

Darbari Seth: best bid



The DCM plant at Kota: many bidders



very difficult to pull out of the red. There is also DCM Data Products which has good collaborations but which is not faring well in the brutally competitive computer market.

The DCM decision will also hinge on a host of other factors. The company is in dire need of money but it has only just worked out exactly how much will be needed to take it through the next few months. If the government comes through with its decision, as is expected soon, to allow the company to close its Bara Hindu Rao factory in Delhi, then DCM will need almost Rs 20 crores immediately for severance payments to the workers. Besides this, the company has several other commitments coming up in the near future including repayment on a debenture issue held a few years ago.

Whether DCM can get away without selling such a major chunk of its empire is also a subject that is getting close attention of the board management committee which is effectively running the company at the moment. One possible alternative is to sell the Swatantra Bharat Mills which is putting the company in the red by almost Rs one crore a month. The management is, however, loathe to sell the mill because the factory is situated on prime real estate which could yield the company a bonanza at some point of time.

The financial institutions who hold almost 40 per cent of DCM's shares will also play a key role in deciding what happens next. So far they have gone along with the plans for the sale. Last week, however, there were reports that the financial institutions had unloaded upto five per cent of their holdings in DCM. Tata Tea's Seth denies rumours that he is buying DCM shares in the market. But anyway, DCM may be ready to talk to Seth about buying the Kota complex. And one thing is certain—DCM's options are getting more and more limited.

Paran Balakrishnan/ ***New Delhi***



Bansi Dhar: holding out

While the Tatas may be the front-runners, there are catches that may prevent the deal from coming through. Managing director Bansi Dhar is still opposed to the idea of selling the complex, and so is Charat Ram

JEWELLERY EXPORTS

Studded with problems

Despite the advantage of excellent craftsmanship, the nine gem and gold jewellery units at SEEPZ are languishing

So near and yet so far, seems to be the state of the 100 per cent export-oriented gold jewellery units at Bombay's Santa Cruz Electronic Export Processing Zone (SEEPZ). Nine of these were set up at the initiative of the commerce ministry two years ago, but owing to various impediments, they have failed to take off. Said one of the owners, "We could have easily done up to Rs 107 crores in the first year itself, but now we have set ourselves a target of only Rs 85 to 90 crores for 1988-89." If the hurdles are removed, then in the fifth year of operation the value of exports from this zone could be around Rs 285 crores.

What makes the SEEPZ exporters feel let down is the fact that India has an age-old tradition of jewellery manufacturing—both plain as well as the studded variety. It has the largest artisan force in the world—around 350,000 goldsmiths—and the wage rates are one of the lowest. The country also has the potential of being one of the largest exporters of studded jewellery largely because of the availability of cut and polished diamonds and other gems for manufacturing studded jewellery.

The irony is that these craftsmen and artisans who adorn the necks, ears, hands and fingers of women throughout the world, work in appalling conditions. Even basic amenities such as water, gas and electricity are not available. On the other hand, because of the moderate prices of exported Indian-made studded jewellery, the middle classes, especially in the United States, can afford them in the price range of $300 to $400. According to a spokesman of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), 70 per cent of the 18 million pieces of studded jewellery sold in the USA were in this price range.

But the problems are many. Explains a spokesman of GJEPC, "In Maharashtra, unlike in Gujarat, there is the sales and turnover tax burden which totals 5.73 per cent on diamonds and precious stones." For instance, an exporter in Maharashtra who purchases diamonds or precious stones and uses these to manufacture jewellery, has to pay a purchase tax of 4 per cent and a surcharge of 48 per cent which is not refundable even though the jewellery is

Finishing touches being given to a ring



meant for export. And with a turnover tax of 1.25 per cent, the cost of the indigenous diamonds to the Indian jeweller is 5.73 per cent higher compared with what a manufacturer in Hong Kong and Singapore has to pay. The exporters, however, hope that chief minister Sharad Pawar, who is known to be against unnecessary taxes, will rectify the situtions. Pawar, however, has not taken any decision so far.

Besides these inbuilt disadvantages, there are other problems which too require attention There are no customs clearance facilities which are basic to any export activity It is claimed that there is a dearth of trained appraisers for jewellery. Moreover, some units have not been provided with infrastructural facilities such as water and electricity, although these units have continued to pay rent for several months Power supply to a number of these units is erratic leading to frequent breakdowns of imported machinery and equipment

The complaints do not end here Although electronic units at SEEPZ are allowed duty-free imports of electronic capital goods such as videos, fax machines and telephones, this facility has not been extended to the nine gold jewellery manufacturing units

Even the advantage of importing gold under the State Bank of India (SBI) scheme is not offered to the jewellery units at SEEPZ This, despite the fact that the export policy has indicated that the scheme is also applicable to jewellery units in SEEPZ And the reason for this is interesting: apparently, the necessary instructions have not reached the operational level of the SBI The SEEPZ jewellery units are also starved of working capital as banks do not accept gold for hypothecation.

The situation as it exists today is ironic. The stepmotherly treatment is despite the fact that the nine units are under the special care of the Union commerce ministry. And unless these hurdles are removed, the ministry's ambitious plans to increase jewellery export will fail to take off.

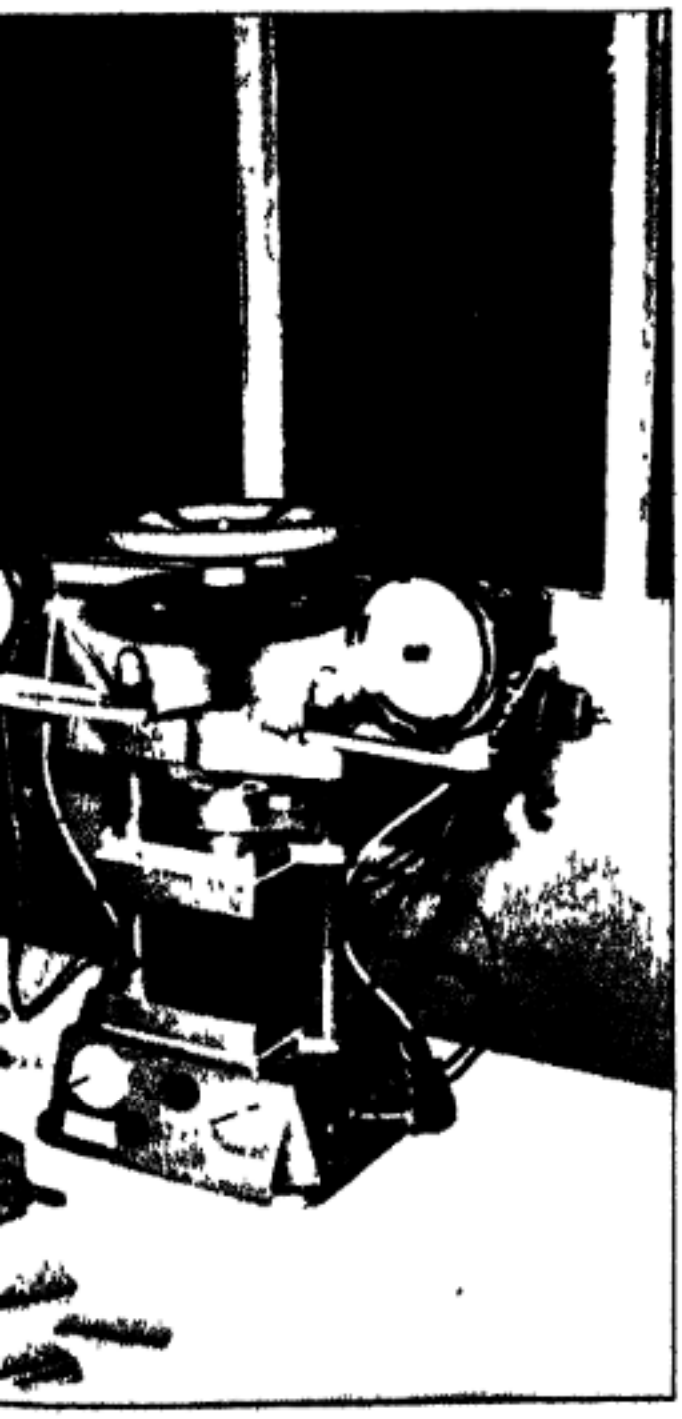
Olga Tellis/Bombay



Vulcanising press used for making rubber moulds, designs for export



Gold rings being polished at a SEEPZ unit well equipped



The country has the potential to become one of the biggest exporters of studded jewellery because of the ready availability of cut diamonds. But various impediments have prevented the export units from taking off

Tussle for Toyo Engg.

The Japanese are not too happy with the prospect of losing their controlling interest in Toyo Engineering. A.C. Muthiah, vice-chairman and president of SPIC and chairman of SPIC Electronics and Systems, who is also a director of Toyo, has increased his stake by buying up 25 per cent shareholding in Toyo from Gujarat industrialist Jaikrishna Harivallabhdas at Rs 60 per share. Since Muthiah already had a 20 per cent holding, he is now poised to become the majority shareholder.



A.C. Muthiah: controlling interest

While Muthiah did not respond to SUNDAY's queries for confirmation of his move, the Japanese are learnt to be disconcerted and are delaying the transfer of Harivallabhdas's shares to Muthiah. The SPIC president has a reputation for having his own management style, and is expected to demand a bigger say in the day-to-day functioning of the company.

Cold feet over IR Bills

Is the government getting cold feet about pushing through its proposed Industrial Relations Bills? It looks very much as if it is. The two Bills have been introduced in Parliament but the government made very little attempt to push them through this time. During the discussion on the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill, labour minister Bindeshwari Dubey gave an indication of which way the wind was blowing when he said that the government was ready to hear all sides.

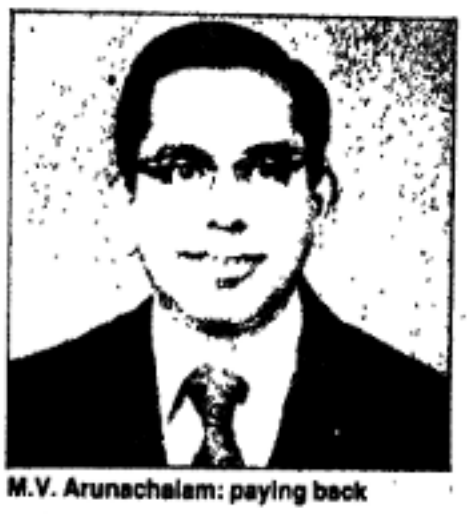
Perhaps it is not a surprise that the government is stalling on the Bill. Already stiff opposition is building up against it—even amongst pro-Congress(I) trade unions like INTUC. Even the employees are not very happy about some of the Bill's new provisions. And now, after the fiasco over the Defamation Bill it looks as if the Industrial Relations Bills may be allowed to die a quiet death.

Bindeshwari Dubey: cold feet



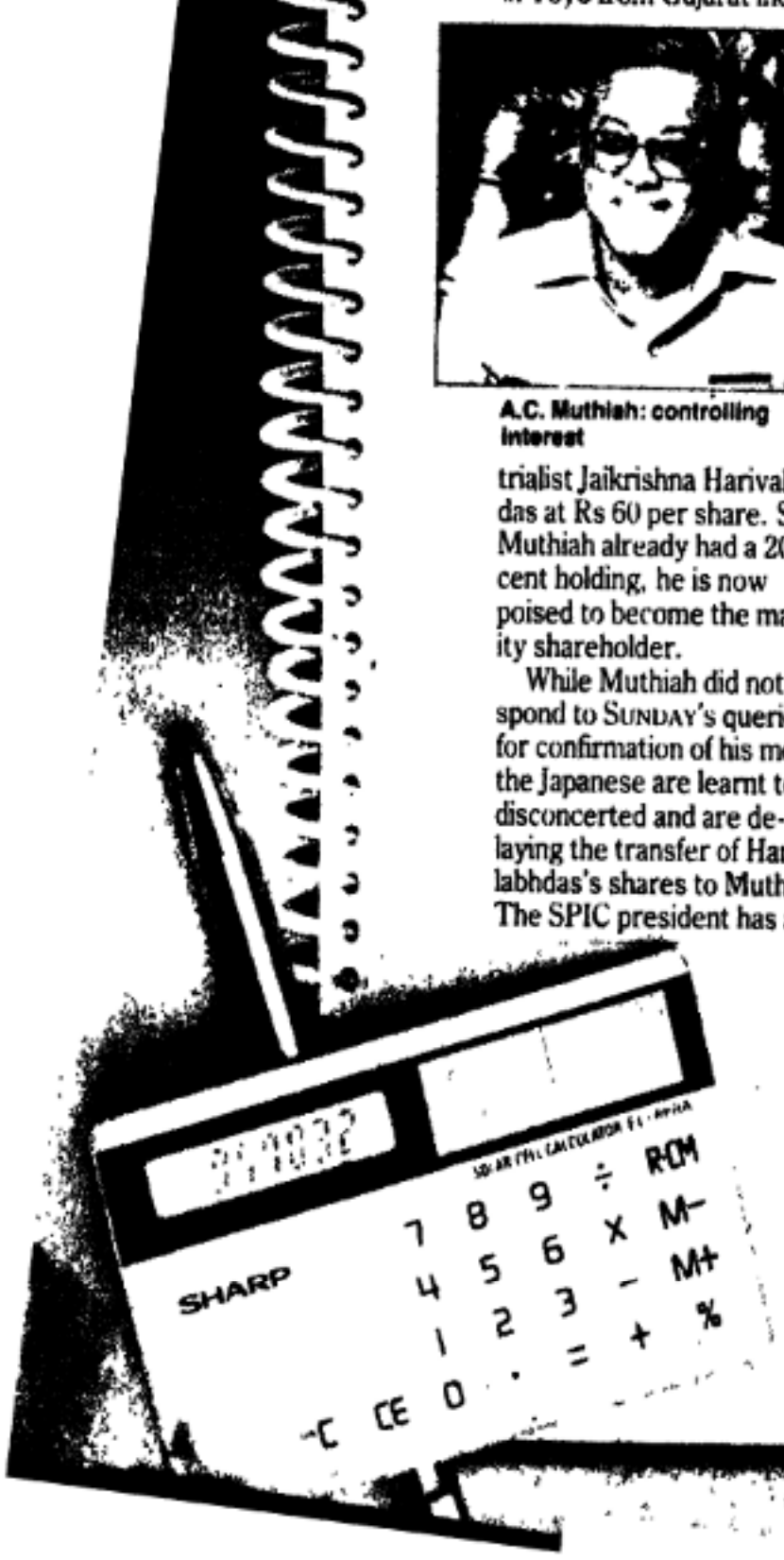
Hindujas humbled

While it has been a summer of failed bids for the Hindujas, they have not quite given up hope so far as Madras-based Best & Crompton is concerned. But, interestingly, they are facing stiff competition in their efforts from a party who very recently thwarted a Hinduja raid on one of its companies: Coromandel Fertilisers. M.V. Arunachalam of the TI Group of industries fought off the Hindujas and kept control of Coromandel promoted by one of his companies, EID Parry.



M.V. Arunachalam: paying back

Now, Arunachalam may prove to be the stumbling block for the non-resident Sindhi brothers. While the Hindujas are reportedly picking up Best & Crompton shares furiously from the market, the TI Group has already swept up 11 per cent of the engineering company's equity. With the race intensifying, the shares have shot up from Rs 28 four months ago to Rs 50 last week. And, if reports are to be believed, the TI Group has the informal backing of the financial institutions.



Bring home the splendour of the outdoors



Home Collection

BOMBAY DYEING

SHEETS • TOWELS • FURNISHINGS

Prodigals to the fore

To counter the political onslaught, the Congress(I) high command seems to be turning to former party stalwarts

The prodigals are returning to the Congress(I) and arms have not really opened up in welcome. Reason: the sceptics in the ruling party outnumber those who are busy applauding the leadership's 'new strategy'. But for those who have been allowed a re-entry the event amounts to a political ressurection.

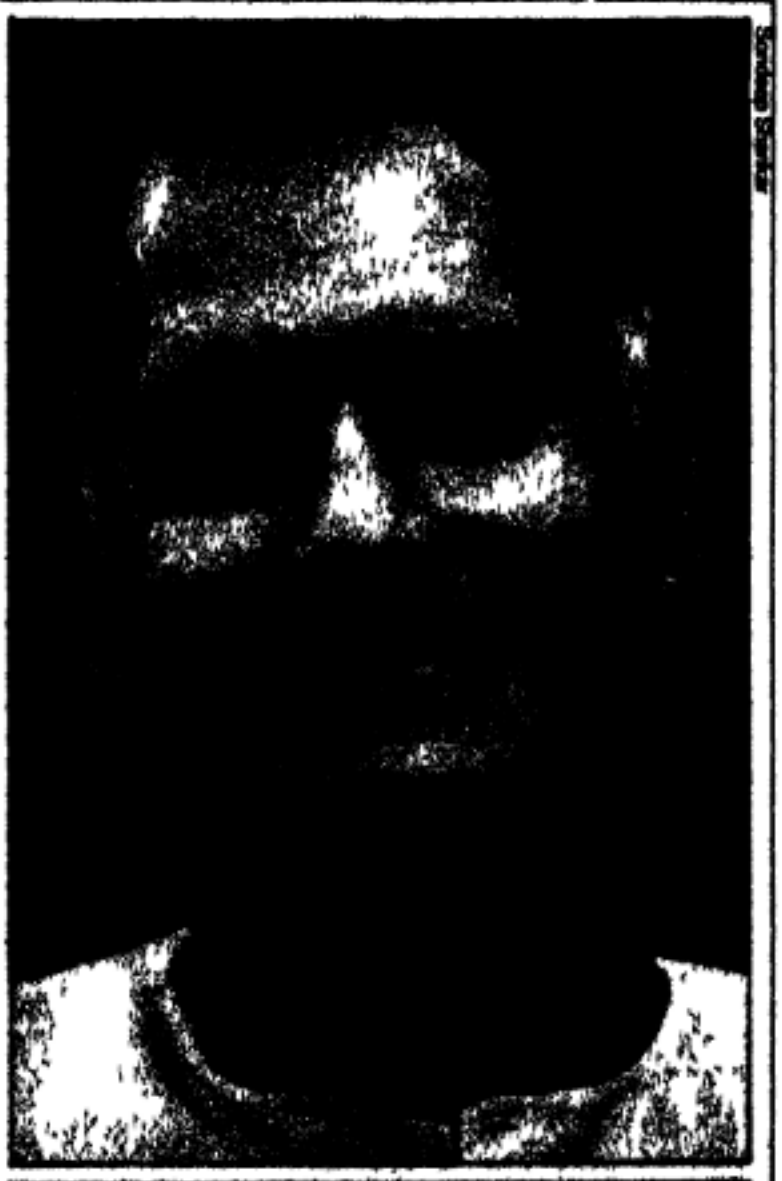
Congress(I) president Rajiv Gandhi, threatened with the possibility of dissidence within the party, has been, for sometime now, toying with the idea of 'buying' loyalty by taking back some former Congress members, ostensibly to strengthen the organisation. The new political prima donna Sheila Dixit, prepared a list of those who could be re-admitted into the party and, in her considered opinion, prove to be assets. It was decided to implement the plan in stages and take special care to see that it was not publicised, except for the necessary announcement to the press.

Chandrajit Yadav, Nandini Satpathy and Shyama Charan Shukla are the favoured firsts to return. More are to follow, foremost being Pranab Mukherjee who is still waiting eagerly in the wings. Mukherjee has been pressing for admission into the ruling party for almost two years now, ever since his brief flirtation with Opposition politics proved highly unsuccessful. Gundu Rao and F.M. Khan are among the other hopefuls in the queue and are in Ms Dixit's talked-about list, or so sources claim. While the three not-so-lightweights in the Congress(I) are full about the 'direction' they can give a 'directionless' party, other members have been wondering how a few individuals can achieve what they failed to do in the past four years. "The need," as one Congress(I) MP from Bihar pointed out, "is to restore our contact with the masses by holding party elections and restoring inner-party democracy. Until and unless this is done, they can take back everyone who has left over the past decade and it will not make any difference in the coming general elections."

It is not clear why the three have been inducted into the party. Several Congress(I) MPs were of the view that this 'strategy' would prove counter productive in the long run as it might lead to confrontations with the respective state leaderships—for example Madhya Pradesh and Orissa—and instead of consolidating the party into a homogenous whole to face the challenge of a general election, it would further divide and subdivide it at various levels.

Chandrajit Yadav, for instance, returned to the Congress(I) after 11 long years. During this time he joined the Congress(O) after leaving Indira Gandhi in 1977, supported Charan Singh's Lok Dal government long enough to get elected to the Lok Sabha on a Lok Dal ticket from Azamgarh in eastern Uttar Pradesh, left and







(Right, top) Chandrajit Yadav and (right, bottom) Nandini Satpathy: will they make a difference to the Congress(I)'s fortunes? (Below) Pranab Mukherjee: waiting in the wings

It is not clear why Chandrajit Yadav and Shyama Charan Shukla have been inducted into the party. Several Congress(I) MPs were of the view that Rajiv's 'strategy' would prove counter-productive

(Continued on Page 79)

AHEAD OF THE 100's



Only Nature could be more fresh and exciting.





Lavender Mist

A Talc Classique.
Created for the way you are.

Orbit/MP-LM/189-87

(Continued from Page 76)

eventually formed his own Janwadi Party. Yadav was one of Indira Gandhi's Young Turks in the early 1970s and played a key role in promoting her socialist politics at the time. He supported her through the 1969 split and stood by her --or rather actively persuaded her—to go ahead with the bank nationalisation programme, abolish privy purses, etc. He was a minister in her Cabinet during the Emergency and all those who knew him predicted that he would go far, until he made the wrong calculations and left Indira Gandhi. Now, he says, he left because of differences with Sanjay Gandhi. According to Yadav, Indira Gandhi got in touch with him several times in the intervening period to come back to the party but he refused since he felt that she was not radical enough. The Janwadi Party was formed to give expression to his own strong views about the need for a new social order by combining the votebanks of the scheduled castes and tribes, minorities and backwards. He was, for a while, part of an Opposition effort to come together on a common platform with Sharad Pawar, K.P. Unnikrishnan and Chandra Shekhar as the essential ingredients. A Left Democratic Front was formed, which collapsed after its birth.

Yadav never really regained his footing in the Opposition after that. He lost the Lok Sabha election in 1984, suffering a staggering defeat. That proved to be a bigger reversal for him than he likes to admit. He supported Devi Lal for a while but left, as he himself says, after the latter made a deal with the BJP. Devi Lal invited him to the Opposition meet at Surajkund but Yadav politely declined, saying that he did not want to participate in any Opposition dialogue which involved the BJP, a communal party.

The emergence of V.P. Singh on the national scene and as the nucleus of all Opposition unity efforts came as the final straw. Chandrajit Yadav's differences with V.P. Singh go back to the days when the latter was chief minister of Uttar Pradesh. At that time the Janwadi Party was the only political organisation to hold a rally demanding V.P. Singh's resignation following reports that 8,000 persons had been killed in Uttar Pradesh in fake encounters. Yadav also protested against the police massacre of devotees at Moradabad's Idgah, pointing out now that that too was under the chief ministership of V.P. Singh. He is very bitter about the Jan Morcha leader, loudly questioning his decision to involve an American "CIA-ridden" agency to enquire into Indian affairs. Asked if V.P. Singh's central role in the Opposition realignments had pre-empted his decision to join the Congress(I), Chandrajit Yadav admits, "V.P. Singh's being there has strengthened my assessment that Opposition parties are not interested in going into the depths of problems." Yadav justifies his decision to re-join the very party with which he had always proclaimed to have had irreconcilable differences and says, "The Congress(I) is much better (than the Opposition). Inspite of its many weaknesses it is even today the biggest national party and is committed to socialism and secularism emotionally." He met the Prime Minister a few months ago for the first time and assured him of the Janawadi Party's support. Later, they had another short meeting, and soon came the announcement of his joining the Congress(I). "I was very impressed by Rajiv Gandhi's foreign policy," Yadav says skipping over the domestic politicies altogether.

Among some former members, whose names were suggested by Sheila Dixit are Gundu Rao and F.M. Khan. Both have been waiting patiently in the wings to make an entry into the Congress(I)

"In his foreign policy he has followed the legacy of Nehru and Indira Gandhi and has often taken a bolder stand than them." He is extremely happy about the 'dignified way' in which he was inducted into the party in that he did not have to fill out any form or sign any statement pledging eternal loyalty to Rajiv Gandhi.

The Congress(I) MPs' assessment, supported by a section of the Opposition is, that Chandrajit Yadav found himself with no role to play in the current Opposition unity efforts following his long-standing differences with V.P. Singh. He also realised (he admits this himself) that in the coming general elections there would be no room for one-man political organisations with the electoral battle centering around the Congress(I) and "hopefully" an united Opposition. Since the doors of the Opposition were closed to him, he knocked at the ruling party's gate and was more surprised, than his colleagues, at the welcoming response. He has thus gone back after over a decade, talking as always, of the 'Left image' that the Congress(I) should acquire and how the priority should now be to win back the minorities, scheduled castes and the backwards. That is, at the moment, his priority and not Rajiv Gandhi's is clear from the onset.





(Top) Gundu Rao and (bottom) F.M. Khan: waiting

It is not very clear what the Congress(I) hopes to gain with Yadav's induction into the party. While strong on the questions of secularism, he has not, in political terms, any real base in UP and is not recognised as a backward leader. His interest has always been more in "international affairs" than in "backward" politics. Perhaps, as he feels, it is his "Left" image that has cemented the relationship.

Nandini Satpathy, who was the chief minister of Orissa during the Emergency, has also joined the Congress(I) after a decade. She had quarreled with the Congress leadership and joined the Congress for Democracy (CFD). Her contacts with the so called national Opposition ended rather abruptly when the CFD merged with the Janata Party, mainly because her arch-political rival in the state, Biju Patnaik, was an influential leader of the Janata Party. She then formed the Jagrat Orissa Dal, enjoying the distinction of being the only MLA representing this essentially one-leader organisation, in the Orissa Legislature.

Satpathy too, was a member of Indira Gandhi's powerful Socialist Forum till the early 1970s and played a key role in giving a Leftist direction to the government then. She was a powerful state minister and left to join the Opposition after the Emergency was lifted. Ironically, she was victimised by the Janata government soon after it came to power. She moved out of the realm of national politics soon after, confining herself to the activities of her Jagrat Orissa Dal.

From her point of view, coming back into the ruling party definitely amounts to a resurrection, as it was becoming clear to her, as it was to everyone else in the country, that small regional parties would not even be considered by the electorate in the next general elections. The presence of Biju Patnaik as a key figure in the on-going Opposition confabulations was an obvious deterrent to joining any one of the many parties engaged in the dialogue. The Congress(I) overtures were thus, more than welcome.

From the Congress(I) leadership's point of view, Satpathy's only asset is her popularity. She will, therefore, become a hurdle in Orissa chief minister J.B. Patnaik's path. That might create further dissensions within the state unit of the Congress(I) which might prove counter-productive at the hustings. As one Congress(I) leader from the state pointed out, "If the central leadership wanted to keep Patnaik in check, and if in their assessment Nandini Satpathy can play a role in achieving this, they should have got her back into the Congress(I) long ago. Now any confrontation between them will only create confusion in the state." Ruling party members also point out that this kind of political manoeuvring, if one can call it that, does not make any sense, particularly as the demand of the 60 MLAs to oust Patnaik was not even considered by the Centre. Instead, Patnaik was allowed a freer hand than usual and made full use of the opportunity to axe three of the dissidents. In their opinion, the high command does not really need Nandini Satpathy to cut him down to size.

Shyama Charan Shukla, who was the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh during the Emergency is the heaviest weight to have joined the Congress(I). Asked why he had left, he says, "Left is a misnomer. I never left the party." According to him he was always in the party having renewed his membership regularly, but those in power refused to recognise his presence. "Perhaps to some Congress(I) leaders, I was too much of a threat and so they blocked my membership," he adds smiling wryly. He points out that when Devaraj Urs, the president of the old Congress, recognised the Indira Congress as the 'real' Congress, "we (in Madhya Pradesh) passed a resolution deciding to merge with the Congress(I) our three MPs, 32 MLAs, three cars and six lakhs of rupees." It was a total merger of which he was a part and despite having renewed his membership in 1982 and again in 1984, four years lapsed before he was 'recognised' by the high command.

Shyama Charan Shukla was thinking of



Rajiv Gandhi at the Congress Working Committee meeting: taking the help of the old guard

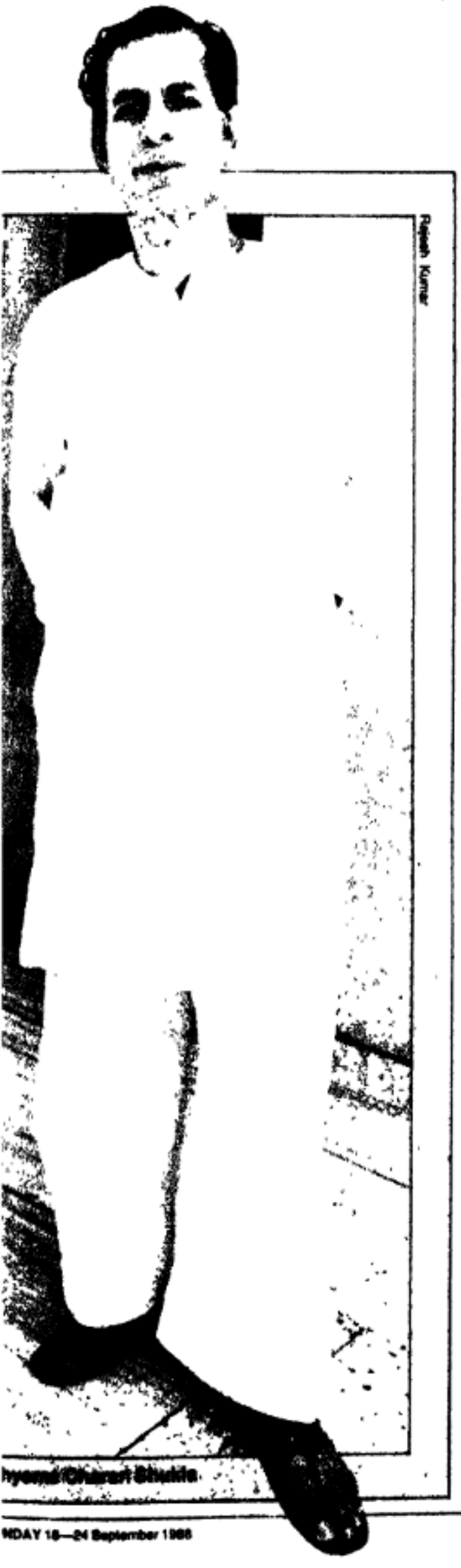




(Left) Nandini Satpathy: J.B. Patnaik's *bete noire*; and (right) A.R. Antuley: making a comeback

Eastern Press Agency

forming his own party in Madhya Pradesh but never really got around to it. He describes himself as a "traditional Congressman" who believes in "the Congress principle and ideology and that it is the only organisation that can keep the country together. It is the only organisation which has the legacy of Gandhi and Nehru." He does not pretend to be smitten with the leadership



Rajesh Kumar

Shyama Charan Shukla

and when asked about the present condition of the party says simply, "every organisation has its ups and downs." He insists that he has not come with any pre-conditions attached as "we are not careerists. We are a different breed of Congressmen." He is certain that the Congress will get through the next elections with a clear majority.

S.C. Shukla's base in Madhya Pradesh has for long been ignored by the high command for one very simple reason: Arjun Singh. Shukla's supporters feel, and others confirm this, that he was the victim of Arjun Singh's machinations, proving no match for the wily politician, who is presently the state's chief minister. Refusing to comment about this, Shukla, however, admits to having a good equation with Madhavrao Scindia and Motilal Vora, the two central ministers, who apparently have had some say in his comeback. If this be true then the obvious inference is that Shukla's induction is to cut Arjun Singh to size, and to make it clear to others in the state that the high command's faith in him is limited. How this will eventually help the Congress(I) in the coming elections for, after all, at this stage all political moves should be guided by this consideration, remains to be seen.

Shyama Charan Shukla also chose to keep out of the Opposition moves, largely because of his brother Vidya Charan Shukla. The two do not see eye to eye on any issue and when asked if this was one deterrent to his joining the Opposition, S.C. Shukla replied, "There are many factors. The situation is not so simple," but refused to elaborate. He did say, however, that "Vidya Charan does not have the support of the masses" He added that many persons had not joined the Jan Morcha and V.C. Shukla "because of me and now that they know I am finally back in the Congress(I) they are at ease". He was of the view that the "Jan Morcha now cannot make a dent in Madhya Pradesh". It is obvious that the Jan Morcha was the prime consideration in the Congress(I) scheme of things for taking back Shyama Charan Shukla. How it eventually works out is for the electorate to decide. Interestingly, however, this aspect appears to have escaped his followers. All those who had come to garland him at his residence in New Delhi and were congratulating him, spoke only of the 'big blow' this would deal Arjun Singh's camp, and how it was long overdue. The focus was entirely on Arjun Singh and not on the Jan Morcha or V.C. Shukla—a fallout which might perhaps not be entirely to Rajiv Gandhi's liking.

Those who have rejoined the Congress(I) have no idea what role Rajiv Gandhi has in mind for them. Nothing has been discussed or finalised about the immediate future. There does not appear to be any pattern behind the 'gameplan'. Perhaps there is no logic over and above the desire to tell the world that the horizon is not so bleak for the Congress(I) under Rajiv Gandhi, and that even though there might be many sitting on the fence waiting for the right moment to cross over to the Opposition side, there are a few who are just as keen to climb on to Rajiv Gandhi's bandwagon in a show of "complete loyalty".

Seema Mustafa/*New Delhi*



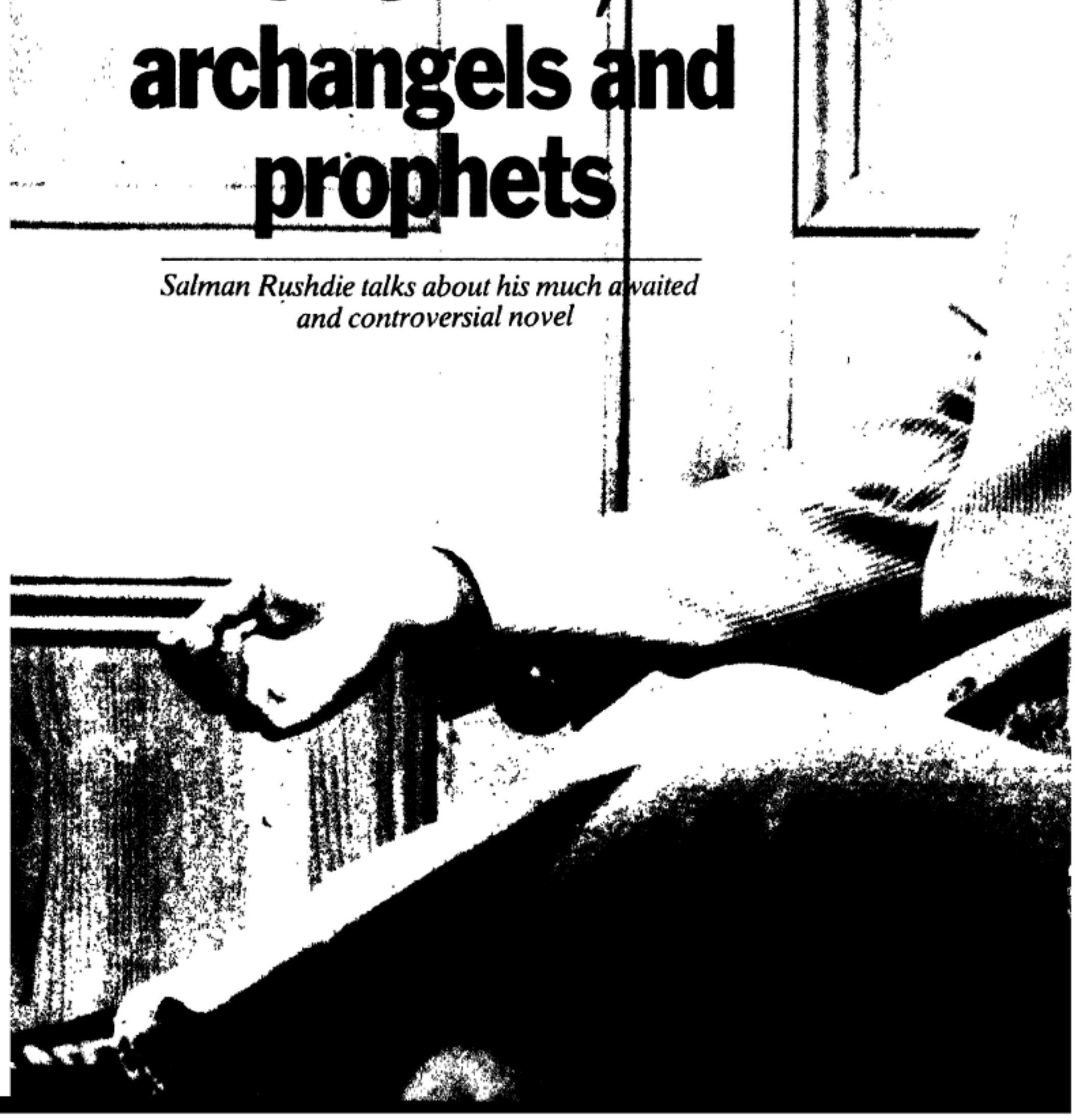
Rajesh Kumar

Chandrajit Yadav was one of Indira Gandhi's Young Turks in the early 1970s and played a key role in promoting her Socialist politics at the time. Now, he says, he left because of differences with Sanjay Gandhi. According to Yadav, Indira Gandhi got in touch with him several times in the intervening period to come back to the party but he refused since he felt that she was not radical enough

Chandrajit Yadav: 'dignified' induction into the party

Of Satan, archangels and prophets

Salman Rushdie talks about his much awaited and controversial novel







"Go straight up," said Salman Rushdie " It's a straight and narrow house."

It is. Several flights of stairs liberally scattered with books, rugs and memorabilia. The treasures pass you by as in Alice's journey through Wonder Tunnel. A portrait of Karl Marx etched and presented by Vivan Sundaram, ethnic designs from Rajasthan and Gujarat—marketed in state emporia back home– several copies of *Midnight's Children*, a book cover of *Satanic Verses*, plants, prints, frames.

Finally, the loft converted to a study—a red and green *chhatri* from Gujarat overhanging a huge worktable An army of books and papers. A mint-green sofa in a corner, and the author in jeans, a checked shirt and an air of cool authority.

At 41, with four novels, two films, a Booker Prize and a Cambridge degree in Islamic studies to his credit, he's already a household name. And now with his fifth novel due for publication on 26 September, he seems quite relaxed. As if he has said it all and won't feel the compulsion to write again immediately.

Satanic Verses - Rushdie's latest literary adventure—is a voluminous work that tells the story of two people—one a legendary movie star, the other a self-made Anglophile– who fall to earth when a hijacked jumbo blows up above the English Channel.

Clinging to each other and singing rival songs, the men hurtle downwards and get washed up on an English beach. But curious changes come about- Gibreel Farishta (the movie star) seems to have acquired a halo, while Saladin Chamcha finds that his legs grow harner, his feet turn into hooves and soon he grows a tail.

With Gibreel and Saladin chosen as the protagonists in the eternal wrestling bout between good and evil, Rushdie carries us through tales of fantasy and bewilderment, of conquest, courage and despair, against the background of Thatcherite Britain.

The book goes on the stand generously laced with controversy. Critics have pronounced it anti-Islamic—the Prophet is said to have a huge harem and receives a revelation in which satanic verses mix with the divine—and there was even the remote possibility that it would not be published in India at all for fear of provoking riots.

All this, despite the astronomical sum of Rs 800,000 allegedly paid in advance to the author.

So SUNDAY decided to ask the man behind it about it all.

Because men don't get pregnant does it mean contraception is a woman's problem alone?

Remember the first time you took a decision all by yourself and were prepared to face its consequences? That was the day you became a man. Being a man means shouldering responsibility. Not only for yourself but also for your near and dear ones. That's why, in any relationship, even if it is the woman who bears the consequences of carelessness, it takes a man to take care of her. To find the right contraceptive method — one that suits not only you, but also your partner. A method that does not involve a risk on her part or reduce the pleasure of togetherness for you. Is there such a method?

The contraceptive confusion

There are methods and methods. How do you find the one that is right for both of you? Some methods involve the tension of counting days (one could go wrong so easily), while others carry the risk of side or after effects. Or worse, the embarrassment of a clinical examination. Some depend upon the temperature for effectiveness. Surely there is a contraceptive method that's absolutely safe without the mess, the accompanying side effects or one that involves a lot of preparation? What you need is a safe, simple, sure method that is right for both of you.



The safe, sure condom

The condom is one of the safest, simplest and surest of contraceptives. It does not involve a visit to the doctor or a clinical examination. Nor does it mean surgery, pain or discomfort. Now thinner and finer than ever before, the condom protects without interfering with the pleasure. It's a man's contraceptive — the only one so far.

Kohinoor confidence

Ask for Kohinoor by name at your nearest chemist. One of India's largest selling condoms, Kohinoor gives you the confidence of knowing that it is absolutely safe. It is lubricated and made from the finest latex to give you a near natural feeling. Each condom is electronically tested for total safety. That's the Kohinoor confidence. Is it any wonder that millions of couples all over India are choosing Kohinoor as the safest, most practical method of contraception?

Kohinoor is from the people who understand your need for privacy, protection and pleasure. Who understand what being a man is all about — the responsibility and the privilege. Because being a man means caring for your woman.

KOHINOOR

Plan your family with Kohinoor confidence.

A Product

MAA COMMUNICATIONS LRCM 288



SUNDAY:* Satanic Verses *has caused a lot of controversy because of the references to Prophet Mohammad—there was even the possibility that it may not be published in India. Were you prepared for this?

Rushdie: That's news to me—I haven't heard it from Penguin. But it would be absurd to think that a book can cause riots. That's a strange sort of view of the world.

But then the situation in India is particularly delicate...

Well the point about the book is that there is a view in it that I take—and that is that everything is worth discussing. There are no subjects which are off limits and that includes God, includes prophets. I refuse to think that I should shut my mind off to subjects which are not just of interest to me but which have been my concern all my life.

The point is, that I am not a religious person anymore, formally; but I have remained all my life very attached to and interested in the subject of Islam. I studied it at university—indeed the place where I first heard about the satanic verses (of which a fictionalised version is in the book) is when I was studying Islam. So it's an image which has remained with me for 20 years.

I guess some people might get upset because it is not reverent, but the point is it is a serious attempt to write about religion and revelation from the point of view of a secular person. I think that's a completely legitimate exercise.

Besides, Mohammad is a very interesting figure. He's the only prophet who exists even remotely inside history. He is the only one about whom there is some half-established more-or-less-factual historical information. That makes him a human being and doubly interesting.

I don't believe that Mohammad had a revelation but then I don't doubt his sincerity either. Mohammad didn't make up the angel. He had that genuine mystical experience. But if you don't believe in the whole truth and you don't disbelieve him either—then what's going on? What is the nature of the mystical experience? Given that we accept it happens and we also don't believe in God and archangels. That's what I tried to write about.

When you made your film* The Riddle of Midnight, *you were accused of being a Muslim fundamentalist. Now you're being called just the opposite...

Yes, it's crazy, isn't it? Now I'm the traitor and *kafir*. Actually it depends on who is accusing me. It seems to me that the point about that film was that almost everybody who had criticised it had not seen it. The film is about communalism—it's wrong to say that a film about communalism is automatically communalist. It's an absurd situation. If I'm a Muslim fundamentalist, that's news to me too.

"I don't believe that Mohammad didn't have a revelation but then I don't doubt his sincerity either. Mohammad didn't make up the angel. He had that genuine mystical experience"

But there was a little too much emphasis on Hindu communalism.

One can argue about too much emphasis—but what no one talks about or writes about is the communalism of the majority. Everybody talks of Sikh communalism and Islamic communalism, but there is this huge thing called Hindu communalism sitting there, and nobody writes about it...if you do, you're called a communalist.

The contrast between the Hindu sari shop salesman and the Muslim tailor is extremely affectionate about both of them. They like each other but history is dividing them—that's not fundamentalist. When you say here is a woman whose husband was burnt alive, who was the victim of a communal riot—if giving her a voice is described as a communal act—it's a very curious logic which needs to be attacked very strongly.

But there was no reference to the communalism of the Muslim Fundamentalists. This is not supposed to be a balanced film. It's an essay. I think what the film was about was allowing ordinary people in India the time to tell their story, and what was extraordinary to me, was how articulate everybody was. I was very proud of the film for that reason. For once, people spoke unmediated. There isn't anything about the film that isn't true.

Not even the statement that every Kashmiri would like to be a part of Pakistan?

You go and ask. I've been to Kashmir five times in the last ten years and I have literally not met a Kashmiri of the working class who does not identify himself with Pakistan. Kashmiris will talk to you differently if you have a

Muslim name than if you don't.

It's not by chance that Farooq Abdullah had shoes thrown at him in the Id *namaz*. It's not by chance that fundamentalist Islam is spreading so fast in Kashmir. There is a desire which I share for this not to be true. I think they would be idiots if they went to Pakistan.

The argument I've had with them regularly is that their form of Islam which is full of shrines, is very Sufistic, and is exactly the kind of Islam that Zia was trying to stamp out. I would say to them, if you got Pakistan you would be practising the kind of Islam that is discriminated against. They didn't accept this. They said we're occupied already, there are generals here already. At least in Pakistan they will be Muslim soldiers.

This is how the ordinary people talk. If it weren't so, I wouldn't say so. You can either say they're not happening and vilify the person who says they are, or you can say they're happening. And my view is, don't shoot the messenger.

Even in the case of the 1984 riots—there are specific complaints, people have been identified. But the government hasn't taken any action and I want to know why. And that is the proper function of a documentary—to ask. Here is the evidence, why are the criminals walking around? I've never heard the answer to that from the Indian government.

If the government wants to clean up its house, it can—but for the attack to come on the person who says the problem exists, is an indication of not wanting to solve the problem. And the one thing to be learnt from any political problem anywhere in the world is that it doesn't go away by not looking at it. So people can call the film what they like, the point is—it looks at the problem.

Though you may disagree with what it sees, you may disagree with how I've said it, you may feel it's unbalanced, it's unfair—all those are legitimate criticisms, and should be argued about. But to criticise the film for looking, is self-censorship.

It is much more destabilising to suppress reality. Because when you give people no voice, the only voice you give them is violence.

And how do you see the situation in India now? What do you think of Rajiv Gandhi's government?

I have always been very optimistic about India. It seems to me that the place goes on—it continues, in spite of Rajiv Gandhi, in spite of all the rest of them. He's no better or worse than anyone else. India survives in spite of its leaders. I think there is a crisis of



"I am not a religious person anymore, formally; but I have remained all my life very attached to and interested in the subject of Islam. I studied it at university—indeed the place where I first heard about the satanic verses is when I was studying Islam"

leadership in India, but I don't think it's unique to India. There is a crisis of leadership in Pakistan, there's a crisis in Britain. For opposite reasons. In India it's a crisis of weakness, in Britain it's a crisis of inflated strength.

I don't have a very high regard for political figures. As a writer you spend your time learning how to tell the truth—it's not always easy—your bias intervenes, your perceptions intervene. As a writer, the important thing about a short story or film is the amount of truth it contains—and that's not true about politicians.

For them, it's the nature and acquisition of power. Truth becomes the subject of power. That's a position for which I have little respect.

Writers have power because they tell the truth. Politicians get power by departing from the truth.

How about Pakistan?

Literally anything can happen in Pakistan now. What is important is to see which horse the US will back. Will they back party-based elections? Will Benazir win if there are free elections? Will the generals allow her to hold power...there are no answers to these questions now. But all I know is that there is a tiny little chink of hope and that's what I'll focus upon.

And back home, where does Thatcher's Britain leave you?

England is a sad country now. On the one hand it's a defeated society, on the other, it's a greedy one. There is no argument here as to the kind of place it is—everyone has surrendered to the forces of power.

So where do you identify yourself?

In Britain.

And yet, you'd go to India for your themes?

I can identify a progression in my novels. It's not right to say that *Midnight's Children* is about India and *Shame* is about Pakistan. They are all linked.

There is this hybridisation in the self. In this book I have, for the first time, managed to write from the whole of myself. It is not from that part of me which is of Indian origin or that part of me which is Pakistan.

This book is a rounding off of a body of work that I have been engaged in for the last five years. It releases me now from the compulsion to write for some time.

I have set down in three books a kind of imaginative landscape which feels to me like my own. All the books together give a rounded statement.

I can now wait for a while before writing again. I'll wait for an idea to seize me and then work on it if it's worth writing about. I have two or three ideas already....

Why did you shift from Picador to Viking/Penguin?

I was writing a novel after a long time and I found that my editors had changed in Picador. The old environment wasn't there anymore. So I thought I should shift as well. Viking/Penguin bid for the book. The advantage with them was that I wanted a worldwide distributor both in England and outside.

For paperbacks, Penguin is ideal—I think we'll have far less piracies than we had in *Midnight's Children*.

Is it true that Viking paid you an astronomical advance?

Yes, it was a lot of money. (*Laughs*) I've never really talked about it.

Looking around the room showed me no trace of the Rs 800,000 that was supposed to have been offered. Asking Rushdie about whether Gibreel Farishta (one of his main characters) was meant to be an Amitabh Bachchan prototype, I packed tape-recorders and books. "No it wasn't," he said, "though there was an initial resemblance."

As the afternoon sun streamed into the study, we said polite goodbyes. Outside, the antiques bazaar of North London was in full swing—china, brass, ornaments, all for the asking.

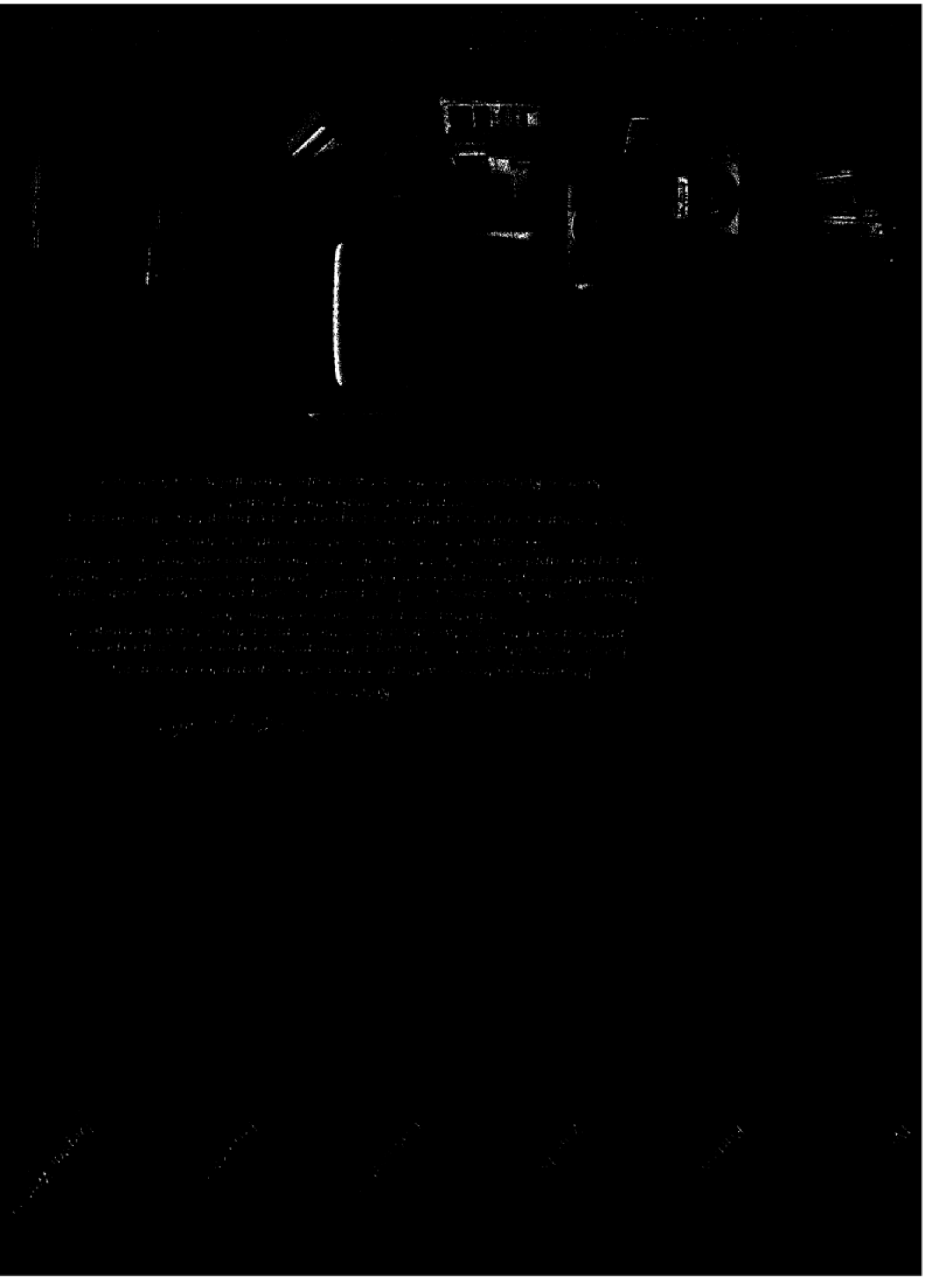
Half-way down, I am stopped.

"You left your raincoat behind," says the author.

I grab the guilty coat, thank him and get started again. At the tube station ironically called Angel, I finally say goodbye to the *Satanic Verses*.

Shrabani Basu/London

Photographs courtesy Viking/Penguin



ROUND EYES, baby face and a disarming lisp-that's what made the Rasna ad so popular. As the viewers gasped "cho chweet", the product-makers knew that they were not commenting on the soft drinks. The heart-stealer was 50 ads old **Ankita Jhaveri** (6).

But life is not easy for little Ankita. As her famous Bombay jeweller family knows, she has to keep a hectic schedule--school during the week and ad-film shooting during weekends. And soon television will see her in star roles in *Tara Ki Duniya* and *Shesh*: a TV film starring Alok Nath and Anita Kanwar. Disappointed ad *filmwallahs* have already started wailing: "We loved you Ankita."

THE PROPHET of value-based politics and former Karnataka chief minister, **Ramakrishna Hegde**, is not through with insisting that he has been had (*vis a-vis* the telephone tapping scandal).



Ashok Vaine

Ramakrishna Hegde: pleading innocence

The latest in the list of evidences cited to prove his innocence is the disclosure (made to newsmen in Bombay) that even his daughter's phone was being tapped by his daughter's name deleted from the list of tapping victims to "falsely implicate" him.

The wily politician would have had it all taped up yet again, if it hadn't been for darling daughter Mamata Nichani herself. Speaking to newsmen in Bangalore, she denied all knowledge of her phone being tapped.

"I am not involved in politics, nor do I come under the economic offenders-criminals category," said a puzzled Nichani, trying, no doubt, to fathom why the state intelligence goons should be interested in her telephonic conversations. "My father," she disclosed, "did not tell me anything."



Kamal Saha

Rajiv Gandhi: danger from the skies

Perhaps Hegde felt that his daughter, like the public, has a right not to know.

THERE'S DANGER even from the skies in **Rajiv Gandhi's** India. Or so say those in charge of the Prime Minister's security. Hence the ministry of home affairs has advised that overflying the PM's house be banned.

Fortunately, the high-flying Prime Minister's abode at 7, Race Course Road is not in the direct flight path of any national or international passenger aircraft, so no airline is likely to rue the decision. The only ones inconvenienced would be Rajiv's yuppie friends in the Aero Club of India and the Delhi Flying Club, who use the nearby Safdarjung airport for indulging in their expensive hobby.

But, plainly speaking (pun intended), was it only security considerations that prompted this ban? Or could this decision be part of a conscious plan to rid the PM of his pro-rich image? After all, if elections come, can gimmicks be far behind?



N Prasad

Ankita Jhaveri: heart-stealer



Rashtriahan Das

Priya Tendulkar: crusader turns housewife?

THE REBEL with a cause, **Priya Tendulkar** recently took time off to marry long-standing boyfriend and tele-screen husband **Karan Raz-**

dan. It was a quiet wedding that took place at ISKCON temple, Juhu, with even the otherwise ebullient Priya playing the subdued, demure Indian bride to the hilt. Only time will tell whether this changed demeanour will endure. Karan's well-wishers hope it does. For it would be a pity to see him reduced to a shadowy figure as the faceless husband of Rajani, in real life too.

The couple are now on honeymoon in Panchgani, a welcome break before they get back to the rigours of making *Kisse Miya Biwi Ke*, their next joint venture, in which the duo take on the task of marriage counselling. And who better qualified than those still in the ethereal world of the newly-wed?

◆

LOST AND found: the presidential pen. The saga goes thus. President **R. Venkataraman**, after a tour of the districts of Andhra Pradesh, arrived at Hyderabad's Begumpet airport. The stopover was brief, the President having to board his Indian Air Force (IAF) jet for Delhi. Nonetheless, the state ministry was out in full force to do him honour, chief minister N.T. Rama Rao taking the lead. The familiar routine over, the President handed the garlands he was presented to an aide, before boarding the aircraft. And, in the process, dropped his pen.

Oblivious of the loss, Venkataraman waved his hand a final time to those assembled and emplaned. But an alert security guard (yes, they do exist) spotted it lying on the ground. Using his well-honed reflexes he picked up the object and ran towards the aircraft. Quick though he was, the doors of the plane had shut and the engine already running. Not one to say die, he gestured wildly to the co-pilot who was obliging enough to open the window. Jumping as high as he could, he then tried to chuck the pen into the cockpit and was third time lucky.

Ashok Vaishnav



Venkataraman: lost and found

Gautam Pasole



Girilal Jain: troubled times

And so were the President and his pen reunited.

◆

THIS WOULD have been an entirely different story if Rajiv Gandhi's pet project had come through. But the defamation case filed against *The Times of India* editor **Girilal Jain** and the art critic of the paper, Dyaneshwar Nadkarni, by the Goan artist Dom Martins, was of ten years' standing. Martins had filed a suit objecting to certain defamatory observations Nadkarni had made in *The Times* about his art work displayed in Bombay's Cymroza art gallery. The first class judicial magistrate, in whose court the case came up for the final judgement, agreed with Martins and sentenced Jain and his art critic to seven days' imprisonment and in addition slapped a fine of Rs 200 on them.

One wonders, however, how the judgement would have read if the government had had its way with its poor gag (the Defamation Bill). But in this one case, ignorance is bliss.

◆

THIS *BHARTIYA nari* minces no words when it comes to holding forth on dear husband's faults. Which explains why **Vasantdada Patil** has a healthy if grudging respect for his better (and now exceedingly bitter) half **Shalinitai Patil.**

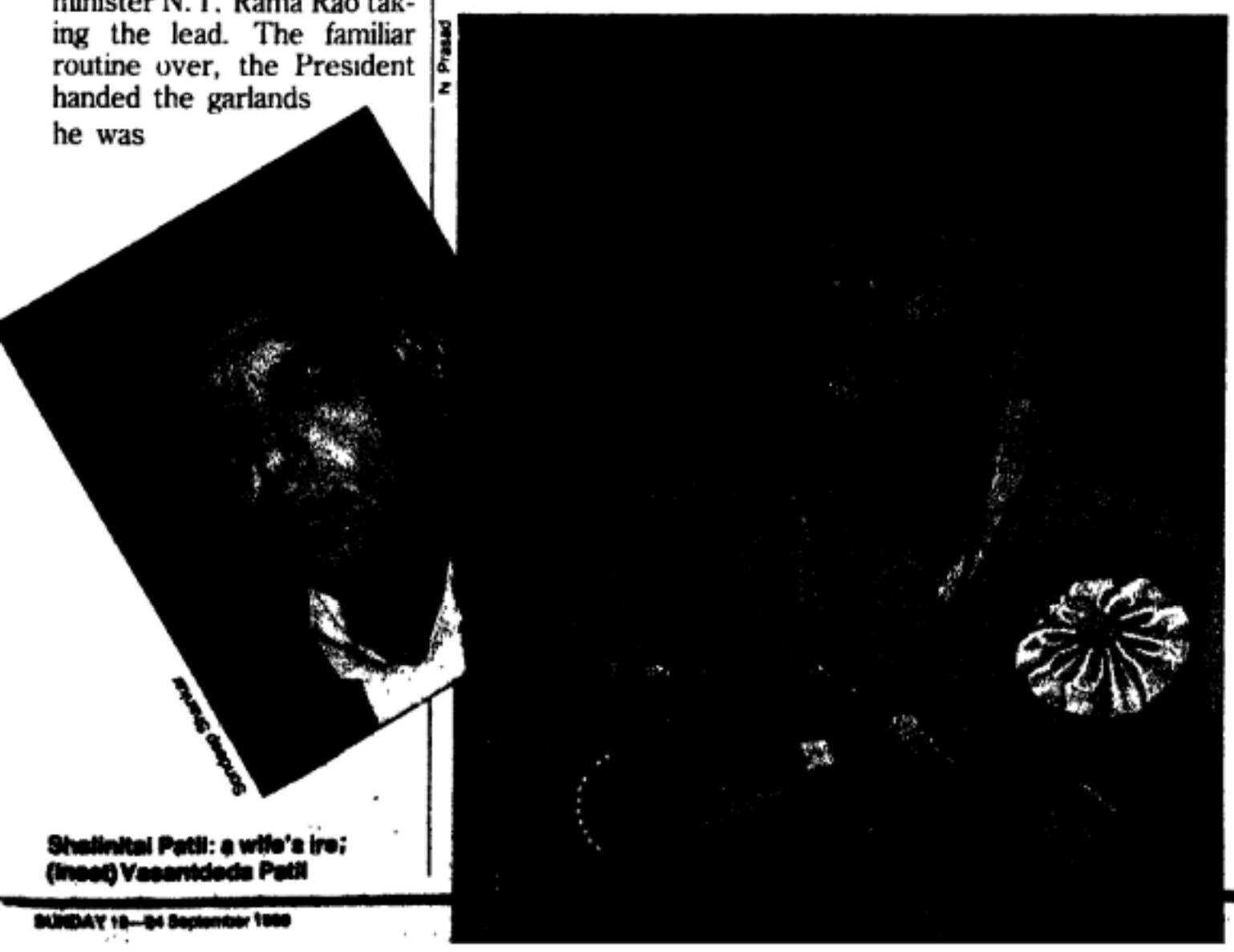
That could only have been reinforced by the lady's recent tirade at Islampur, about 40 kms from Sangli. This time round it was Dada's criticism of the policy towards farmers that led the former revenue minister of Maharashtra to high dudgeon. And she gave vent to her ire in the presence of a party of reporters (so what else is new?). Vasantdada had been in power for over 40 years, she tersely reminded scribes. If the pathetic condition of the farmer caused him as much anguish as he made out, he should have done something to alleviate his lot when he had the wherewithal to do so, instead of issuing carping statements now, which go "against party discipline" and are "politically improper".

Dada, Shalinitai enlightened us, could become chief minister only because of the support of party legislators and not (by implication) because of his independent power base. So his using the "technique of threat and pressure" would not be tolerated by the party high command.

Thus spake the wronged wife. The injured husband, when seen last, was maintaining a dignified silence.

Compiled by
Seema Goswami

N Prasad



Sunday Graphic

Shalinitai Patil: a wife's ire; (inset) Vasantdada Patil

Junkie-eyed Sunjay Dutt is now proud papa of a bonny baby girl. That perhaps signals the last nail in the coffin of his tempestous youth, replete with wild affairs, drug addiction, trigger-happy drunkenness and what have you.

Govinda, it is said, wants his daughter (the one that doesn't exist publicly) to look like Neelam. Wonder whom Sunju wants his little princess to take after: the sophisticated Tina Munim, the green-eyed Kimi Katkar or sultry siren Rekha. But perhaps, this time round too, Dutt the junior will settle for another broad-boned beauty in the Richa mould.

Sunjay Dutt: proud papa



Gautam Rajadhyaksha



Gautam Rajadhyaksha

Richa Dutt. broad-boned appeal

What better way to unwind in Hong Kong than to submit oneself to the ministrations of a nubile lass in the environs of a massage parlour? That's exactly the mode prize windbag of the film industry Anil Kapoor adopted to recover from the rigours of outdoor shooting, while in the city recently. Muscles well toned up, Anil made his way back home only to confront a highly affronted wife who had heard of his escapades abroad, the grapevine functioning as efficiently as ever.

If the experience has taught Anil anything more than the benefits of a good rub-down, it is that *filmi* stars can have no secrets and that past sins have an uncomfortable way of catching up.

If a popularity poll were taken today the two most unpopular actresses would be Meenakshi Seshadri and Madhuri Dixit. And both for the same reason: the ubiquitous presence of their family members. Never are these screen beauties allowed anywhere unescorted, for fear of the big bad *filmi* wolves. If their mothers, brothers, sisters or family regulars are not available to chaperone the ladies around, the hapless fathers are co-opted into the task. And to give credit where it is due, they perform the job manfully, with nary a sigh at being subjected to the indignity of standing outside darling daughter's make-up room for hours altogether, while she...er...changes costume inside.

Such parental devotion is touching indeed, even if it rubs the looking-for-a-chance heroes the wrong way.

Madhuri Dixit: the keep-off vibes



N Prasad

So Salim Khan has finally done it. Scripted a hit film and that without the inspiring presence of erstwhile partner Javed Akhtar. His first authentic solo hit has now hit the market: *Vijay (Naam,* everything said and done was more Mahesh Bhatt's film than Salim Khan's). Salim is, predictably enough, thrilled to bits and all willing to listen are regaled with accounts of his having charged Rs 2 lakhs for scripting only 14 scenes in the film. "Ultimately," he pontificates, "a King will always remain a King." Here's then to royalty!

Nobody, just nobody would have dared do this to the great Dharmendra. That is, until director N. Chandra

Meenakshi Seshadri: constant chaperonage



Kalyan Chakraborty



Hasan Belal

Dharmendra: there's a first time for everything

(of *Pratighaat* fame) came on the scene. Not only did he wait until half-way through his film *Tezaab* before signing on the brawny middle-aged Jat, but even had the temerity to dispense with his services after a couple of shooting stints, with a curt: "The role doesn't suit your calibre."

Highly incensed, Dharmendra has vowed vengeance, disclosing to one of Chandra's minions in his best Hindi film hero manner (flaring nostrils, blazing eyes, bulging muscles, et al) that he will teach the film maker what his calibre really is.

Fireworks can safely be expected.

Remember Aruna-Vikas, the creative husband-wife team who made the Vinod Khanna-Shabana Azmi hit *Shaque?* Evidently, the two have gone their separate ways, an arrangement formalised by Aruna reverting to the use of her maiden name Rajee. She is currently working enthusiastically on her new film *Rihayee*, starring Vinod and Hema. Vikas, on the other, is very enthused these days about a pretty little number, whose only other claim to fame is that she is V. Shantaram's granddaughter. ■



XLRI JAMSHEDPUR

Invites application for admission to

- ☐ TWO-YEAR POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES IN
  - a) **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**
  - b) **PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT & INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**
- ☐ FELLOW PROGRAMME IN MANAGEMENT

Eligibility Criteria :

Postgraduate Programmes - 3 yr. graduate with 50 % marks *. *Fellow Programme* - BE with two years work experience / MBA or its equivalent / Postgraduate with 50 % marks *. **XLRI alumni** with CQPI of 6 are exempted from the written test. (* 40% for SC/ST candidates).

Written Test :

On **Sunday, January 8, 1989** at the following centres : Bhubaneswar, Bombay, Calcutta, Cochin, Delhi, Hyderabad, Jamshedpur, Kanpur, Madras and Patna. Bangalore, Guwahati and Bhopal may be considered depending on the response.

How to Apply :

Mail your request for the prospectus and application form to the Admissions Coordinator, XLRI, Post Box 222, Jamshedpur 831 001 **enclosing** (i) a non-refundable crossed demand draft for Rs. 40/- made out in favour of 'XLRI JAMSHEDPUR' drawn on 'State Bank of India, XLRI (Jamshedpur)' or 'State Bank of India, Jamshedpur' and (ii) two typed 9 x 6 cm self-addressed slips with PIN code.

Last Date : Issuing application forms : **October 31,1988**
Receiving completed forms : **November 28,1988**

Jaipur's Prince Charming

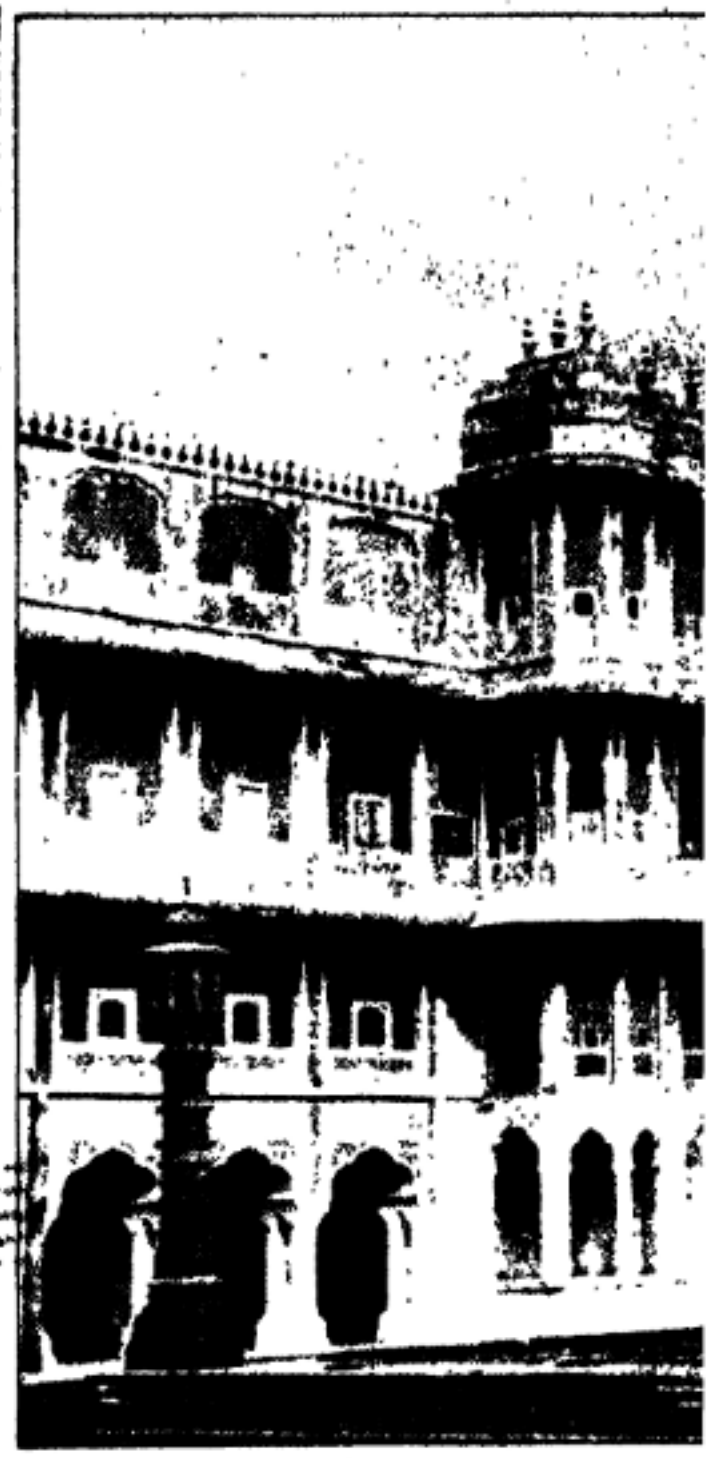
Robert Stern describes the princely state of Jaipur during the British Raj

Madho Singh's heir was a a ten-year-old boy, renamed Man Singh. The maharaja adopted him from his own branch family, Isarda. It was not the first time in Kachhawa history, certainly, that a powerful raja or *thakur* had tried to reorder the clan's lineages or his lineage's branches to make his the senior. But it was a reordering that almost inevitably invited hostility—armed, in earlier times—from those with a stake in the genealogical *status quo ante*. Effected by a chief so contemptuous and oppressive of his great clansmen as was Madho Singh, such a reordering could only be regarded by them as a final outrage. Indeed, for some time after he chose Man Singh, the maharaja kept his choice a secret and refused to divulge the boy's name, lest he be murdered before he was seated on his *gaddi*, and the question of succession to it thus violently reopened. Madho Singh's plan was to present his nobles with a *fait accompli*. Immediately after his death, his senior widow would proclaim the maharaja's choice.

The maharaja announced the name of his adopted heir a year and a half before he died. But he would neither in public nor in private forgive the *thakurs* who had opposed his choice. Even in the face of an implied British threat to delay their recognition of Man Singh's adoption, the old maharaja would not be moved to forgiveness. And he would not be bluffed. When the agent asked him "whether he wished to carry his animosities beyond the grave," Madho Singh "said candidly that it was the custom of his race to do so". Sawai Man Singh's adoption and his subsequent succession to Jaipur's throne were unconditionally recognised by the imperial government.

In this last and most critical succession dispute of his career, Madho Singh's leading advocate to the Government of India was Charles Cleveland. Even at thrice the salary of his Indian colleagues on the maharaja's cabinet, Cleveland was very good value. Such good value that it was Madho Singh's specific wish that his old friend, having helped to secure the *gaddi* for the maharaja's chosen successor, would continue in Jaipur's service as the head of Sawai Man Singh's regency. This requires some explanation.

Before Cleveland came to Jaipur, Madho Singh had recorded for the imperial government his wish *not to have* a British regent for his successor. The imperial government, in response, however, had indicated its unwillingness to be bound by his wish. Regencies were, after all, great opportunities for reforming, intelligence-gathering and imperial interference in princely state administrations and politics. And in view of the way Madho Singh conducted his affairs, a regency in Jaipur was an opportunity that the British government was hardly likely to pass by. So like it or not, Madho Singh's successor was going to have a British regent. The real question once again for a Jaipur maharaja was how to make the best of a bad bargain. The answer for the wily old maharaja was to choose his own British regent for his adopted heir. A distinguished British officer, retired, to whose appointment as Jaipur's *diwan* the government would be hard put to find objections, unconnected to the Rajputana Agency, friendly to the *durbar* and beholden to it for a very comfortable retirement. Sir Charles Cleveland. The government had already approved his appointment to Madho Singh's cabinet, he had held high imperial office and been knighted for his conduct in it, his loyalty to the empire was beyond question—a secret police chief, after all—and he enjoyed the reputation of being a first-rate administrator and a "dominating and towering personality". By appointing Cleveland, Madho Singh avoided the worst of a bad bargain—a regency administration for Man Singh directed by some serving officer of the unfriendly Rajputana Agency.



The Jaipur palace: and (inset) the interior of the palace

For some time after he chose Man Singh to be his heir, Madho Singh kept his choice a secret and refused to divulge the boy's name, lest he be murdered before he was seated on his *gaddi*

For a while, Madho Singh's stratagem worked. The Government of India, and particularly, of course, its foreign and political department, did not want Cleveland in Jaipur. But there were no grounds on which it could object initially and until it became clear that while from this side of the grave Madho Singh could buy his Englishman, from beyond he could not keep him. After the maharaja's death in September 1922, there was no one to protect his protege from the



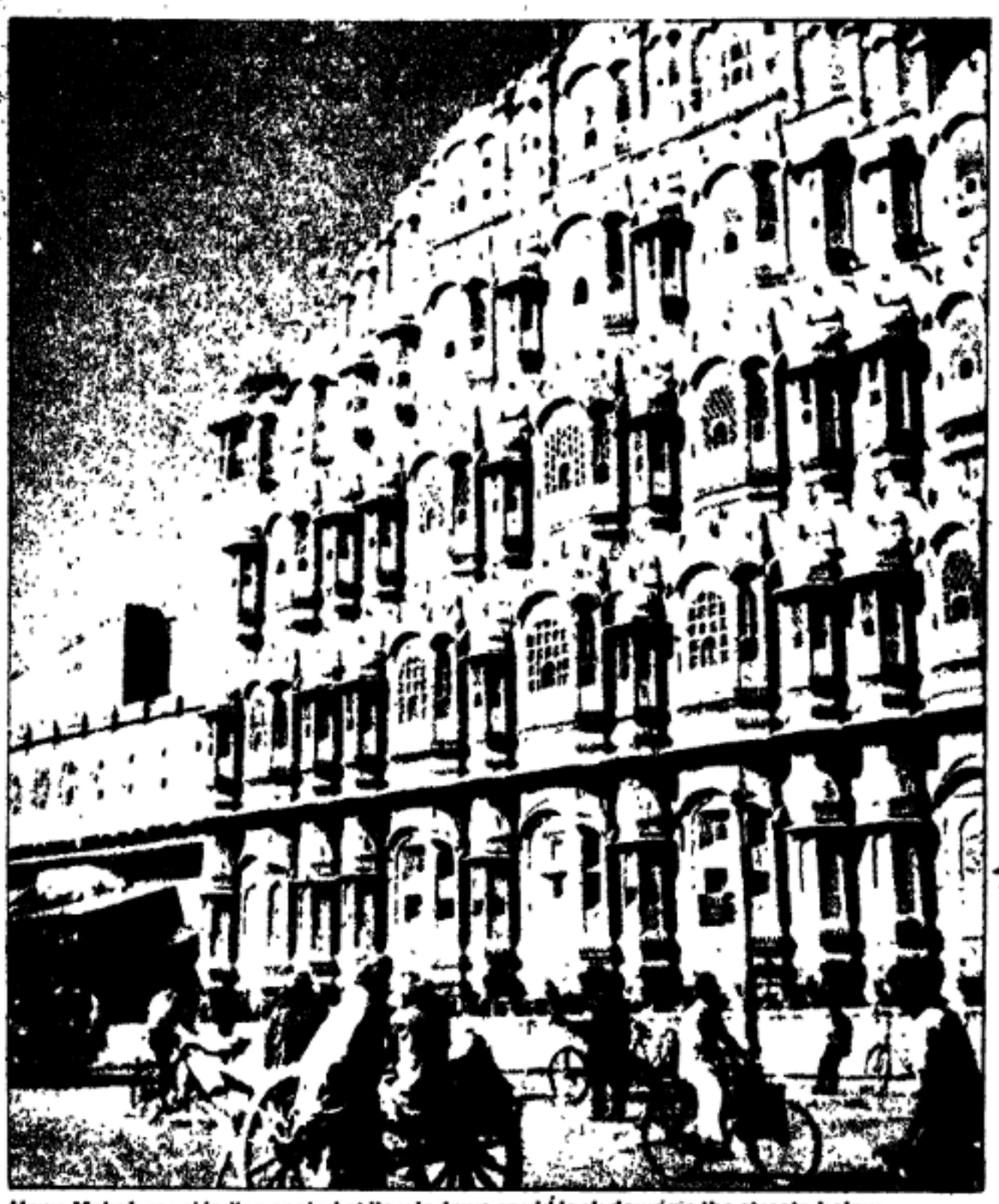
Indian colleagues whom he had bullied and the palace intrigues that were apparenty incomprehensible even to a British secret policeman

It became known as such things become known that Cleveland was amassing a small fortune in Jaipur through various speculative enterprises His mentor and partner in these was none other than the infamous Kwaja Bala Bux, the late maharaja's intimate, whom the Agency regarded as the chief source of corruption and mismanagement in the Jaipur *durbar* and the leading entrepreneur in the illegitimate sale of *thikanas* —like Chowkri and Chitora

Cleveland's cabinet colleagues responded to the news of his "serious indiscretion" by resigning in righteous protest The *zenana* came alive with proposals for alternate regency administrations headed by the relatives of various *ranis* Public meetings to demand Cleveland's resignation were arranged in Jaipur city The Government of India's official position was that Cleveland had been indiscreet but not dishonest, and it was disinclined to pursue the matter further than to ease him out of Jaipur In 1923, the government appointed Jaipur's resident to be its regent, thus making him superior to Celeveland who was only officially the head of the state's administration, i e , the regent's first minister Cleveland resigned

In 1917, five years before Sawai Man Singh came to the Jaipur *gaddi* as a minor prince, a viceregal pronouncement of 1909 was reincorporated into Government of India policy gudelines for political officers charged with the administrations of princely states during the minorities of their rulers

> The Governor General in Council (i e , the British government) is opposed to anything like pressure on *durbars* to introduce British methods of administration He prefers that reforms should emanate from the *durbars* and grow in harmony with the traditions of the states Administrative efficiency is at no time the only or indeed the chief object to be kept in view This should specifically be borne in mind by officers charged temporarily with the administration of a state during a minority, whether they are in sole charge or associated with a state council. They occupy a position of peculiar trust and should never forget that their primary duty is the conservation of the customs of the state Abuses and corruption should be corrected as far as possible, but the general system of administration to which the chief and the people have become accustomed



Hawa Mahal: royal ladies seated at its windows could look down on the streets below

should be unchanged in all essentials.

By 1922, these guidelines of 1917 were no less an anachronism than Sawai Madho Singh's Jaipur. Sawai Man Singh's British regents treated them as dead letters. They had been deprived of their force by events. Of these the organisation post-war of peasant discontent in British India by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi was most ominous to the foreign and political department. Its fear was that organised peasant discontent would spread to the princely states and breech those breakwaters. "Political agitation is gradually spreading from British India to some of the states of Rajputana," the agent warned in 1921, and "there will be plenty of material ready for agitators". For as badly as peasants were abused in British provinces by such practices as rack-renting and *begar* (landlords' demands for unpaid labour), the abuses were "many times worse in many of the states". Jaipur among them. "The condition of the peasantry in Jaipur is as bad as the very worst in Rajputana", and that was as bad, certainly, as the very worst in India. If Jaipur's regency administration did nothing to make it better, a possible consequence was "serious trouble".

While Bolshevism made few inroads into Jaipur's countryside in the early 1920s, there was certainly an increase in communal tensions. The Rajputana Agency was concerned. In a Rajput state where there had always been a bare minimum of religious strife and generally cordial relations between Hindus and Muslims, there was a disturbing increase in the number of communal incidents. The ill-fated Khilafat movement, even during its brief existence, was probably more productive of communal strife than co-operation in India; and apart from simply threatening the peace, that strife had, at least, political overtones in Rajasthan. There, a major contributor to the strife and its politicisation was the Arya Samaj. It was the largest and most aggressive Hindu revivalist organisation in northern India and had been very active for many years among the Baniyas of Sheikawati towns and the Jat peasants of its villages. The *samaj* was the first step for many townsmen towards affiliation with the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha, the party of Hindu nationalism. Due in part, certainly, to their *samaj* connections, the Jats became the most politically conscious peasant caste in Sheikawati, as well as the largest and richest.

The problem with princes who were their zenanas' captives was that they would not be merely figureheads. They interfered in darbar affairs to serve the zenana. Their private values became public burdens

The policy guidelines of 1917 and their prescription of non-interference to preserve political peace in the princely states had assumed for the Rajput principalities domestic political arenas which were more or less closed to British Indian politics and in which the only contestants were the princes and their noblemen. By 1922, these assumptions were no longer tenable for Jaipur. The entry of the peasantry and their bourgeois promoters and organisers into Jaipur's arena was only a matter of time. A little time. No more than three years after Sawai Man Singh came to Jaipur's *gaddi*, the Jats' would become an organised force to reckon with in Jaipur's politics.

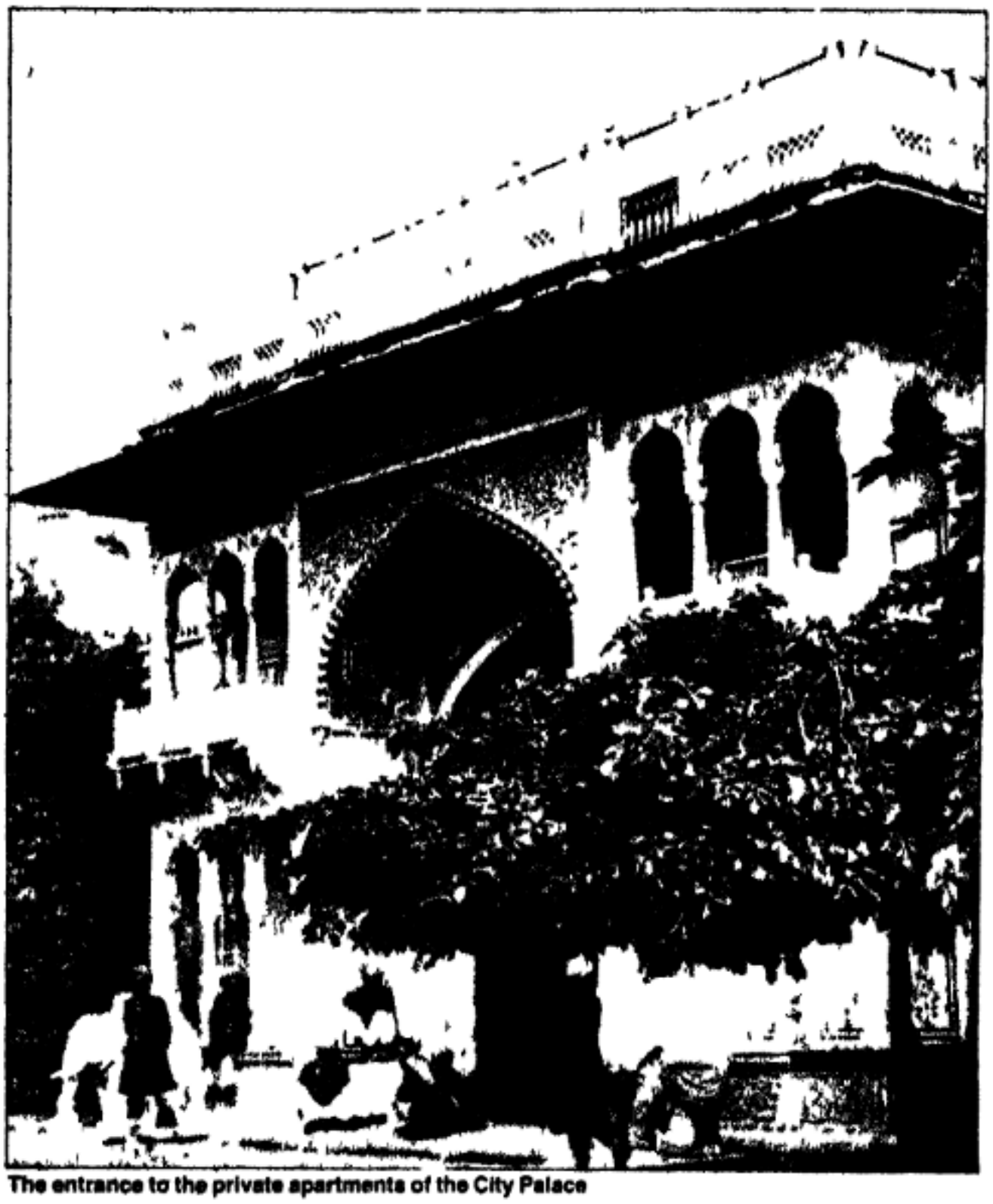
Just 50 km from Jaipur's south-western border, in the Bijolia *thikana* of Udaipur, there was already really serious trouble. Peasant rebellion against the *thikanedar* had been endemic for many years. But it was almost turned into revolution between 1916 and 1922 by a professional revolutionary from British India, Bhoop Singh alias Vijay Singh Pathik. Vijay Singh, himself of peasant origin, organised the Bijolia tenants into a *panchayat* (village council) system of local administration parallel to the *thikana's* and in fact supersessive of it, inspired rebellions like Bijolia in several neighbouring *thikanas*, attracted defectors from the Udaipur *durbar* to his cause, established a landmark and a legend in Rajasthan's freedom struggle, and made Bijolia the Rajputana Agency's byword for the Bolshevik menace.

The imperial government reacted to Bijolia by forcing the Udaipur prince to abdicate in favour of his son The old maharana had been regarded for some time as an inept and possibly disloyal prince and his inability to bring peace to Bijolia was his undoing Finally British officers effectively ended the Bijolia rebellion by going into the *thikana* and conceding virtually all the demands of its tenants The British took the opportunity of Bijolia to punish the maharana but clearly he shared the blame with a Rajput political system which restrained its princes even the adept and loyal from ruling their barons and their barons peasantry A political system in which the barons were still in perilous times, the missing link

So what was to be done in Jaipur was simply to get at peasant discontent before the Vijay Singh Pathiks did And that could be done according to the Agency first by finally and completely bureaucratising Jaipur's *durbar* so that it would be capable of ameliorating or suppressing peasant discontent anywhere in Jaipur whatever the personal abilities and loyalties of its prince and second by eliminating insofar as possible, the *jagirdars* capacities to impede the *durbar's* administrative advance into Jaipur's countryside Nationalist politicians would find either few troubled waters in Jaipur's villages or a *durbar* able to keep them from being fished In its enduring administration as well as in the qualified and possibly transient loyalties of its princes Jaipur would be made one with the British empire

The Government of India agreed Nine years after Jaipur's British regency administration began the bureaucratisation of its *durbar* in 1931 Sawai Man Singh was invested with "full ruling powers". The viceroy who performed the rites noted only in passing his government's policy guidelines for minority administrations The regency administration was worthy of praise for preserving, "wherever possible", "all that was of value in the old customs and traditions of the state."

For the first two decades of Sawai Man Singh's reign, Jaipur's administration advanced under the direction of British officers During the maharaja's minority, from 1922 to 1931, his *durbar* was "guided by the resident in all important matters" In "quasi-subordination" to the resident, who was sometimes his official junior, another British officer served as president of the Jaipur Council of State, successor institution to the Royal Council. The president was, in effect, Jaipur's chief minister. He was a senior officer of the



The entrance to the private apartments of the City Palace

Rajputana Agency and accountable to the agent rather than to his fellow councillors or the maharaja From 1931 to 1942, Jaipur's chief ministers were appointed by the maharaja on the advice, the nomination, of the imperial government and subject to its final approval To 1939, these ministers were all British officers, who like their predecessors held themselves accountable to the Rajputana Agent rather than to the Jaipur council or the maharaja

So extensive was the involvement of British and British Indian officers in Jaipur that in 1926 the under secretary of state for India was asked in the House of Commons whether the Government of India is responsible for administrative acts in the state? He answered truthfully that it is an accepted principle that the Government of India have a special measure of responsibility for the administration of Indian states during minorities But only half truthfully in his paraphrase of the 1917 guidelines that the imperial government's general policy is to leave unchanged in essentials the general system of administration to which the ruler and the people have become accustomed"

After Madho Singh had withdrawn into the *zenana*, Jaipur's affairs lapsed into disorder. So completely beguiled had the maharaja become by the "notorious woman" Rup Rai, that Jaipur came to be known as *randi ka raj*

The difference in 1926 between the government's stated policies and those actually pursued by its officers in Jaipur was only greater in degree than it had been in the past. But much greater

The programme of essential change foreshadowed by Sawai Man Singh's British regency in its "revised Constitution of the Higher Administration of the Jaipur State" of 1925 was unprecedented, and the number of British officers employed in Jaipur's administration during and after the regency was unprecedented. Apart from being the state's chief ministers, British officers were revenue, public works and settlement members of the state's council, inspectors-general of its police and jails, commanding officer of its army, manager of the state's railways, superintendent of its Court of Wards, directors of its educational and medical services, chairman of the Jaipur Municipality, and chief administrators of Khetri and Sikar. In 1930, the Agent observed that, "there is perhaps no place in India where the chain of European control is more complete" than it was in Jaipur. Of the ten non-judicial "High Officials" listed in "The Report of the Administration of the Jaipur State for 1938-39", seven were British officers. The plain truth was that the administrative advance of British officers in Jaipur simply erased the Government of India's policy guidelines for minority administrations.

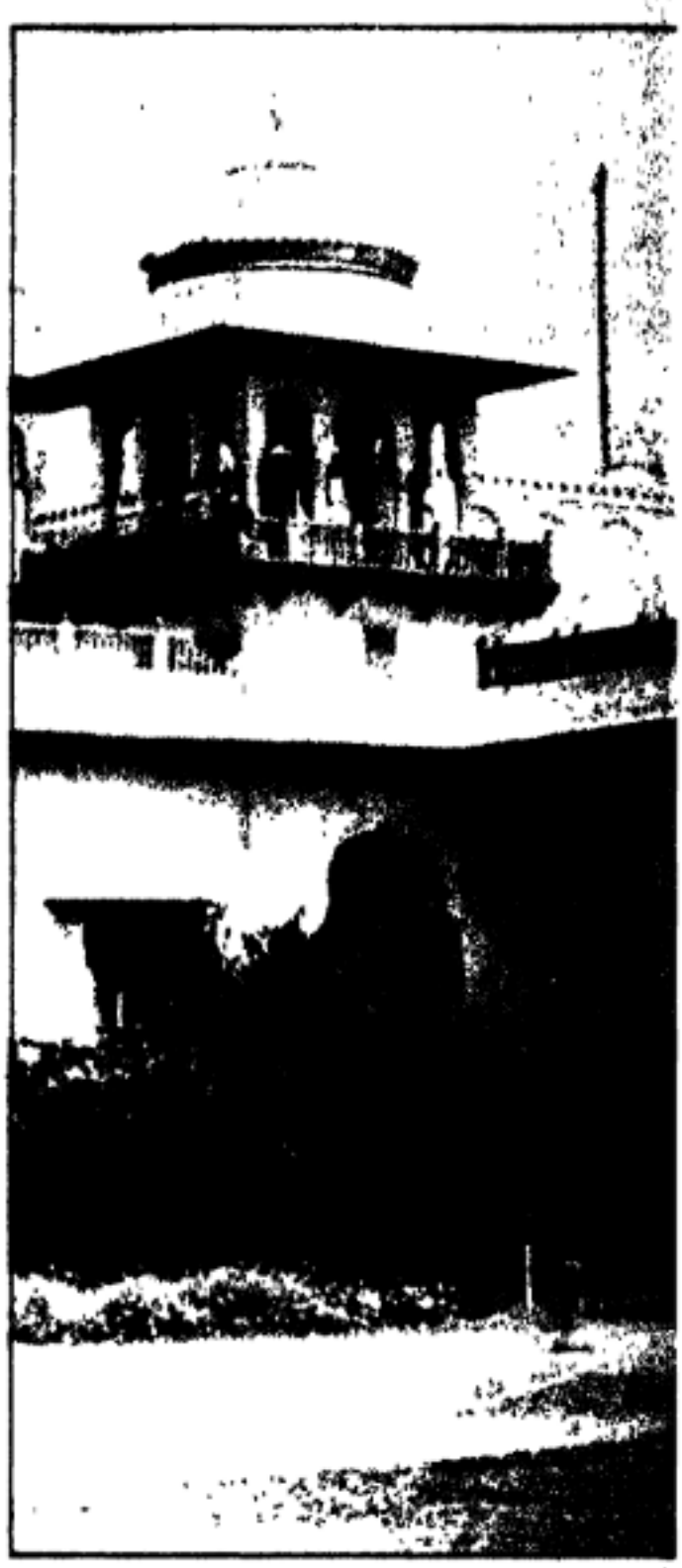
Madho Singh's political will barely survived him. He had bequeathed to Jaipur's administration a perpetuation of the Cabinet-within-the-Royal Council structure that he had established during his terminal illness. After ridding the cabinet of its chief, Cleveland, Jaipur's British administrators operated the late maharaja's political legacy for 18 months and then declared it "clumsy and fundamentally unsound". They scrapped it and created the Council of State: the guidelines *contra*, "an important constitutional reform". The British president of this new council then appointed as its military member the *thakur* of Chomu, although Madho Singh in his will had specifically enjoined Chomu's employment by Man Singh's regents. The *thakur* of Digg, like Chomu, had incurred the late maharaja's wrath for supporting Jhalai's claim to the *gaddi*; and, like Chomu, Diggi was punished by an injunction in Madho Singh's will against his employment by the regency. This injunction, too, was ignored by the British, and Digg was appointed to the Committee of *Sardars* which the regency created in 1925 to advise the Council of State on the "rights and privileges" of the Rajput nobility. Sawai Madho Singh had willed that not more than one Rajput noblemen should serve in the regency *durbar* that succeeded him. The British employed several.

Shortly after he was adopted, Man Singh had been married to two Jodhpur princesses, an aunt and her niece. The aunt, 11 years older than her husband, personified the British fear of educating him at home. She was the *zenana*. The British understood that Man Singh's senior maharani was anxious to bear his first son, but they also feared that she would lead him "to indulge his sexual appetites to excess" at an age at which he was likely to become their captive. And the *zenana's*. And the senior maharani's. This was the fear that motivated his British guardians to arrange the maharaja's school holidays always away from Jaipur. At seventeen-and-a-half, just months after he received official permission from the Government of India to "cohabit" with his senior maharani, Man Singh was whisked overseas to complete his formal education at the British military academy at Woolwich. Man Singh's sexuality, his "distinct leaning toward the fair sex", was perhaps the greatest British concern about the young maharaja.

They were not concerned with his sexual morality, as such. Political officers had been too long in Rajputana not to accept, with whatever measures of disapproval, resignation and envy, that a maharaja's sexual opportunities were limited only by his health and tastes. They were concerned, as ever, and with administrative advance in prospect, perhaps more than ever, with that indestructable demoness who led Rajput princes to ruin and British plans to nought: the *zenana*. Not merely the women's quarter in Jaipur's palace, but the synonym for debilitating and corrupting vice!

The *zenana's* power to affect politics, though no longer perhaps to direct them, was in these years of grace still considerable, or thought to be so. The *zenana* had, after all, been Sawai Madho Singh's ruination. For all the British

Man Singh was bright and handsome, vigorous and affable. But affairs of state bored him. His heart was never in his job, it was in polo. He loved being an Indian maharaja in Europe and having a maharaja's wealth. Jaipur bored him



complaints about the ways in which he had ruled Jaipur, the late maharaja at mid-career had been described by the agent as follows:

> His Highness...possesses great shrewdness and sagacity, he takes the keenest interest in the affairs of state and there are few things that happen that do not come under his cognizance.

After Madho Singh had withdrawn into the *zenana*, at the end of his career, Jaipur's affairs lapsed into disorder. So completely beguiled had the maharaja become by the "notorious woman" Rup Rai and her patron, the *kiwasji*, that Jaipur came to be known by 1920 as *randi ki raj*—a harlot's kingdom. In 1927, there were serious riots in Jaipur city; the police fired into crowds, people were killed and injured, the resident intervened, and so forth. Unable to find any cause for the rioting, the Agency's best guess was that it was in some way a *zenana* intrigue to capture the maharaja from Mayo College.

The *zenana* seemed a particular threat



The Rambagh Palace in Jaipur

to administrative advance, and to the bureaucratised *durbar* which Sawai Man Singh's regents were trying to organise in the state and which the British government hoped would mollify Jaipur's peasants and keep it safe for the empire. Simply, the prince who was uninterested in the affairs of his state was less likely to imperil administrative advance than the prince immured in the *zenana*. British hopes for Sawai Man Singh were not certainly that he would continue his predecessors' progress to monarchial autocracy, but rather that he would be active in the use of his traditional authority to legitimate and facilitate the work of the bureaucratic autocracy established for him by the British. If, however, he chose to be uninterested in the affairs of state—as he did—that would be regrettable but hardly perilous. With the maharaja as its figurehead, Jaipur would be ruled by its bureaucracy subject to imperial oversight.

The problem with princes who were their *zenanas'* captives was that they would not be merely figureheads. Characteristically, they interfered in *durbar* affairs to serve the *zenana*. Their private vices became public burdens. They vitiated rule and system by using the *durbar's* resources of wealth and power to pay their *zenana* debts and dues to favourite wives and concubines

The *zenana* never captured Sawai Man Singh. But neither did the British. He escaped both to become Jaipur's "veritable prince charming," a stereotype of the playboy maharaja of the years between the wars. He was bright and handsome, vigorous and affable. But affairs of state bored him. "If only his heart were in his job", the Agent grieved in 1939, "he could become a bulwark of personal rule". But his heart was never in his job. It was in polo. During his year at Woolwich, Man Singh became a champion at polo and a convert to the lifestyle of a British cavalry officer in a fashionable regiment. He loved being an Indian maharaja in Europe and having a maharaja's wealth. Of the good things of life, the dashing Jai, as he called himself, of Jaipur, took his share, at least; but being a bulwark was not to his taste. Jaipur bored him. So apparently did avuncular warnings from British officers that he was inviting "the obvious alternative of democracy" by his "repeated absences" from his state

More in sorrow than in anger, the Government of India concluded that the maharaja of Jaipur was "an absentee ruler by inclination". For example, in 1938, the *rao raja* of Sikar supported by thousands of Rajput *bhumias* rose in armed rebellion against the authority of the Jaipur *durbar*. Though staged as *opera bouffe*, it was nonetheless a political crisis.

During the Second World War, a momentous time in Jaipur's political development, Man Singh's energies were directed to pressing the viceroy into allowing him to go on "active service" with the Household Cavalry in Palestine. Lord Wavell resisted as long as he could because, as he reminded the maharaja, "You happen to be the ruler of an Indian state". But Man Singh finally had his way and, according to British intelligence, he served the Allied effort in the Middle East most conspicuously in Cairo's *boites*. After the war, the maharaja's most notable concerns, other than getting his own from the amalgamation of the Kachhawa into the Congress *raj*, were in keeping his wartime king's commission and securing a place for his eldest son in the real Eton.

Although the maharaja's self-centeredness and his unapologetic disengagement from the tedium of public administration or even the exhilaration of "personal rule" exasperated the British, they never credited him with less than a very "shrewd practical judgment". That judgment led him until 1942, I think, to make his peace with the inevitable: administrative advance in Jaipur under the direction of British officers. He could emplace himself as its bulwark or leave it for "the primrose path". Not unreasonably, but to the British government's displeasure, he chose the latter. In 1942, the maharaja positively defied the government to employ as his plenipotentiary that master of public affairs, Mirza Ismail, to make Jaipur's peace with the probable—a Congress *raj* in India. In 1948, one of the duumvirs of that *raj*, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, changed prince charming into the new Indian state of Rajasthan's *Rajpramukh*, its ceremonial head, the first among Rajput princes.

The Cat and the Lion by Robert W. Stern. Published by Allied Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi. Price: Rs 150.



Keeper of the Janata purse

Jayant Malhoutra, the new treasurer of the Janata Party, strides the worlds of business and politics with equal ease

Doordarshan cameras covering the change of guard in Karnataka repeatedly flashed his face on the small screen. His large frame and chubby face drew a lot of attention. "Yes, I was very much in Bangalore," said Jayant Malhoutra "because I was one of the observers who supervised the election of the new chief minister of Karnataka, S.R. Bommai. It was a perfectly democratic process. All MLAs and MLCs were consulted. Even the rebels were consulted. All credit must be given to Ramakrishna Hegde, who did not impose his choice on the legislators."

Jayant Malhoutra, a successful businessman from Maharashtra; was appointed the treasurer of the Janata Party about three months back, replacing another businessman, Kamal Morarka, who was elected to the Rajya Sabha and is now the secretary of the Janata Legislature Party. For Malhoutra it was a meteoric rise as he was not even an office-bearer before becoming the treasurer. But since 1983, Malhoutra; who joined the party in 1977 has been a special invitee to the Janata national executive meetings. "I am a political activist, rather than a politician. I think that in politics one needs a certain amount of commitment and I am deeply committed to bringing about a change. As an industrialist I think I have something to offer. Management strategy can be inducted to improve the functioning of political parties. You certainly require managerial inputs. For instance, the Congress party has installed computers all over the country and are making systematic studies of the strength of various groups, religious and social; and have built an enormous information bank. This comes in handy when one has to mobilise and effectively use resources," argues Jayant Malhoutra.

Asked whether his background would help him to collect funds for the Janata Party, Malhoutra said, "I am new to it. At the moment we only need funds for running the central office and that is not much. But for the elections it will be a bigger task. People are intelligent and if they feel that the Opposition chances are good in an election they will contribute to our fund. It should also be easier for us to collect funds in Opposition-ruled states. Of course, when I said this in a television programme, it drew a lot of flak."

Jayant Malhuotra was with the JK Group of Industries before branching out on his own eight years ago. Today his firm, called the JKM Group, has about three or four factories which manufacture a variety of consumer items. Malhoutra's flagship company is the Rs 8 crore Dynamatics Hydraulic which he floated in 1974. Malhoutra has been accused of being anti-Hegde because the former chief minister is supposed to have refused him permission to set up a PSF plant in Karnataka. Malhoutra, however, feels that he was not given the licence as two prominent business houses from Karnataka, the Mallyas and the Kodays, were in the running.

With the Janata Party divided into the pro-Chandra Shekhar and the pro-Hegde factions, Jayant Malhoutra is very much with Chandra Shekhar, though he would not admit that there is any such division. "Hegde has been an old friend of the family since the Sixties. If one has a difference of opinion with someone that does not mean that one is against that person. I have faith in Chandra Shekhar. I think he understands best the psyche of the Indian people. He is acceptable to all sections of the people. On the Punjab problem he had much to offer but unfortunately his team was not helpful and so his performance has been found wanting. But this team can now be pepped up. I do not understand why the media is so much against Chandra Shekhar."

Malhoutra stoutly denies what Devi Lal and others believe–that Chandra Shekhar is a Congress(I) agent. On the contrary, says Malhoutra, "The biggest Congress(I) agent is Arun Shourie of the *Indian Express*. Had he not encouraged Hegde to publish a transcript of the telephone conversation between Ajit Singh and Deve Gowda, all the subsequent events would never have taken place. The story is the same regarding Dr Subramaniam Swamy, who has been accused of being an agent of the Congress(I).

Though the move by Chandra Shekhar to oust Hegde from the chief minister's chair with the support of the dissidents started much before the phone-tapping incident, Malhoutra denies that there was any such move to topple Hegde. The treasurer of the Janata Party feels that if Hegde had wanted to solve the dissidents problem he could have. Moreover, Gowda had 50 legislators on his side and it was not a small number to be ignored. Malhoutra thinks that it is wrong to blame the high command for creating political turmoil in the state.

Does Jayant Malhoutra envisage an official position for himself when the Janata Party merges with the other Opposition parties to form the Samajwadi Dal? First, said Malhoutra, the majority of our party members want the united Opposition party to be called the Janata Dal and not the Samajwadi Janata Dal. Of course, it will take a couple of months for the parties to unite. The basic problem today is that Devi Lal is in a hurry to form a party. How can you have unity of four divergent parties with eight leaders without working out the modalities for unity? asks Malhotra.

What about Malhoutra's friendship with the controversial godman, Chandra Swami? Malhoutra says that he finds him one of the most interesting personalities, one who is very articulate. Chandra Swami was introduced to Malhoutra by Maneka Gandhi and their friendship has developed ever since.

The portly, ebullient Malhoutra is indeed walking a tight rope for, being in business and in the Opposition could attract the vendetta of the ruling party. But Malhoutra has so far managed to play both the roles with ease.

Olga Tellis

I am a political activist, rather than a politician.

As an industrialist I think I have something to offer

In search of excellence

Operation Excellence, launched to infuse life into sports, is beset by teething troubles

Did you know that the Constitution of India equates sport with circuses? When the nation does not seem to be overly concerned whether or not some of our acts under the big top can be compared wih the acrobatics of, say, some Soviet entertainers, then why should there be so much noise over the failures of our star athletes and sportsmen in the international arena?

This is the argument put forward by the Union minister of state for sports, Margaret Alva, when people question her about the poor standard of sport in the country. "But we are making a beginning," she says, "which could rejuvenate our sports set-up."

The "beginning" that she refers to is probably an imminent change in the Constitution, making sport a subject on the concurrent list rather than the state list. "After 40 years of Independence, sport has at last been given its due", Mrs Alva remarks. According to Parliament sources, the concerned Cabinet committee has already made up its mind to bring sport under the concurrent list. That means a Bill will soon be placed in Parliament to effect the change.

Although Mrs Alva does not specifically state that sport will come on the concurrent list, she says she would really welcome the change. "From the time I took charge of the sport ministry, I felt the need for some central legislation to ensure the smooth functioning of the different sports organisations", she remarks. "It is very difficult to function without certain powers. The Centre has all along tried to afford all facilities to sporting organisations and to sports people. But all we have done is to spend money. There was no way we could ensure that these funds were properly utilised", she adds.

One way out was Operation Excellence. This is the name given to the long list of guidelines prepared by the sports ministry so that the Sports Authority of India (SAI), sporting federations of different disciplines, outstanding coaches and sportspersons can work together towards achieving better results in the 1990 Asian Games to be held in Beijing, China.

But the response to the guidelines have, at best, been mixed. All federations have welcomed the increase in financial benefits proposed. These benefits relate to grants for staging national competitions at all levels as also to increase in money allotted for arranging coaching camps for different disciplines

However, very few disciplines have agreed to accept the guidelines with regard to selection procedures. Operation Excellence contains several conditions for the payment of grants. For example, it stipulates that all selection committees should have a representative of the sports federation concerned, along with one each from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and SAI, as well as a former international player of that game—to be nominated by the government—and the national coach.

Most federations have refused to accept these guidelines, objecting that they would, in effect, have no say in the selection of either the national coach or the players for the coaching camps and competitions.

These guidelines were formulated on the basis of the national sports policy adopted by Parliament in 1984. The policy had two basic objectives: broad-basing the infrastructure for sports promotion and achieving excellence in competitive sports. In her foreword to Operation Excellence, published on 1 March, 1988, Margaret Alva wrote: "Various steps have been taken for creating the necessary infrastructure required for sports development."

"In an effort to improve the standard of sport and to reach excellence at international competitive levels, the government has been in consultation with the state governments, the IOA, the sports federations and eminent sportspersons. The debates in Parliament that followed the performance of the Indian contingent in the Seoul Asian Games and the reports of the expert groups that were set up to study all issues involved in the preparation of our teams for international participation have helped us in putting together these guidelines..."

Sports minister Margaret Alva said: "It is very difficult to function without certain powers.... But we are making a beginning which could rejuvenate the sports set-up"

Margaret Alva: finally, sport gains clout

Despite their laudable objectives, the guidelines have not been welcomed in the sports arena. Sports administrators like V.K. Malhotra of the Archery Federation, I.S. Bindr of the Table Tennis Federation of India and several others have not only aired their grievances but have decided to contest the government's directive once the Seoul Olympics are over.

The dissatisfaction of the federations with the government's guidelines is, however, only one side of the picture. On the other hand is the ill effect of sportspeople getting too much, too soon. Sport in India, is overwhelmingly amateur. For a long time there had been pressure from several quarters to grant more incentives to sportspeople.

When the government started funding players in different ways, the situation hanged dramatically. Over the last two years, several sports persons have grown rich. P.T. Usha, for example, has accumulated over Rs 12 lakhs from endowments, grants, gifts and prize money. Some of the others have also come into a great deal of money.

How has this new-found affluence affected them? In most cases, it has given them a sense of confidence in themselves, but little of this confidence has been transferred to their sport. The women's relay team, for example, has failed to qualify for the Olympics. Even individually, most of the girls have avoided participating in all meets billed selection trials, on one pretext or the other. The fire within them to succeed seems to have burnt itself out with monetary gains. They no longer have the urge to succeed. "I really don't know what to do about this. But something obviously has to be done", Mrs Alva says worriedly.

Actually, arriving at a balanced approach is very difficult. Incentives for outstanding performances have not had the desired effect. On the other hand, one cannot expect a sportsperson to go all out if he or she is not assured of reasons for success.

But this has to be treated in the right perspective. At the moment, India has very few outstanding sportsmen. Only when the infrastructure and facilities are increased to accommodate a large section of the population can the country expect to raise a large number of excellent sportspeople.

To bring about a situation like this, the present sports set-up will have to be changed substantially. But this will not be possible until a cohesive, all-pervasive set of laws that apply to the entire country are formulated. At present,sports policies—and even emphasis on sports—differ from state to state, each having the power to control the department according to its own priorities.

Once sport comes on the concurrent list, both the Centre and the individual states will be able to formulate laws on the subject. But the important point is that if there is a conflict between what the Centre decrees and what the state stipulates, the Centre's law will prevail.

One line of thinking is gradually emerging. Both the government and the different federations can explore the possibility of getting industrial sponsorship for different branches of sport in the country. The experiment has proved very successful in both Japan and South Korea, where big business houses have started taking care of individual sports—taking responsibility for discovering and nurturing talent as well as for the international participation in that discipline. They are also free to extract as much advertising mileage as they can from the sport. And, in this endeavour, the business house is helped by both the sports federation concerned and the government.

It is time for some cool but hard thinking on the subject of sports promotion. And, by everyone concerned.

Arijit Sen/New Delhi



GM 36/86R

FROM

RAJ & RAJ

The name people trust



A comfortable choice of Executive Chairs to help you relax while you work

The latest models, crafted from the finest stainless steel and upholstered with the best foam leather In a range of dignified colours
A truly exclusive range, at prices to suit every budget.

RAJ & RAJ
(FURNITURE) PVT. LTD.
7, Camac Street (Azimganj House),
Calcutta 700017 Phone 44-3392, 43-5221

BEGINNING 18 SEPTEMBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March — 20 April) Good luck awaits you on the financial front this week. Businessmen must not hesitate to use novel methods in their business. Rely on your intuition. You will reap the benefits of your past investments Those in service must keep their temper under control. Progress may slow down towards the end of the week. A journey is in the offing Watch your health. A friendship with a member of the opposite sex is likely
Good dates: 19, 21 and 22
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: East



TAURUS (21 April — 20 May) This is a week of excellent prospects Businessmen are advised to expand their investments and enter into new deals A secret association is likely to be of great help Follow your hunches. Windfall gains are likely: your stars forecast a very lucky time financially A journey is likely towards the end of the week
Good dates: 20, 22 and 23
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North



GEMINI (21 May — 20 June) This may turn out to be a favourable week provided you steer clear of legal matters. Friends and relatives will help to make this a very lively and busy week The domestic front will be free of problems. However, the professional front may not be altogether promising, progress will be slow Those looking for a job may have to wait for a while before they find suitable work. Patience is a must
Good dates: 18, 20 and 21
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (21 June — 20 July) Don't dream about the girl next door, not this week in any case, for this is not a good phase for romance Attend to your work instead and pay attention to the minutest detail. Keep your employers and those in authority in good humour. However, problems on the professional front will be solved. A pleasant surprise awaits you at the weekend. A letter may bring good tidings.
Good dates: 21, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South-west



LEO (21 July — 20 August) This is not a very lucky week. Lawsuits and debts will cause you a great deal of anxiety. You are not likely to find an easy solution to your problems. Your efforts will not bear expected results. Do not be disheartened A word of advice. do not make hasty decisions regarding matters of the heart The health of a family member may cause some anxiety Do not be unduly alarmed. no bereavements are forecast.
Good dates: 18, 20 and 22
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: South



VIRGO (21 August — 20 September) Provided you follow the golden rule of neither borrowing nor lending, you are likely to enjoy a fair measure of success Early gains will be followed by losses during the second half of the week. A word of advice. avoid quarrels at all cost, they will be harmful for you in the long run.
Good dates: 19, 21 and 23
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: North-east



LIBRA (21 September — 20 October) Trust your intuition and business acumen and you will be able to solve your financial problems All matters of business will progress steadily and will pick up speed by the end of the week. However, a word of advice. try to avoid sudden changes This is not a good week for romance. so do not pin your hopes on the recently developed friendship.
Good dates: 20, 22 and 24
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



SCORPIO (21 October — 20 November) Lovers must get ready for a week of fun and merriment. However, this is also a week of good opportunities on the professional front. Try to strike a balance between fun and work. For the luckier ones, a promotion is not unlikely. Businessmen must push their affairs to the utmost. Your financial position will improve remarkably A journey is in the offing. The home front will be peaceful.
Good dates: 18, 19 and 20
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: North



SAGITTARIUS (21 November — 20 December) A week of mixed fortunes awaits you. A secret matter of the heart is likely to come to an end causing you some distress. However, do not get depressed for things are bound to brighten up soon. Notable success on the financial front will enable you to make purchases you have been wanting to make for a long time Women are likely to acquire clothes and ornaments. A word of advice do not squander your earnings.
Good dates: 22, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: East



CAPRICORN (21 December — 20 January) This might turn out to be a good week provided you keep a sharp watch on your health. The domestic front will remain peaceful A recent friendship is likely to lead to incalculable losses Rely on your relatives to help make your plans successful. Avoid controversies.
Good dates: 20, 21 and 22
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west



AQUARIUS (21 January — 20 February) This week success awaits creative artists and intellectuals Your success is likely to arouse jealousy and hostility among your colleagues, but do not be alarmed Tact is all that you need to deal with the situation. Financially, this is going to be a lucky week. However, your gains will be offset by some heavy expenditure that you have planned to undertake
Good dates: 18, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 6, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South-east



PISCES (21 February — 20 March) Your boundless energy and ambition will bring you success. However, do not strain yourself unnecessarily. A secret matter will progress and you will be benefited by young people. Exercise tact and patience in dealing with your elders A new friendship with a member of the opposite sex is in the offing, which may blossom into romance. Keep a sharp watch on your health.
Good dates: 19, 20 and 24
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: West

Star Partners: Pisces—Leo

The Leo woman likes to know where she stands. The unpredictable Pisces man who at times reciprocates her generous love and shuts himself off at other times, will throw her off balance. In his turn, he will be irritated by her wild socialising They must arrive at a compromise through patience and understanding

Forgotten Roop

An 18-year-old hit the headlines in death last year, when on 4 September, she jumped on the funeral pyre of her husband. Roop Kanwar became a revered modern-day *sati*, and obscure Deorala in Rajasthan became the most talked about town in the country, bristling with long lines of pilgrims and newsmen.

But a year is a long time. Roop Kanwar's blazing deed is already a distant memory. The *sati sthal*, which was guarded by sword-wielding



Rajput youths around this time last year, now wears a deserted look, except for the few officers of the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary posted to prevent a *sati mela* on Roop Kanwar's death anniversary.

Like the fading memory of Roop's *sati*, the cloth canopy over the *sthal* is in tatters and its colour faded. And all that remains is a passing thought for the young girl who died under mysterious circumstances.

Hasty claim

Scholastic findings have a way of not going unchallenged. Barely two weeks after Dr Vedavyas, an IAS officer, had created ripples with his claim that he had found the missing 45 *slokas* of the *Gita*, a Gujarati novelist, Dinkar Joshi, has come out with evidence that a 745-verse book had existed even earlier.

Joshi has produced a Gita with 745 verses in Gujarati which was translated by Acharya Charantirtha and published in 1941 by the Sree Bhubaneswari Peeth of Gondol town in Gujarat. He produced another book, published 30 years later by Dr P.H. Pant in Marathi, which too contained the 45 verses 'found' by Vedavyas.

It now appears that the 45 verses in contention were dropped from the standard *Gita* probably because they were akin to Buddha's teachings, and also because Adi Sankaracharya wrote his commentaries on only 700 *slokas*.

Perhaps, Dr Vedavyas had made too hasty a claim!

Off the map

'The island has disappeared'. This could well be a headline in the not too distant future. With severe sea erosion, Chinna Gollapalam, an island off the Andhra Pradesh coast, might soon find itself out of the map of India. About 500 hectares of casuarina and coconut trees have already been washed away by powerful undercurrents. Villagers are understandably worried about their fate with the island facing the alarming prospect of becoming extinct.



The tourism department, too, is worried because the island attracts more than 5,000 visitors every year. The lush green vegetation coupled with the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal has made Chinna Gollapalam a hot spot for tourists.

In an effort to win the battle against nature, the villagers have undertaken deforestation on a large scale. Trees are being cut ruthlessly to form embankments to prevent the land from being washed away. The island's authorities have also asked the Centre for relief measures. But whether man will win this battle against nature remains to be seen.

THIS INDIA

•CALCUTTA: A subdivisional information officer of Chandannagar in Hooghly district allegedly auctioned the national flag along with other office equipment. The court has directed the district magistrate of Hooghly to hold an inquiry into the incident—*The Telegraph* (P.C. Sinha, Calcutta)

•AHMEDABAD: A bull in an attempt to get some food ended up on the terrace of a three-storeyed building in the Life Insurance Corporation colony in the Naranpur area. The bull was attracted to the third floor by some people who offered it food. However, after finishing the food, it could not descend the steps, and instead climbed on to the terrace. Fire brigade personnel were summoned and after a long struggle, the bull was brought down—*The Times of India*(Dharmesh, New Delhi)

•BOMBAY: In a unique *modus operandi*, a Haj pilgrim tried to smuggle gold in a jug containing holy water. Acting on prior information, officials of the air intelligence unit detained thepassenger who arrived from Jeddah, and passed his water jug through an X-ray machine. Concealed in the thermocole packing were 12 gold bars worth Rs 4.47 lakhs—*The Times of India* (Rajneesh Batra, Allahabad)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

A work of art

Did Wajid Ali Shah, who left Lucknow to reside in Calcutta till his death in 1887, bring a transcription of the Holy Koran which was written by the court scribe of his great grandfather Ghazi-ud-din Haider who ruled Oudh from 1814 to 1827? The rare manuscript which is 168 years old, today forms part of the collection of one of the oldest families of Calcutta. The immaculately preserved manuscript in two volumes was written in 1820 by Amir-ud-Daula, a contemporary of the two famous court poets of Oudh, Mir Babbar Anis and Mirza Salamat Ali Dabir.



A page from the rare Koran

The transcription in Arabic is in red while the one in Urdu is in black. The beautifully decorated document on rice paper is profusely illustrated with motifs and floral designs. The opening page, an invocation to Allah, is a great work of art with gilded work all over. The book is a feast for the eye and a rare specimen of the art of calligraphy.

Illustrations Debashis Deb

No more dissidence

The Karnataka Janata Party no longer appears to be riven by dissent. The theory is that chief minister S.R. Bommai and dissident leader H.D. Deve Gowda, old friends in the Opposition, have struck a deal to keep Ramakrishna Hegde out of the picture. The two seem to have made up their minds not to make any references to former CM Hegde during speeches at public functions. Presenting a united front, Bommai and Gowda feel, is the most effective way to neutralise Hegde's reputation for holding the party and government together.

With Dr Subramaniam Swamy on the rampage after the telephone tapping scandal that forced Hegde to quit and the ever-failing attempts to form the Samajwadi Janata Dal, it is believed that the former CM and his supporters will be obliged to quit the party altogether and form a new party. According to the new theory, this would suit Bommai and Gowda. As party chief Ajit Singh said, "If anybody (read Hegde) wants to quit, how can we prevent it?"

Political intrigues in Pondicherry

There have always been frictions between the unholy trinity which rules the tiny Union Territory of Pondicherry, the Congress(I)'s last bastion in the south. But relations between the trio—chief minister Farooq Maricar, PCC(I) president P. Shanmugam and health minister Kannan—have never been so bad.

Kannan was the hot favourite for chief ministership three years ago and his friendship with the AICC(I) general secretary G.K. Moopanar, everyone thought, was enough to secure him the seat. But then Maricar, shrewd businessman and politician that he is, pipped his younger rival to the post. The compromise formula had Kannan being allotted the number two position in the Cabinet and Shanmugam, the PCC(I) leadership. Kannan was also put in charge of the territory's Youth Congress.

It was an uneasy arrangement and strained under the test. But now things have gone from bad to worse with



Maricar: the battle has begun

the appointment of a new Youth Congress chief (Balan) in place of Kannan. A move masterminded by chief minister Maricar who argued before the Centre in favour of the one-man-one-post formula.

Maricar's hands have been strengthened now, having won over Balan to his side. But Kannan was set on having his back. He lent support to a demand put forward by P. Shanmugam that a joint committee of senior partymen be formed to (ostensibly) work for coordinating the policies of the government and the party. Like all political decisions made these days, the composition of the six-member committee was decided in New Delhi. And Maricar has found, to his chagrin, that it includes Shanmugam himself and two of his staunch supporters. Political intrigues in this little Union Territory may be inconsequential but they promise to be even more interesting in the days to come.

Hegde: Out in the cold?

The campaign against the Defamation Bill all over the country has meant unfavourable publicity for former Karnataka chief minister, Ramakrishna Hegde.



H.K. Rajashekar

Hegde: pressing problems

During anti-Bill demonstrations in Bangalore, journalists and press employees suddenly raised slogans against Hegde's controversial Freedom of the Press and Legislators' Bills. Demonstrators stopped chief minister S.R. Bommai at the entrance to Raj Bhavan and screamed slogans against the Hegde Bills. The Hegde loyalist of yore disarmingly promised to take back the Bills if the press found them objectionable. Cynical journalists see in the event two blows against Hegde—not only the press but also a former staunch supporter seem to have turned against him. Now Bommai declares, "I am for unrestricted freedom of the press." ■

Bommai (left) and Deve Gowda: burying the hatchet



H.K. Rajashekar

DELHI DIARY

D.E NIZAMUDDIN

Move over IFS officers

The resentment of the IAS officers had been slowly building up and when it was finally about to boil over, the Prime Minister's decision removed the reason for their indignation. Just when the IAS Association had decided to agitate about the continued induction of IFS officers into the Prime Minister's office instead of officers of the Indian Administrative Service, Rajiv Gandhi decided on the advice of two ministers that no more IFS officers would be appointed to his office.

The Prime Minister's office is already packed with many ex-IFS officers. The three key posts of joint secretary are held by G. Parthasarathy, Ranen Sen and Mani Shankar Aiyar—all foreign service men. Rajiv Gandhi's ministerial colleagues feel that if he further expands his set up he should now induct IAS officers, who know far more about the problems of rural India, having worked in remote areas of the country, than IFS officers who stay abroad. And if that does not prove that it is the IAS officers who are the more deserving, "During Jawaharlal Nehru's and Indira Gandhi's times, IFS officers were kept away from this high office," points out an indignant Indian Administrative Service person.

Ambitious Congressmen

A habit that most Congressmen cannot seem to grow out of is to approach the Prime Minister whenever and wherever they can.



Mani Shankar Aiyar: the last of the IFS officers in the PMO?





Rajesh Kumar

Ghulam Nabi Azad (left) and Anand Sharma: all for the PM

An ambitious politician in the ruling party is always striving to show his/her face to the PM or, better still, exchange a word with him.

A Youth Congress(I) meet was held on 12 August. Among those who attended it were Jayanti Natarajan, Suresh Pachauri, Sarfraz Ahmed, Bhubaneswar Kalita, P.P. Roy, Mamata Banerjee, Anand Sharma and AICC(I) general secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad. The PM came at 10 am and left at 10.30 am. During the half hour that he spent at the meet, everyone seemed passionately concerned about the task of national reconstruction. But after he left, nobody found any reason to stay on. Not even the prospect of a sumptuous lunch could persuade the "ambitious" Congressmen to go on with their discussions. The meeting, which was supposed to be a whole-day affair, came to an abrupt end.



Dilip Banerjee

Mamata Banerjee

Pant put in his place

The pre-Olympic international athletics meet on 5 and 6 September was a great show. The Congress(I) luminaries were all present, eager to be associated with the event—Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, home minister Buta Singh, sports minister Margaret Alva, Suresh Kalmadi and his wife. On the first day of the meet, defence minister K.C. Pant was absent. But his son, Sunil Pant, took his place on the dais, clad in a *khadi kurta* and *pyjama*.

Sunil Pant (who, as has been said earlier in these columns, is desperately trying to get a toe-hold in politics through his father) was a member of the committee responsible for organising the event. Suresh Kalmadi, the PM in charge of organising the meet, had given in to Pant Junior's persistent requests and included Sunil's name on the committee. On the first day, the young man sat in his father's seat, savouring his newfound importance. But when he tried to get too close to the PM, securitymen pushed him back and asked him to stay where he was—on his seat. A perfect example of a man being put in his place!

A Credit Card from the First Private Sector Bank with International Tie-up

Not Just Convenience

Status too!

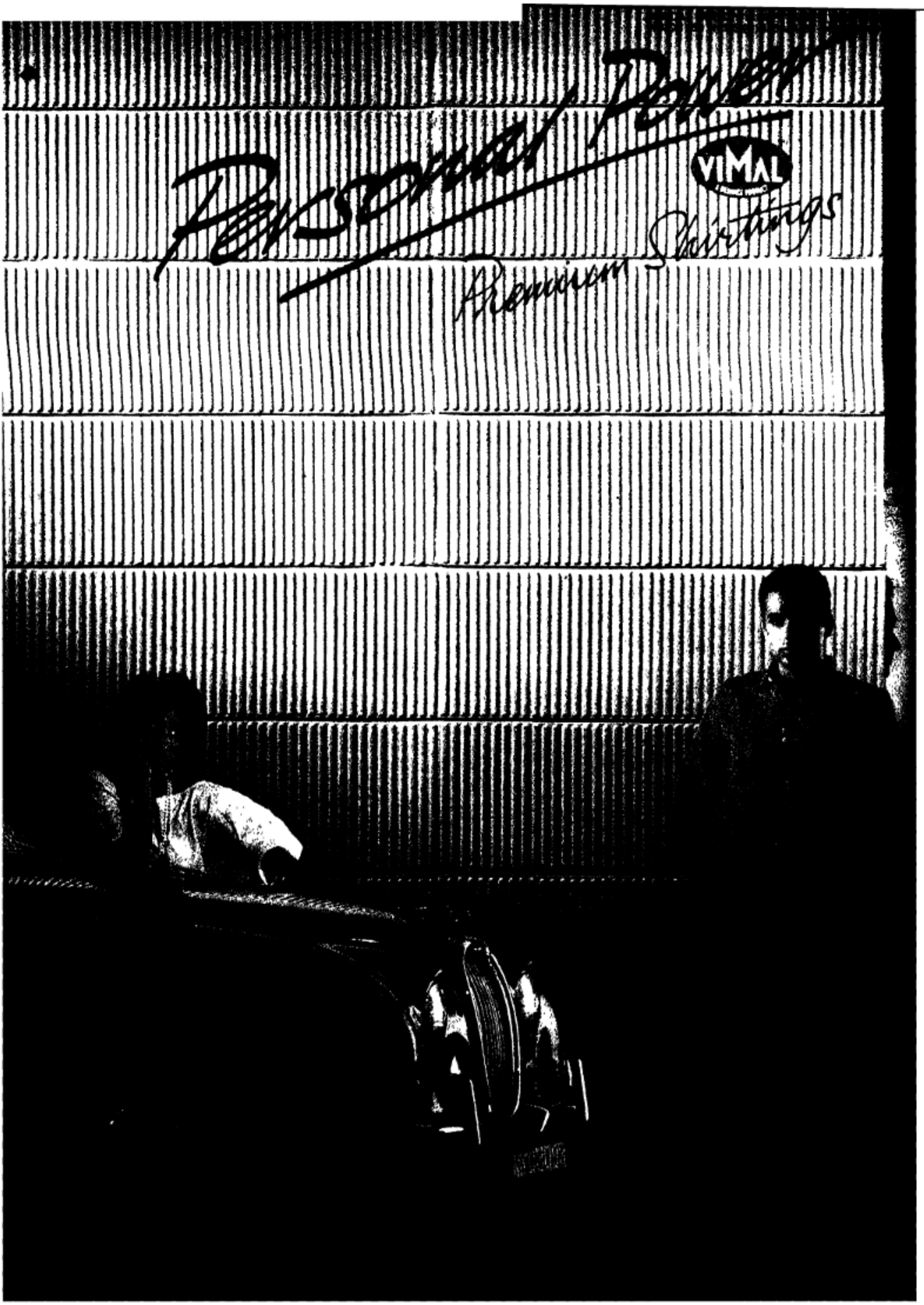
- STATUS SYMBOL
- BUYING POWER
- SAFETY
- CASH WITHDRAWALS FOR EMERGENCIES AT ANY BRANCH
- ACCESS TO OVER 7,000 ESTABLISHMENTS INCLUDING LUXURY RESTAURANTS, HOTELS, AIRLINES ETC. IN INDIA & NEPAL



Central Card from Vysya Bank
A Credit to your life style

THE VYSYA BANK LTD

COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP/VB/024


Respect
VIMAL
American Standards

5 September —1 October 1988 ☐ An Ananda Bazar Publication ☐ Rs 6.00

THE SEARCH FOR THE MUSLIM VOTE

SUNDAY

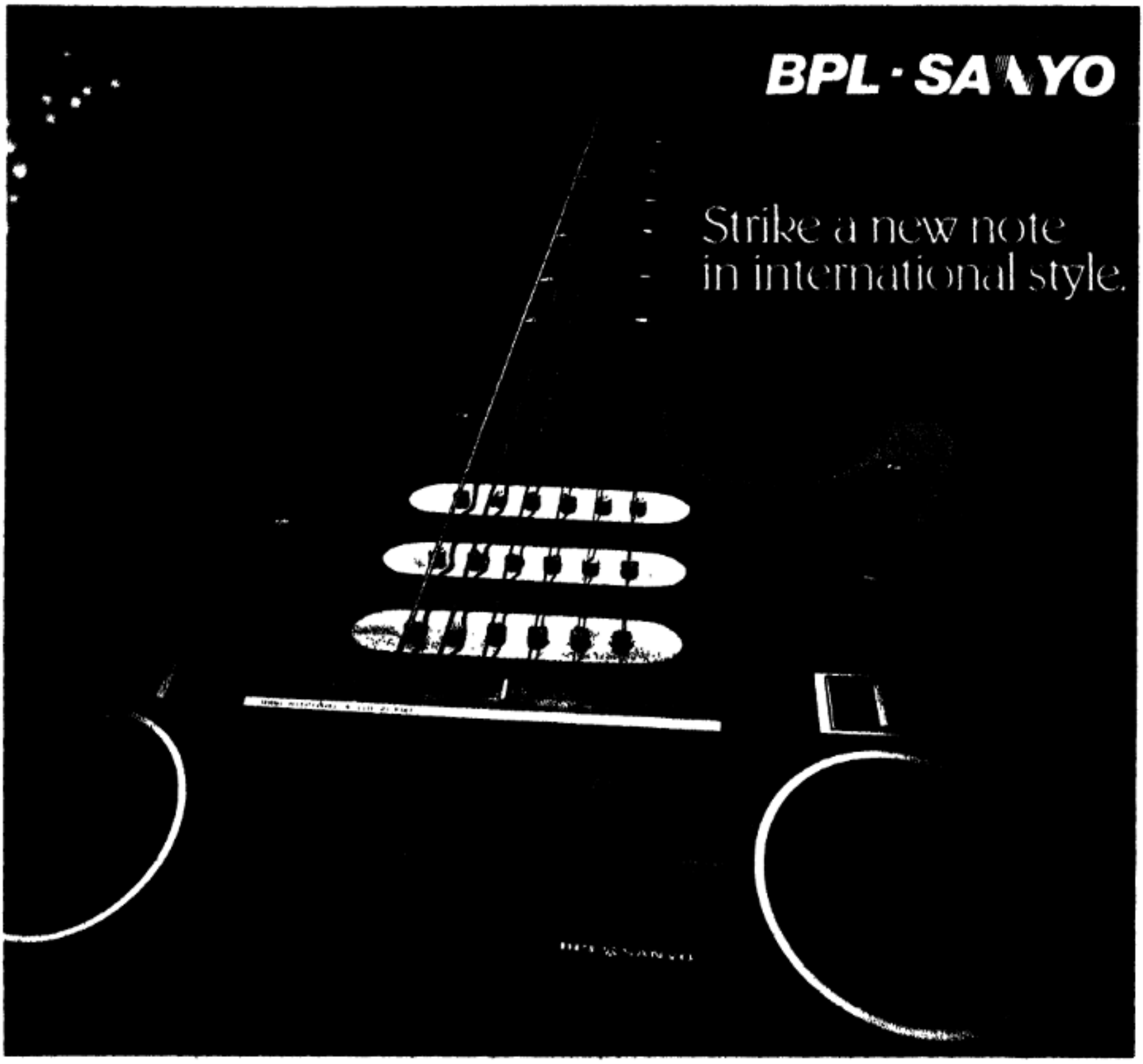


Ajit Singh

JANATA PARTY

Tearing up the unity





BPL-SANYO music makers.
At last! A world class choice.

Mono or stereo, cassette recorder or 2-in-1, BPL-Sanyo calls the tune. Stylish.
Packed with features And surprisingly affordable Take your pick... today!



M7740 K
Ultra-sleek 6-speaker 'Boom Box' Feature-packed model with big sound that surrounds you The only one of its kind



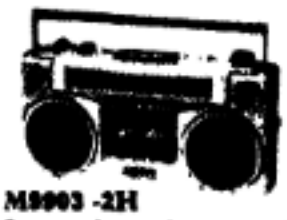
M7010 K
Slimline attraction with 4-band radio. 10-watt stereo sensation at a sensational price



MW200 K
Double cassette 'Mini Studio' with high-speed dubbing and 4-band radio. Compact model with high-impact sound. Affordably priced.



C1 K
Mini compo system with detachable speakers for true stereo effect. 4-band radio with FM. Excellent bargain.



M9003 -2H
2-way, 4-speaker marvel. Surprisingly affordable. Makes more sense than a mono in its price range



M1760 H
Mini and slim international favourite. Small on size, big on sound. Unique styling. Ideal all-time companion.

More to choose from :



M 2420-2H **M 2800-2H** **M 8300-2H**



C1004 **C1002**

BPL-AUDIO
Always the best!

SWAMY/BPL/3614

CONTENTS

VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 44 | RS 6.00 **SUNDAY** AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

25 SEPTEMBER—1 OCTOBER 1988

COVER STORY **11**

TEARING UP THE UNITY

A fierce internecine war is raging within the Janata Party and the bitter rivalry between its leaders has virtually split the party in two. What impact will it have on Opposition unity? An indepth report

SPECIAL REPORT **22**

THE SEARCH FOR THE MUSLIM VOTE



Are mainstream political parties no longer concerned with the once sought after Muslim vote?

IN QUOTES **30**

THE FRAME-UP

A month after he was acquitted by the Supreme Court, Balbir Singh talks about the Indira Gandhi assassination case.

BOOK EXTRACT **40**

A VIEW FROM THE FIELD

Imran Khan recalls the humiliating experience and the memorable moments of the 1980-81 and the 1982-83 Test series against India in this extract from his book, *All Round View*.

FOCUS **52**

CAUGHT...ON TAPE

The Shiv Sena's grand plans to plant a saffron flag atop the Mantralaya in Bombay are exposed by an Independent councillor.



Page 11



Page 66

COMMENT

Opinion 4
Byline M.J. Akbar 6
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 8
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 10
Sight and Sound 9
Business Diary 62

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Deccan Diary 81
Delhi Diary 82

Cover transparencies of Chandra Shekhar and Madhu Dandavate by Ashok Vahie, of Ajit Singh by Dharam Vir Jayner and of R.K. Hegde by N. Prasad

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd. by Bijit Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001

Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura 20 paise; North Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup, Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts of Assam 30 paise.

BUSINESS **56**

INDIA'S GLOBAL LEADERS

A number of Indian firms have successfully battled their way to the top in their fields. A look at some of them.

SUNDAY SPORTS **66**

A GAME PEOPLE PLAYED

The heyday of Indian polo is well and truly over but a few enthusiasts are struggling to keep the game and its romance alive.

PROFILE **74**

RAJIV'S LEGAL HATCHET MAN



P. Shiv Shankar, Union minister for human resources development, has made himself indispensable as Rajiv Gandhi's legal troubleshooter

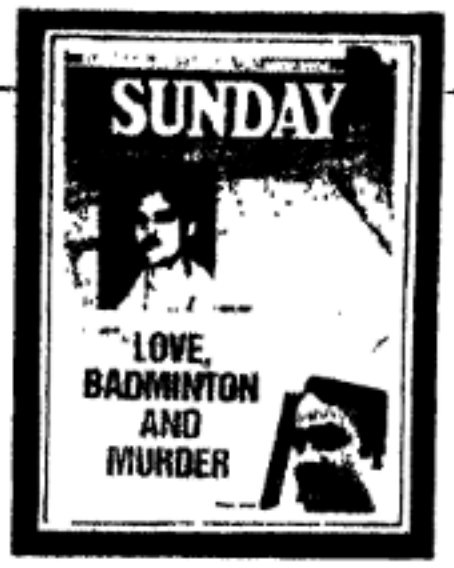
NEWS **32**

NEWSWATCH **77**

QUARRIES OF CONTENTION

Is Bangladesh illegally mining limestone from the quarries along its border with Meghalaya? An investigation.

Khaas Baat 63
Spotlight 64
Sundayweek 79
Odds and Trends 80



Political murder?

I read with interest the Syed Modi murder mystery (*The politics of murder*, 4—10 September). The prompt action of the CBI is indeed commendable. If they manage to solve the mystery, the public will begin to have faith in the work of the investigating agency.

Your magazine has done its bit to keep its readers


Tapan Dey

Syed Modi: a victim of politics?

informed about the case.

S. Hussain, Dibrugarh (Assam)

■What is happening to politics in our country? Recently it was R.L. Jalappa in Karnataka who was allegedly involved in a murder; now it is Sanjay Singh in Uttar Pradesh. What does one call it — murderous politics, or politics of murder?

U.S. Iyer, Bangalore (Karnataka)

■ Your cover story made objective reading. With all the post-independence legislation on social reforms, the fact that we Indians still live a life of false ethics comes to the surface. Cases of debauchery and adultery are quite common. Adoption of moral education through the media is necessary to save posterity from social decadence.

N.P. Kalyanam, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

Keeping tabs

The cover story (*Hegde's stratagem*, 21—27 August) mentions that the Government of India maintains surveillance over the telephones of politicians. It has also been stated: "Don't believe Rajiv when he says the Centre does not tap telephones." I would like to point out that the Government of India does not tap the telephones of political leaders, as alleged in your story.

In this connection, I would like to quote what Rajiv Gandhi said in the Lok Sabha on 9 August,"...The Act does not provide for tapping the telephones of political personalities...let me assure the hon'ble member that no telephone of any politician has been tapped by us at the Centre."

S. Narendra, director, public relations, ministry of home affairs, New Delhi

SUNDAY stands by its story —Editor

Dying without a cause

This refers to your cover story (*Out of step*, 14—20 August). What has the IPKF ultimately achieved in Sri Lanka? Practically nothing. Soldiers who would have heroically laid down their lives for their motherland met an untimely end for the sake of another country.

My brother, Capt Satish Kumar Sharma, is one such soldier, whose death has only added to the long list of brilliant officers who have lost their lives. Even if the sending of troops to a foreign country is justified, deploying personnel from the army's elite forces is absolutely ridiculous. One would have felt so proud if Capt Sharma had given his life for his motherland.

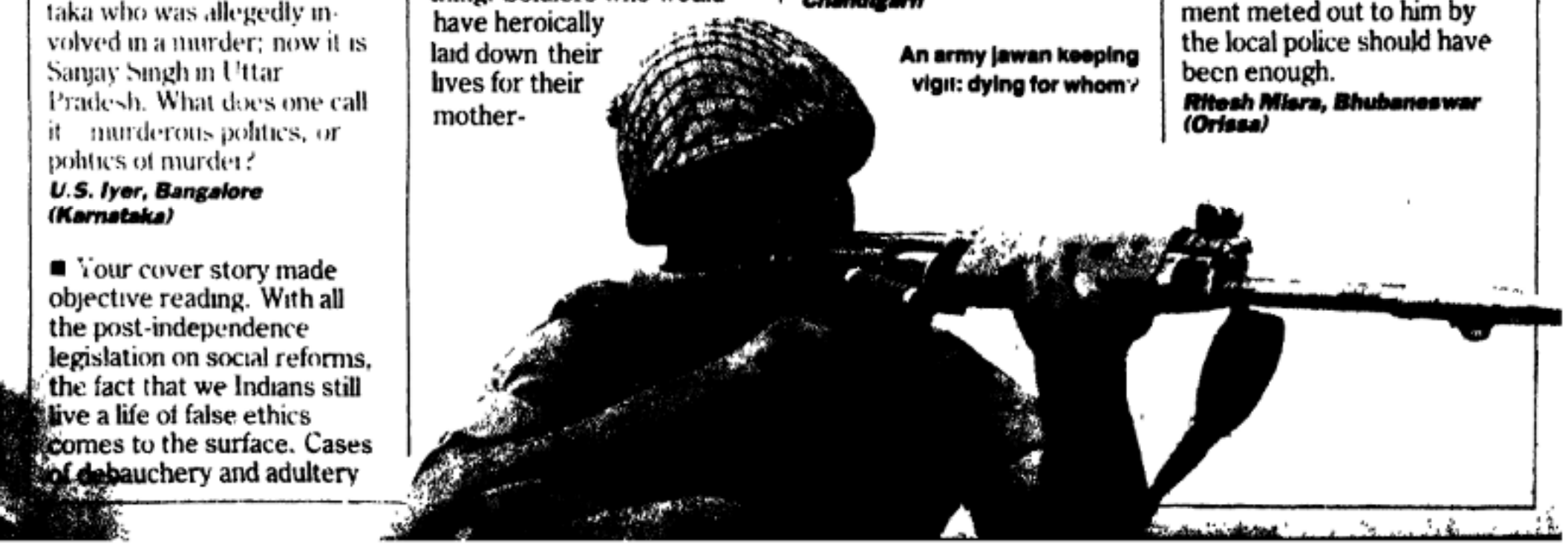
An officer trained in commando operations, skydiving, seadiving and hand-to-hand fighting, should have been appropriately utilised. If this is the outcome of a peace mission, one wonders what a real war would be like?

S.K. Sharma, Bombay (Maharashtra)

Speaking for his son

In the report (*Ragi's second coming*, 28 August—3 September), it is mentioned that I met the Prime Minister for the release of my son, Simranjit Singh Mann, detained in Bhagalpur jail for the last four years. This is entirely untrue. I have never met the PM for this or any other purpose. My son, Mann, is being held in Bhagalpur on trumped up charges, and is being tortured in many ways including keeping him in solitary confinement against all canons of law and human rights.

Joginder Singh Mann, Chandigarh


An army jawan keeping vigil: dying for whom?

A fit PM

Rajiv Gandhi's interview (*The everyday Rajiv*, 4—10 September) made interesting reading. Working 16 hours a day, sleeping for only four hours and having a


Kamal Saha

Rajiv Gandhi: fit as a fiddle

light lunch, our PM looks the picture of health and *joi de vivre*. There must be something in love and fresh air after all, and of course the Opposition.

G.I. D'Souza, Bangalore (Karnataka)

Black deed

It was certainly wrong on the part of Birendra Vidrohi to blacken the Bihar CM's face especially when the latter had gone to Damuha to console the victims of the massacre (*An IPF activist sees red*, 28 August—3 September). However, it was hardly necessary to book the offender on the charge of an attempt to murder. Perhaps the harsh treatment meted out to him by the local police should have been enough.

Ritesh Misra, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

Not secular

Khushwant Singh contradicts himself in his column (*Choosing an air chief*, 21—27 August). On the one hand he claims to be a secularist, while on the other, he makes Air Marshal M.M. Singh's supersession look like an anti-Sikh move. Was this the first instance of supersession in the history of the Indian armed forces?

Parag Jain, New Delhi

■ The columnist has rightly condemned the action of the defence ministry towards Air Marshal M.M. Singh by depriving him of the chance to become Air Chief Marshal. In the choice of service chiefs, the defence ministry, strangely, has not shown itself to be very secular.

Parimal Bhattacharjee, Tinsukia (Assam)

The voice of Telengana

The decision of the Government of India to locate the nuclear plant on the left bank canal of the Nagarjunasagar is yet another anti-Telengana act (*Power to pollute*, 21—27 August). The left canal into which the effluents from the power plant would be dumped serves three Telangana dis tricts.

The nuclear plant could have been located in the coastal areas of Andhra. Unfortunately, the Telugu Desam government of NTR is bent on establishing all thermal stations in the Andhra region and not one in the backward Telengana region.

Pratap Kishore, Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

Shaken up

Apropos your report on the earthquake (*Forty seconds that shook Bihar*, 4—10 September), if the Prime Minister and the chief minister blamed the press for exaggerating the death toll, it was not with any intention to malign the fourth estate. It is a normal practice that chief ministers give high casualty figures to get maximum financial benefits from the Centre, but in this case, since not much political capital could have been made from the unexpected disaster, the leaders were not keen on playing up the death figures.

Panna Lall Mundhra, Calcutta (West Bengal)



A scene of devastation in the north Bihar earthquake

A strong leader

There can be no denying the fact that Gen Zia had established himself as a force in Pakistan. His was a Draconian rule. During the 11 years of his dictatorial rule, Zia created an environment whereby none dared to speak against him. However, I differ with those people who blindly supported Zia's authoritarian rule in which the rights of the people were suppressed in the name of Islam. Zia's greatest gamble was the hanging of his mentor Bhutto. Through the years, the dictator succeeded in strengthening himself at the cost of his country.

Khursheed Ahmed, Patna (Bihar)

■ Zia gave Pakistan the much-needed political and economic stability. Other countries, especially India, can learn a lesson from Pakistan's stability where one man was at the helm for more than a decade with everyone trusting his leadership. Zia's strong-arm rule has proved better than the collective leadership system.

The half a dozen or so of India's Opposition parties would do well to take note of this fact. In today's world, leaders who can give stability to their country are valued more than anyone else. Thus, those who try to interfere with the political stability of their country are guilty of an unpardonable crime.

K. Kumara Sekhar, Eluru (Andhra Pradesh)

Impropriety

It was certainly injudicious on the part of the High Court judges who attended the inauguration of a marriage hall on a working day (*Guests of contention*, 4—10 September). The Chief Justice of India should look into the matter and take necessary action.

K.V. Rajagopalan, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

Krishna in Russia

It was heartening to know that ISKCON was the first religious sect to gain official recognition in the Soviet Union (*Krishna and the reds*, 4—10 September). Lord Krishna had waged a war against injustice and perhaps it was this message which influenced the Russians into promoting this religious cult.

Dhananjoy Patro, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)



ISKCON devotees

Democracy wins

Your report (*Sabotage in Kohima*, 14—20 August) is somewhat biased. It is not Vamuzo, Chishi or Jamir who plotted to oust Hokishe Sema, but democracy which succeeded in ousting undemocratic means in the land.

H. Dezo, Kohima (Nagaland)

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager (U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta-700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

Foreign secretary of a Hindu India

Ever since the story broke, an incident from Jawaharlal Nehru's last days has been buzzing in my mind. It is a famous enough tale, particularly after the late Y. D. Gundevia put it in his sparkling memoirs, outside the archives. Nehru, as keenly involved in his foreign ministry at the end of two prime ministerships as at the beginning, was taking questions from the assembled IFS officers after another exposition of his world view. But the questions veered into domestic politics also, and one officer asked about the professed neutrality of the bureaucracy. Should the bureaucrat be neutral even if, say, the communists were elected to power? After all, a communist government had been elected in Kerala; so theoretically the communists could always be voted into power in Delhi too. Nehru exploded: communism, everyone seemed obsessed by communism. The real danger to India, Nehru warned, did not come from communism, but from communalism—and in particular, Hindu communalism. All his life Jawaharlal had watched this fascist tendency make its bids for power, and fought it with uncompromising vigil. He had seen it in the most unexpected places—in the highest echelons of the bureaucracy, for instance

Another quiet believer decided to come out of the closet recently. His name: A. P. Venkateswaran, no less—the former foreign secretary of the Government of India, one of the most powerful positions a civil servant can hope to attain. We now learn that he holds the same views as the RSS. Nor is it that he has suddenly come to this position in his search for a political identity after being sacked. By his own admission, he says that his suggestions when in service were rejected by "secularists" in the Indian government. (Secularist, of course, is a dirty word. And he finds the independent India brand of it particularly irritating. To quote him: "Today, what we can find is that a Muslim can say that he is proud of being a Muslim and we accept him for it, a Christian can say that he is proud of being a Christian and we accept him for it. But if a Hindu gets up and says that he is a Hindu, somehow he is a communalist.")

We would never have known all this but for the mouthpiece of the RSS, the weekly *Organiser*, which treated this endorsement of its views with front-page status. They were reporting a speech made by Venkateswaran at a *guru pooja*

The real danger to India, Nehru had warned, did not come from communism, but from communalism—and in particular, Hindu communalism. All his life Jawaharlal had watched this fascist tendency make its bids for power, and fought it with uncompromising vigil. He had seen it in the most unexpected places—in the highest echelons of the bureaucracy, for instance



Jawaharlal Nehru: saw the dangers of Hindu communalism



Sovfoto Stamas

A.P. Venkateswaran (third from right) with a Chinese delegation in New Delhi: bureaucrat with RSS leanings

organised by the RSS at Madras on 14 August. Our former foreign secretary built his nation around the theme, "Whether we like it or not, we are a Hindu India." A further sample of quotable quotes is offered: "I think it is time now for the people in power to understand that secularism does not mean that Hindus have to be somehow made to feel ashamed that they are Hindus."

All the shibboleths that are the common currency of the worst kind of propagandists of the 'Hindu India' theorists were present in that speech, which must be considered the first major enunciation of the political ideology of Venkateswaran.

If it were just a question of a frustrated individual letting off putrid steam, it might be another matter. But Venkateswaran is no longer just an ex-bureaucrat. He is a major player in Opposition politics, a star on political platforms, and—if the grapevine is to be believed— V. P. Singh's preferred candidate for the South Madras seat. However, even if the last bit were not true, it is hardly a secret that Venkateswaran is set on a political career. It is perfectly logical, consequently, to assume that if the Congress were replaced by a National Front government, Venkateswaran would play a major role in the formulation of the next government's foreign policy. That, after all, is his area of expertise. One can also assume that he would no longer be trammelled in the execution of policy by the "secularists" who so inhibited and frustrated him the last time he was in power.

Are we then going to see, at long last, the collapse of the bipartisan consensus that has marked India's foreign policy since Independence? There was a serious attempt to do so when the Janata came to power, but we were fortunate that Atal Behari Vajpayee (a wise and able man) was foreign minister. Vajpayee ran his department like a Janata foreign minister—and not like an RSS foreign minister (much, incidentally, to the regret of a few hawks).

We now learn that A.P. Venkateswaran, the former foreign secretary—one of the most powerful positions a civil servant can hope to attain—holds the same views as the RSS. Since he's now a major player in Opposition politics, and if the Congress were replaced by a National Front government, we might see, at long last, an end to the bipartisan consensus that has marked India's foreign policy since Independence

One hopes that Venkateswaran's extremist views do not gain such influence on the policies of the National Front. In any case, there are socialist and secular partners in the front, to name K. P. Unnikrishnan for one, who will not tolerate such gibberish. In fact, they must be distinctly uncomfortable to discover the RSS wolf in bureaucrat-sheep clothing. What Venkateswaran's case does illustrate is the constant need for vigilance. In the heat of electoral battles, not to mention the turmoil of government-by-compromise (this is true of all governments, particularly Congress ones), ideology tends to get the short shrift. But there are some basics which must be kept beyond the pale of compromise. Communalism is perhaps the most important of these basics. Our country cannot be run as a Hindu India or a Muslim India or a Sikh India. It can only survive as an Indian India. While the progenitors of Muslim India are bad enough, the propagandists of a Hindu India are no less a threat to this nation. They are lurking around, increasingly confident that their time may have come as the Congress inflicts wound after wound on itself, and the centrist Opposition fares little better. Maybe, that is why the closets have begun to open—and the most unsuspected faces turn out to have been masks. ◻

KHUSHWANT SINGH

A Kashmiri poet



Visiting his parents recently in Srinagar was Agha Shahid Ali teaching English in Hamilton College in the United States. He left behind two of his publications to be given to me, *The Half-Inch Himalayas* and *A Walk Through the Yellow Pages*. In addition he has three other books to his credit, *Bone Sculpture*, *In Memory of Begum Akhtar*, and his doctoral dissertation, *T.S. Eliot as Editor*. Shahid's father, Agha Ashraf Ali, I have known over the years when he was teaching in the Jamia Milliah Islamia and living in retirement in Kashmir. He is about the best seminarist I have heard on any subject and always regretted that he never put his thoughts in print. His son is apparently making up for his sire's lapse—five books to his credit before he is 40.

Agha Shahid Ali, a Delhi-born Kashmiri, is almost unknown as a poet in his homeland. He deserves to be taken seriously. I give two samples of his composition. This one is entitled *Today, Talk is Cheap Call Somebody*.

I called Information Desk, Heaven,
and asked, "When is Doomsday?"
I was put on hold.

Through the hallelujahs of seraphs,
I heard the idle gossip of angels,
their wings beating rumours
of revolts in Heaven.
Then I heard flames, wings burning,
then only hallelujahs.

I prayed, "Angel of love,
Please pick up the phone."

But it was the Angel of Death.
I said, "Tell me, tell me,
When is Doomsday?"

He answered, "God is busy.
He never answers the living.
He has no answers for the dead.
Don't ever call again collect."

In another poem *Language Games*, he has witty-macabre lines like:

"You challenged me to *Charades*
I agreed. This
would be my syllable-cure.
Tableau One: I licked a saucer of milk.
You cried: CAT!
Tableau Two: I was stubborn as a mule.
You cried: ASS!
Tableau Three: I gave you my smile, like a prize.
You cried. TROPHY!

You cried: CAT-ASS-TROPHY?
You cried: CATASTROPHE!"

REQUIEM FOR ZIA

I am truly (and pleasantly) surprised that despite adverse comments in our media, many Indians admired General Zia-ul Haq. Amongst them is my life-long friend, Dr Prem Kirpal, once secretary of the ministry of education, head of the cultural division of UNESCO and chairman of its executive board. He is currently chairman of Delhi Public Schools. He also paints and writes poetry. His poem entitled *20th August 1988* is a tribute to the late General:

Rain drops pouring in stark muffled tones
from dark clouds enveloped in the sky
presage a time of sadness and mourning
for dear neighbours of the north in the home that was ours.
Grief and blight in the hearts of others
are sensed and shared by fellow-beings;
death and disaster cast their shadow beyond the orbit of those afflicted.

Let us join together in this time of mourning
and heal the wounds of a turbulent past
to live in harmony as free men and brothers
freed from the scars of fear and hatred.

Agha Shahid Ali, A Delhi-born Kashmiri, who teaches English in the United States, is almost unknown as a poet in his homeland. He deserves to be taken seriously. And his father, Agha Ashraf Ali, is about the best seminarist I have ever heard on any subject and regretted that he never put his thoughts in print

PARABLE ON CORRUPTION

K.K. Agarwal of Ghaziabad has sent me the following parable as a comment on the state of affairs of today.

Once upon a time there was a rich *zamindar* who liked to end his day by taking a bowl of whipped cream *malaee* before retiring for the night. He had a servant whose job was to get three annas' worth of *malaee* from a *halwaae* every evening. He became suspicious of this servant's honesty and engaged another to keep a watch over the fellow. The two servants came to an understanding. Instead of buying two annas' worth and pocketing one anna, they began to buy one anna's worth for their master and dividing the other two between themselves.

After some days the *zamindar* smelt collusion and hired a third servant to keep a watch on the other two. This time the three of them came to an understanding whereby they divided the three annas between themselves. At night they smeared their master's moustache with white paint. Next morning the *zamindar* spoke angrily to his servants, "I got no *malaee* last night. Why?" The servants protested that he had and showed him a mirror which showed the white on his moustache.

Agarwal goes on to comment: "In the first decade of independence only 25 per cent of India was corrupt; in the second, 50 per cent; in the third, 75 per cent and in the fourth, 100 per cent. Now we enter the decade when a white smear on the moustache fools the people that they have had their dessert."



R. K. Laxman/*The Times of India*

"

A weak man like our Prime Minister can be very dangerous when threatened.

P. UPENDRA, *Telugu Desam MP*

Rajiv is a petulant child and the Defamation Bill is a manifestation of his petulance.

L.K. ADVANI, *BJP president*

I do not intend to marry the press. So I do not woo the press.

S.R. BOMMAI, *Karnataka chief minister*

I don't know if there are ring leaders. But we must say we are not hijackers.

RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE, *former Karnataka chief minister*

Mr Hegde is now unemployed.

ATI SINGH, *Janata Party president*

Mr Devi Lal had only asked me to translate in Hindi what I had said in English.

K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN, *on the National Front's "free language" formula*

Socialism is like a handkerchief that is used to wipe a running political nose.

V.P. SINGH, *Jan Morcha leader*

When the Prime Minister has no concern at all for the people of Assam, why should I,as the chief minister, rush to receive him?

PRAFULLA MAHANTA, *Assam chief minister*

My coming back to Congress(I) will not make an iota of difference to the party. I am just a drop in the ocean.

A.R. ANTULAY, *former Maharashtra chief minister*

We have created an environment where people make a career out of creating problems. I want an environment where people make a career out of solving problems.

SAM PITRODA, *technology adviser to the Prime Minister*

If their (Left Front's) slogan is "Rajiv *hatao*", ours is "Rajiv *bachao*".

SUBASH GHISINGH, *GNLF president*

Whom do I have to impress with my smartness or intelligence? My audience? I can assure you that they are quite happy seeing me on the screen.

SRIDEVI, *film actress*

Twenty minutes are not enough. How can you say anything funny in 20 minutes–by the time you establish the hero's character and the situation, time's up. I'd like more time.

R.K. LAXMAN, *on his serial,* Wagle ki duniya

"



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

Finding a foreign office boss

The ministry of external affairs is looking for a foreign secretary. K P.S. Menon, the present incumbent, retires next March that is, if he survives, till then, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's impetuousness, which caused the resignation of Menon's predecessor, A.P Venkateswaran, and almost resulted in Menon's own exit sometime back

S.K. Singh, India's ambassador in Islamabad, is the foremost claimant, but Natwar Singh, the minister of state for foreign affairs, has said that so long as he is in the foreign office, S.K. Singh cannot step in

Of course, Natwar Singh is not the power he was; Narasimha Rao, on returning to the external affairs ministry, has cut him to size. Natwar Singh used to stride all over the ministry, now he tends to confine himself to his room Therefore, he may not have the last say. And K.K. Tewari, another aggressive minister of state in the foreign office, appears to like S K Singh. Therefore, the veto from Natwar Singh may be overruled by Tewari's support.

But another hurdle, although not insurmountable, that S.K Singh faces is superannuation; he retires next year. If he is given the foreign secretaryship, he would have to be given an extension. This is not unusual in the foreign office Menon's tenure has been extended and so was Venkateswaran's

Junior to S.K. Singh is A.S. Gonsalves. But he has a reputation of never doing, writing or uttering anything which will catch attention He is a good person, but that is all

So, if Gonsalves is out, it is anybody's guess as to who will fill the berth. Ashok Chib, the right timber for the foreign secretaryship, will have retired by the time the vacancy arises and so will a few others who might have been considered. Like all services, the Indian Foreign Service has had no long-term perspective That there is a paucity of talent in the middle level has been known for some years, but nothing was done to cover the deficiency

In fact, the IFS is attracting far less talent now than it used to. The once glamorous service used to attract the top 10 or 12 in the competitive examination. But many top-rankers now prefer the IAS and even some of the other services. In the latest batch of recruits, one IFS recruit ranked 621 among the successful candidates. One probable reason is that in the IFS there is less scope for promotion and transfers are too frequent. Those joining the other services also know that they would have chances of going abroad on deputation.

But why should talented people be needed, asked one official. He remarked, "The entire foreign policy is run from the Prime Minister's secretariat where a junior IFS officer calls the tune." R Sen, a comparatively junior IFS officer posted in the PM's secretariat, reportedly guides policy Notes from the foreign office, even those of the foreign secretary, are paid scant attention and it is Sen who dictates the line.

In fact, when he travels abroad with the Prime Minister, it is he who is asked by our missions abroad for guidance on matters relating to foreign countries, even when Menon himself is in the entourage. Nobody has ever questioned Sen's authority– everybody presumes that he is acting on behalf of the Prime Minister.

Even otherwise, the role of the foreign office is minimal. It is the Prime Minister's secretariat which counts. And as happens in any secretariat, the onus is on the officials, who do not have either the vision or the sweep. That is what goes to make India's foreign policy unaccommodating.

Natwar Singh: checked



Rajiv Gandhi is too dependent on the bureaucrats; even on representation abroad, he has given foreign policy an "officialese' stamp. Till recently, some foreign missions abroad were headed by public men, who, because they were not used to red tape, contributed to flexibility in policy matters. America, the Soviet Union and the UK almost invariably had non-officials as envoys Now public men are out; it is officialdom that has taken over.

That is bad enough; what is worse is that these positions have become sinecures for retired foreign and cabinet secretaries. IFS officers could rationalise when an outstanding citizen was appointed ambassador in Washington, Moscow, London or Beijing. Now their normal chances of promotion are stalled because of Rajiv Gandhi's penchant for appointment of retired bureaucrats to key ambassadorial positions Take, for example, T.N. Kaul in Moscow. He is going on and on.

Nonetheless, the foreign office feels relieved under Narasimha Rao. When Rajiv Gandhi had kept the portfolio, he did not have time to attend to it. Natwar Singh was virtually foreign minister and he rubbed most people the wrong way. Some of his brainwaves, amateurish as they were -- like inviting the late General Zia-ul Haq to New Delhi for consultations on Afghanistan and air-dropping of food in Jaffna— damaged India's image. The nation will have to pay for the harm he has done

Till recently, IFS officers would say that there was no use writing any note on any subject because nobody read it in the foreign office. Natwar Singh being an IFS hand, was sure that he knew everything, and no one knew better. Assessments by our envoys from abroad would gather dust. Narasimha Rao's presence has at least created the impression that an analysis made or a note submitted will be read.

Whether Narasimha Rao can make any difference to the style of foreign policy which New Delhi has come to assume under Rajiv Gandhi is another matter. One thing about which Rao is fairly confident is that he will select his own foreign secretary, whatever be Natwar Singh's likes and dislikes.

TWO WAY STREET

The Janata Party clearly isn't big enough for both Chandra Shekhar and R.K. Hegde. Will it break into two?

Asked to rewrite the rules of Indian politics, the Opposition has responded by revising the clichés. Faced with the prospect of overthrowing Rajiv Gandhi at the next election, it has chosen to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory.

That, at least, was the way it seemed last week. Janata, the country's leading non-communist Opposition, seemed determined to tear itself into two in a messy, public battle that could only benefit the battered Congress(I). At stake was victory in the forthcoming general election and yet, the warring factions candidly conceded that ideology had nothing to do with it.

Said George Fernandes, a vocal member of the Ramakrishna Hegde group: "The politics of the centrist parties have been bereft of ideology for a long time now. The only issues that figure are sharing of offices, positions and things of that nature." Agreed Jayant Malhoutra, the party's treasurer and a leading light of the Chandra Shekhar faction: "This is just the usual exercise in brinkmanship. The issues involved are those of personalities and egos."

The immediate provocation for the crisis was the Hegde group's announcement that it intended to hold a convention in Bangalore on 30 September. Chandra Shekhar, the party's leader, denounced the convention as "politically immoral" and ruled out his participation. Ajit Singh, the party's current president, made it clear that he would not attend. And Subramaniam Swamy, Singh's chief lieutenant, condemned the "illegal convention", adding: "There can be no greater service to the demoralised Congress(I) than to split the Janata Party."

But even as frantic negotiations aimed at calling off the convention went on behind the scenes, it was clear that the problems that divided the Janata Party were not going to be easily solved. The Hegde faction intended to use the convention to bury the Janata-Lok Dal(A) merger, effected by Chandra Shekhar and Ajit Singh in March. It hoped also to derecognise Ajit Singh as party president and to appoint one of its own men to that post.

As neither Singh nor Shekhar could possibly accept these terms, a Janata split seemed inevitable. If, as the negotiators hoped, the Hegde group gave in and called off the convention, the problem of Ajit Singh and his Lok Dal(A) would still remain. And Hegde's supporters gave no indication that they would ever accept what Jaipal Reddy called: "a shot-gun merger".

But even the Ajit Singh issue was, in a sense, a symbol. The battle was really about the ambition of two bearded *kurta*-clad men. Will Janata continue to be Chandra Shekhar's party? Or is Ramakrishna Hegde the leader of the future?



"Nobody has been more abusive than Swamy"

George Fernandes on the merits of the 'old' Janata Party

In recent months, veteran trade-unionist George Fernandes has emerged as a leading critic of Chandra Shekhar and Ajit Singh. He explains below what the justification for the Bangalore convention is.

Will a new president be elected at the Bangalore convention?

I will not rule out the possibility of electing a new president because Chandra Shekhar has resigned from the presidentship of the party. He has said that under no circumstances is he going to attend the convention, which he has called unlawful, illegal and so on and so forth. So, one is in a dilemma. The titular party president is boycotting it. Former president Chandra Shekhar is not coming there. In that event those who assemble at Bangalore will have to elect a new president.

Don't you think that Devi Lal's statements calling Chandra Shekhar and Bahuguna Congress(I) agents are a blow to Opposition unity?

There are a lot of things politicians say which they should not. But I don't think in Indian politics anybody has been more abusive of his party president and of his associates as Subramaniam Swamy. Mr Swamy is now the principal spokesman for both Chandra Shekhar and Ajit Singh. I don't think there is anything that Subramaniam Swamy did not say about Charan Singh and today Ajit Singh finds in Swamy a most trusted colleague and principal adviser.

What will be the attitude of V.P. Singh towards these developments?

My view is this. If the Jan Morcha led by V.P. Singh--and I am choosing my words deliberately—the Janata Party which is meeting in Bangalore, the Lok Dal which had its convention on 20 August in Delhi, the Congress(S) plus other smaller groups in the country which may want to be part of this—Congress(J), West Bengal Socialist Party, the Socialist Party—come together, this will be the mainstream Opposition in India. And I believe this will be the anchor party for Opposition politics in the country.

Interviewed by Kuldeep Kumar/ *Delhi*



George Fernandes

"A small group of ten people are in control of a national party, answerable to nobody but themselves and totally unconcerned about the views of the party rank and file. We are trying to right that wrong"

That Chandra Shekhar might have to relinquish control over the party he had run as president since 1977 seemed clear early this year. R K. Hegde had expressed a desire to come to Delhi and there was even talk of appointing Madhu Dandavate to Chandra Shekhar's job. Shekhar's response was typical. He relinquished the presidency but nominated his own successor. Aware that none of his followers had Hegde's or Dandavate's stature, he merged Janata with the Lok Dal(A) and appointed Ajit Singh president

Foxed, his enemies within Janata attempted to scuttle the merger, a move that was weakened by dissidence directed against Hegde's Karnataka government. The dissidence was masterminded by H.D. Deve Gowda, a Chandra Shekhar protégé and tied Hegde to Bangalore, weakening the anti-merger lobby. So, Shekhar got his way, but the Janata leadership was peeved. Says Jaipal Reddy, deputy leader of Janata in the Lok Sabha: "Both Ajit Singh and Subramaniam Swamy belong to the takeover culture of the corporate world. But the Janata Party is not a company that they can capture by their takeover tactics."

The opposition to the merger crystallised around Hegde who many saw as a Prime Minister-in-waiting. When the Hegde faction sensed that Chandra Shekhar had outmanoeuvred it, the answer was to take the battle outside the party. Hegde and Devi Lal began negotiating to form the Samajwadi Janata Dal (SJD), a united Opposition party, of which Hegde would be vice-president, Devi Lal, the chairman of the parliamentary board, and V.P. Singh, president. It became clear that Chandra Shekhar would have no part in this enterprise when Devi Lal publicly called him a "Congress agent".

For a while, it seemed that the SJD would come off and even Ajit Singh went and made his peace with Devi Lal, earning for himself the post of secretary general. Chandra Shekhar now seemed well and truly finished.

But such an analysis reckoned without his masterly manipulative skills. He pointed out to Ajit Singh that as chairman of the parliamentary board, Devi Lal would hand out all tickets and effectively destroy the Lok Dal(A)'s support base. Next, he renewed his relations with V.P. Singh and cautioned him about the perils of being guided by an eccentric rustic like Devi Lal. Instead, he suggested an Opposition combination containing Singh, H.N. Bahugu-

Says Jaipal Reddy: "Both Ajit Singh and Subramaniam Swamy belong to the takeover culture of the corporate world. But the Janata Party is not a company they can capture by their takeover tactics"

na, Ajit Singh, Ram Naresh Yadav, Ram Vilas Paswan, B.P. Maurya, Nathuram Mirdha, Virendra Saklecha, Chimanbhai Patel and, of course, Chandra Shekhar himself, that would be virtually unbeatable. If Mulayam Singh Yadav was added to the list, then this configuration would have the support of the Thakkar-dominated rural elite and the Jat and Yadav-dominated middle classes. Plus, B.P. Maurya could deliver the Harijans and Bahuguna, the Muslims.

On the other hand, all the SJD could offer Singh in the north was Haryana (because of Devi Lal), but that state only sent ten members to the Lok Sabha. The argument obviously appealed to Singh as did Shekhar's sly suggestion that eventually Hegde's supporters would see to it that their man became the next Prime Minister. The SJD proposal died a quick death and Hegde was reduced to fighting Chandra Shekhar within the Janata Party.

The present Janata crisis has its roots in the fall-out of that move. Elated that he had become the new focus of anti-Rajiv forces and outraged that Ajit Singh should be encouraging Deve Gowda's dissidence, Hegde's supporters leaked a transcript of a tapped telephone conversation between Gowda and Singh to the *Indian Express*. It was a silly, short-sighted move. Hegde's claim to fame was that he represented a value-based alternative to Congress politics; the *Express'* that it stood up for civil liberties. By enlisting the secret policemen to their side, Hegde and *Express* editor Arun Shourie destroyed their own cases.

An angry Ajit Singh assigned Subramaniam Swamy the task of finding out how the phones had been tapped and the Congress(I) gleefully leaked letters from the Karnataka government authorising telephone tapping. His credibility in shreds, an embarrassed Hegde tried to salvage some dignity by resigning, while a triumphant Swamy held press conferences to call him names.

The net result of all this was that, firstly, Hegde became determined to 'get' Swamy and Singh. And that secondly, as an unemployed politician, Hegde now tried to create a national role for himself. This was no easy matter. His image had been tattered and as a mere Karnataka MLA, he had no official position. For instance, when the Opposition's National Front was launched in Madras on 17 September, Hegde found that he was not a player. When the Front was first announced, he had been appointed a member of its Presidium by virtue of being chief minister of Karnata-

"The days of the philosopher king are over"

Chandra Shekhar on his conception of Opposition unity

Janata strongman Chandra Shekhar is usually reticent about answering questions on Opposition politics. But a few weeks ago, sitting in the Bombay office of Janata treasurer Jayant Malhoutra, he was unusually forthright. Excerpts:

On the Samajwadi Janata Dal: I am not a hypocrite. I am a student of political science and believe in a political process. The Dal was formed without a programme or a national debate on programmes. If this party is to be an alternative to Rajiv Gandhi, then they should first have presented an alternative policy framework.

Through all this, Rajiv Gandhi may be ousted. He is certainly a curse on the nation. But does this mean that all of India's other problems will disappear? Where is their strategy to make India grow stronger? What about the problems of the Punjab? What about the frustration of our youth? What about regional imbalances?

On V.P. Singh as leader of the Opposition: The days of the philosopher king are over. They have been replaced by democracy. The individual should not be the determining factor. Some politicians and journalists are trying to pressurise me since they think they are the kingmakers. But they cannot fight me on those grounds. I have struggled against bigger people, like Indira Gandhi, over the last 20 years, but I have never got personal.

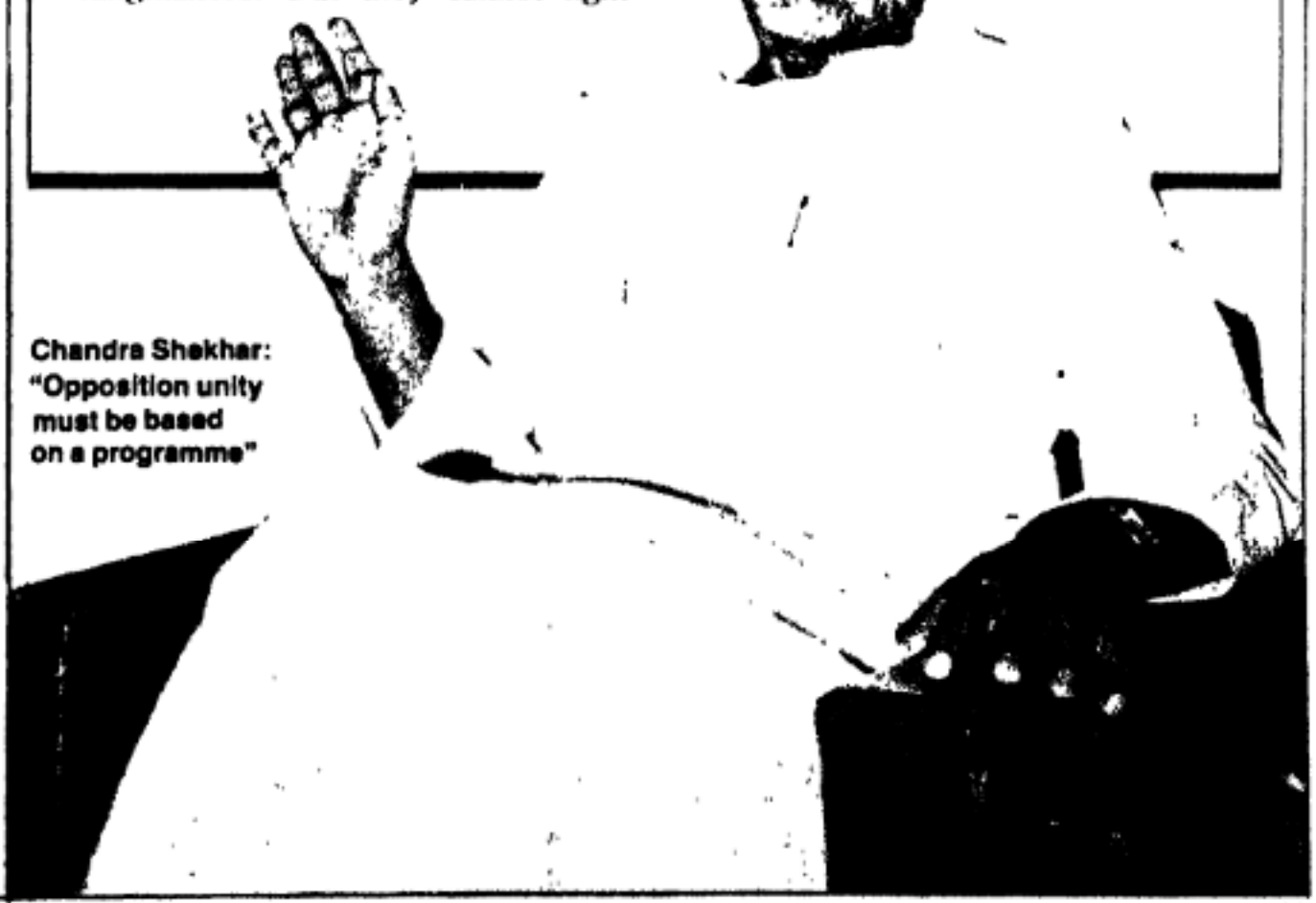
On Opposition unity: I have expressed myself unambiguously against the kind of unity they want to achieve with the Samajwadi Janata Dal. They must understand that political parties are born out of struggle. The Janata Party was not made by a coterie of leaders but through the struggle of the JP movement for which lakhs of people sacrificed.

Suppose something happens to the Dal, we will all lose our identities. Rajiv Gandhi's regime is evil. Yet, most of the leaders now talking of unity have praised Rajiv Gandhi at one time or the other.

Unity just for election victory will ultimately lead to grabbing of power. It is like committing suicide in order to see if there is a better life hereafter.

Interviewed by Olga Tellis/*Bombay*





Chandra Shekhar: "Opposition unity must be based on a programme"

WHO'S WHO —Hegde faction

R.K. Hegde



A Congress(O) stalwart, he became Janata general secretary in 1977 and found social eminence as a cocktail party version of Chandra Shekhar. Surprise choice as Karnataka CM in 1983; proved to be a spectacular success and won national renown. Resigned after the phone tapping scandal.

Menaka Gandhi



It is one of the ironies of Indian politics that the widow of the crown prince of the Emergency should be a leading light of the party founded to fight it. Extremely close to Hegde. Was once close to Jayant Malhoutra and Chandra Shekhar but has now backed this faction.

George Fernandes



Noisy trade-unionist who has seen his working class support diminish and is thought to have peaked too early. Was defeated from Bangalore in the 1984 Lok Sabha poll. Since then has been part of many Opposition conclaves

Biju Patnaik



Along with Hegde, one of the few Janata leaders to maintain a mass following in his home state, Patnaik is the real veteran among the Janata leadership. His career has seen many ups and downs but his popularity remains indisputable.

Madhu Dandavate



Mild-mannered former socialist leader from Maharashtra, he was Janata's railways minister and is widely respected for his honesty and integrity, if not his political acumen. Usually mentioned as a compromise president.

Jaipal Reddy



Voluble parliamentarian whose questions on Bofors and the Bachchans have earned him much personal publicity. He is strongly opposed to the entry of Swamy and Ajit Singh and will fight them at all costs.

ka. When he resigned his post, he was dropped from the Presidium. To become even a member of the Front's National Council, one has to be president or convenor of one of its constituent parties, or at least leader of a recognised Opposition party in a state legislature. Hegde fulfills none of these criteria.

One view is that the Bangalore convention has been called with the intention of splitting the Janata. Once there are two Janata parties, Hegde can appoint himself leader of one of them and accept a key position in the National Front. That way, he remains at the forefront of the Opposition.

Naturally, the Hegde faction rejects this interpretation. Says Ranjit Bhanu, the president of Janata's Bombay unit: "We are dead serious about holding the



The battle was really about the ambitions of two bearded, *kurta*-clad men. Would Janata continue to be Chandra Shekhar's party? Or is Ramakrishna Hegde the leader of the future? Everything else was incidental

30 September meeting. As we said in our letter signed by 42 people, including the presidents of 15 state units—after five months of this so-called merger, the party is stagnating instead of becoming the focus of a larger political unity."

Among the signatories to this letter were Madhu Dandavate, Biju Patnaik, Surendra Mohan, Hukum Dev Narayan Yadav, Reoti Raman Singh and George Fernandes. Their stand was that the party had become an object of ridicule because it had not ratified the decision to merge with the SJP and exhorted members of Janata's National Council to discuss ways and means of recovering. Later, the Hegde group put it about that it regarded the Lok Dal(A) merger and Ajit Singh's appointment as irregular because it was not ratified by the National Council. At the Bangalore convention, it would demerge the 'old Janata' and 'regain its lost glory'.

This claim provokes angry responses from Chandra Shekhar loyalists. "Who is

"The Janata has more leaders than Hegde"

Ajit Singh on how Ramakrishna Hegde is fostering Opposition disunity

The former Lok Dal(A) chief, Ajit Singh's induction as Janata Party president is one of the main causes of the present trouble. Here he defends the Lok Dal-Janata merger.

SUNDAY: Do you think the present crisis in the Janata Party will culminate in a split?

Ajit Singh: Well, the way Ramakrishna Hegde and his friends have been going about is not helping the unity of the Opposition parties. I don't understand how they can achieve Opposition unity by undoing the merger of the Lok Dal(A) and the old Janata Party and by creating a new party. It's just beyond me. In fact, if you look at the recent statements of Hegde, where he has said that Ajit Singh has no right to sit in the chair (of party president) and that he (Ajit Singh) should be punished, make it clear that the idea behind the Bangalore convention is not to hurry up Opposition unity. It is something else.

Hegde has also charged that I brought down the Janata government in Karnataka. For his information, I would like to tell him that Karnataka still has a Janata government under Bommai's leadership. Yes, Hegde is not there but he had to quit because the Janata Party stands for certain principles and it fought against the invasion of privacy under the Postal Interception Bill. So, he had to go for those reasons. It is very wrong to say that Karnataka does not have a Janata government simply because Hegde is not there.

Is it true that more Janata leaders are with Hegde in this feud than with you?

A lot of misinformation has been spread. The names they gave to the newspapers as signatories to the letter calling for the convention, include a number of those who did not give their consent. Three leaders of the Rajasthan unit whose names had figured in that list have given a statement saying that they are not against the Lok Dal(A)-Janata Party merger at all. Their aim is to achieve more unity. And they were told on phone by the organisers that it was a unity convention. I also talked to Babul Reddy who said, convention or no convention, he would stand by me.

If you remember, when the Lok Dal(A)-Janata merger took place, at that time also there were telegrams supposedly signed by 30 people. But nothing happened. The call for the Bangalore convention was signed by only three people- not even Hegde, Biju Patnaik or Dandavate signed it. And in any case, Janata has got a lot more leaders.

In case the Bangalore convention is held, do you think it would put a seal on the split?

Some people may go and form a new party but I am sure that after the parliamentary board meeting and the national executive meeting, a lot of people would hesitate to leave the party.

Interviewed by Kuldeep Kumar/ *New Delhi*



Ajit Singh

Hegde to talk of the glory of the Janata Party?" demands former treasurer Kamal Morarka. "Isn't he the same person who accepted two insignificant posts—one for himself and the other for Ajit Singh—in the SJD when the Janata Party was always going to be the biggest constituent of this new party?"

And the opposition to the merger also angers Chandra Shekhar's followers. "It is a great pity," says Subramaniam Swamy, "that the people who have called this convention are seeking to undo the merger of Janata and the Lok Dal(A) which is the only merger of established Opposition parties that has taken place since 1977—instead of trying to build on it. If they are successful, it will only strengthen Rajiv Gandhi's propaganda machinery which will claim at the next election that Opposition parties always break up."

Swamy's reasoning has many takers within the Janata. Over the last month, hectic parleys have been conducted to bring Hegde and Chandra Shekhar together. Madhu Dandavate has met both Shekhar and Ajit Singh to work out a compromise. And on 14 September, treasurer Jayant Malhoutra



Chandra Shekhar's position is secure. The focus of Hegde's attacks are Ajit Singh and Swamy. Should the battle swing in Hegde's favour, all Chandra Shekhar has to do is sacrifice Swamy and Singh and perhaps become president himself

WHO'S WHO—Chandra Shekhar faction

Chandra Shekhar



The wiliest Janata leader. President of the party when it was first formed in 1977, he resigned after the merger with the Lok Dal(A) in favour of Ajit Singh. R.K. Hegde is entirely his creation. He made him chief minister of Karnataka but today they are rivals.

Ajit Singh



American-educated son of the late Charan Singh. Regarded as honest and straight-forward, he is currently a Chandra Shekhar loyalist, though recently he made up with Devi Lal and was party to the abortive formation of the SJD which Chandra Shekhar opposed.

Kamal Morarka



Affable, youthful Marwari industrialist with political ambitions, he has been Chandra Shekhar's buddy for years. He recently stepped down as Janata treasurer. His press interests include New Delhi's *Chauthi Duniya* whose editor Santosh Bharatiya advises V.P. Singh.

Jayant Malhoutra



Once Hegde's closest friend, this prosperous Bombay industrialist switched sides last year and crossed over to Chandra Shekhar's faction. Still on cordial terms with Hegde and Menaka Gandhi, though politically opposed to them. Now treasurer of the Janata Party.

H.D. Deve Gowda



Chandra Shekhar's secret weapon. As a key member of Hegde's Cabinet, he turned on the pressure when the Karnataka chief minister began to flout Chandra Shekhar's authority. His resignation and continued dissidence made Hegde's position untenable and contributed to his fall.

Subramaniam Swamy



Former full professor of economics, a former Jan Sangh MP, he joined Janata in 1977 and remained there till Chandra Shekhar threw him out in 1984. He then joined the Lok Dal and re-entered Janata after the merger. Intelligent, articulate but single-minded

and his wife Barota had dinner with Hegde and his wife at the Bangalore home of a coffee planter who is a mutual friend. Malhoutra asked Hegde to call off the convention but the latter refused to do so unless Ajit Singh and Swamy were driven out of their party posts.

But Malhoutra came away from the meeting feeling that the party could be saved and two days later, answering questions in Bombay, Hegde declared that while he would go ahead with the convention, it would not, necessarily, lead to a split in the party. Agrees Malhoutra: "The fact that the principal

Hegde (right) confronts Chandra Shekhar: the protégé who turned ambitious



players are prepared to talk indicates that they don't really want to break up Janata." He is clear, however, that Hegde has no right to complain about Ajit Singh's appointment. "We had always made it clear that Ajit would be president till party elections were held. Hegde was a party to this decision. I discussed it with him myself. In fact, we had offered him the presidentship but he did not accept because he did not want to give up his position as chief minister."

Even while the peace talks are on, both sides are assessing their strengths. Says Swamy: "I don't see any chance of a *significant* split because the overwhelming number of party workers want unity." The key word is obviously 'significant'. The Chandra Shekhar faction believes that those who will go with Hegde will be those like Fernandes and Dandavate who have high media profiles but no support base. It claims that in Bihar, it has the support of both Janata MPs and most MLAs. In UP, it has the 50-odd Lok Dal(A) MLAs and another 10 Janata MLAs. In Gujarat, it has the support of both Indubhai and Chimanbhai Patel. Even in Hegde's native Karnataka, say Chandra Shekhar's followers, he is unlikely to carry the party with him.

Assesses Malhoutra: "No one in Karnataka is interested in rocking the boat and Hegde and Bommai are not on the same wavelength on this issue. I am sure that Hegde will not get the support of the party in the states that count: UP, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. He may get some support in Andaman and Nicobar or West Bengal or Assam but it won't have much meaning!"

Hegde's supporters reject this gloomy prognosis and are confident of carrying at least 50 Karnataka MLAs. They claim to have 13 UP MLAs, the entire organisational base of Chandra Shekhar's carefully nurtured Bihar unit, the full Maharashtra unit and nearly everyone who counts in Gujarat. After veteran socialist leader, S.M. Joshi, endorsed the Bangalore convention, the Hegde faction was confident of winning the support of all the former socialists in the party.



Where it will all lead is difficult to say. After the Karnataka Assembly reconvenes on 3 October, Hegde's position is bound to be weakened as Deve Gowda's supporters move privilege motions against him for tapping the telephones of his senior ministers. If he holds his convention on schedule and splits the party, this could be less embarrassing.

Also crucial is the attitude of V.P. Singh. Jaipal Reddy is confident that once the Hegde faction is firmly in control, then Janata will become the focus of all Opposition unity efforts and that V.P. Singh and Devi Lal will be drawn to it. On the other hand, Chandra Shekhar's supporters are convinced that the Raja will always perceive Hegde as a threat and will steer clear of any grouping with him as the head.

Meanwhile, a new possibility has emerged in recent weeks. While everybody knows that the real battle is between Hegde and Chandra Shekhar, the latter has shrewdly used Ajit Singh as his front man. Consequently all of the Hegde faction's attacks have been directed at Singh and Swamy and not at

ATTENTION MARRIED COUPLES!
UNHAPPY? LACK OF URGE & STAMINA? DIFFERENCE BREWING UP?
The only stimulant for male & female
TRY
CUTE (Syrup & Tablets)
AN AYURVEDIC RESEARCH PRODUCT
It contains essential nutrients and vitamins to boost up
MARRIED LIFE
* URGE * VITALITY * STAMINA
No Side-effects
A MUST FOR EVERY MARRIED COUPLE
Postal or Door Service available.
For free medical advice write to our ethical department.
FROM THE HOUSE OF :
HERBID (INDIA) PVT. LTD.
1/1, Kimber Street, Calcutta-700 017
Phones: 43-1461, 44-8904
Available at all leading retailers.


HI/E-2A/88
Financially sound Distributors/Stockists/ C & F Agents required all over the country

Bad days in Bangalore

If Janata splits, then the Karnataka ministry may fall



Mushtaq Ahmed

(L to r) Deve Gowda, R.K. Hegde and Ajit Singh: their differences could topple the Karnataka government

The impact of the Janata feud on the national political scene will not be clear till the next general election. But in Karnataka, its effects will be perceptible at once.

Should Hegde split the Janata Party, then it is possible that the Karnataka ministry will fall. Says an Hegde aide: "We will take 50 MLAs with us and there is no way the government can survive for long." But, counters a Deve Gowda supporter: "Chief minister Bommai will join hands with us to oppose Hegde. Only 15-20 MLAs are likely to go." Bommai himself is keeping mum, a position that clearly has Hegde's approval. "Why should he take sides?" asks Hegde. "He is a chief minister." But he must know that if he is to remain in office, he cannot support Hegde and needs to join hands with Deve Gowda who got 58 votes (out of 144) during last month's election of a new chief minister.

The uncertainty has led several Karnataka Janata heavyweights to accuse Hegde of sacrificing the government on the altar of his ambition. On 15 September, Bommai and Deve Gowda met Hegde. "If you have any differences with Chandra Shekhar, please settle them in New Delhi," Deve Gowda told Hegde. "Why do you want this government to be harmed? In 15 months, we have to call elections. How can we face the people?" Local politicians fear that Hegde will use the collapse of the ministry to substantiate his oft-repeated contention that he only held on as Karnataka chief minister for over five years because any other leader would have been incapable of keeping the party together.

Hegde is coolly unconcerned about the charge that he is destabilising the government. 'How can that be so?" he asks. "The convention is of the Janata Party, for the Janata Party and being held by Janata Party workers. How can it destabilise a Janata government?"

The Hegde line is that whatever dissension there is consists of a Janata vs Lok Dal battle. But that, he argues, can hardly affect Karnataka? "I don't think the Karnataka government consists of people belonging to the Lok Dal," he laughs. "If it did, then there could be substance in this propaganda."

It is a smooth routine but it fools no one. Finally, when it comes to the crunch, R.K. Hegde is clearly willing to lay everything on the line. And that includes the future of the Karnataka government.

Prakash Belawadi/*Bangalore*

Chandra Shekhar. Should the battle show signs of going Hegde's way, all Chandra Shekhar has to do is sacrifice Singh. And now that Singh is perceived as having behaved in an untrustworthy manner by briefly flirting with Devi Lal, Shekhar has far less residual loyalty towards him. Already, Shekhar loyalists are subtly critical of Ajit Singh. Says Kamal Morarka: "I agree that Ajit Singh's style of functioning needs a change, but this is no reason to split the party." And Ramanand Singh, president of Janata's Madhya Pradesh unit, while calling on Hegde to postpone the Bangalore convention, has also demanded that Swamy apologise for his intemperate statements.

Finally, this could be a perfect compromise solution. Forced with the clamour against Ajit Singh, Chandra Shekhar could agree to remove him. Having made this concession, he would be within his rights to refuse to support Hegde for the job and demand a similar sacrifice from the other faction. Then, faced with a real chance to make up, the Janata Party would turn to the one man who has presided over its fortunes for a decade. Who else but...Chandra Shekhar?



The real tragedy is that while Chandra Shekhar and Hegde play chess like two canny grandmasters, the Janata is in danger of conceding the whole game to Rajiv Gandhi: by a walkover, as it were

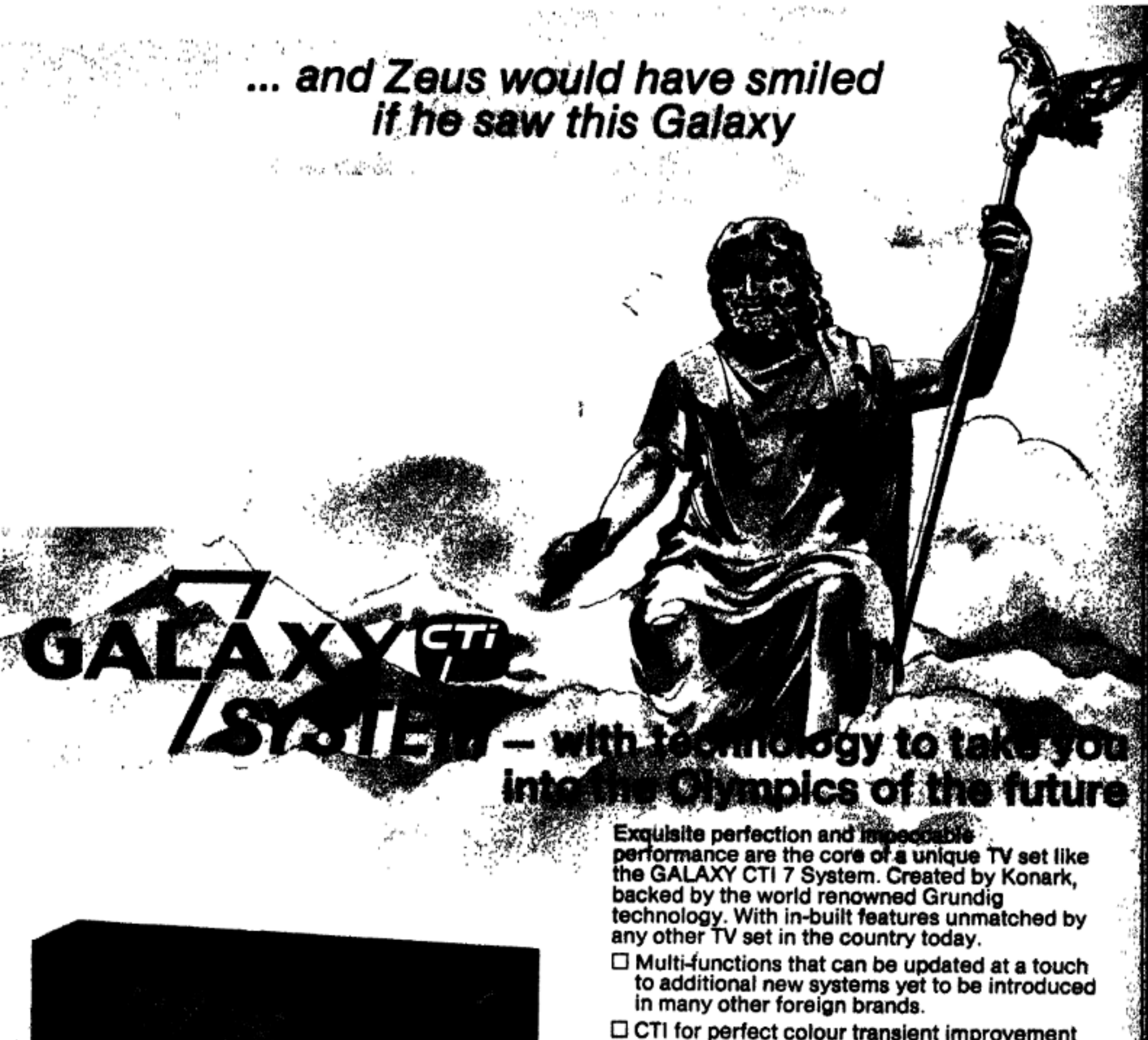
As of last week, however, Chandra Shekhar was dismissing this proposition but his fall-back position had clearly emerged. Either way, it seemed probable that he would win in the long run, whether Hegde split the party or not.

Of course, none of this intriguing did the Opposition's cause any good. With all the polls showing that Rajiv Gandhi's popularity was severely dented and that a united Opposition could well drive him from office, only one thing was going in his favour: would any Opposition alignment hold together?

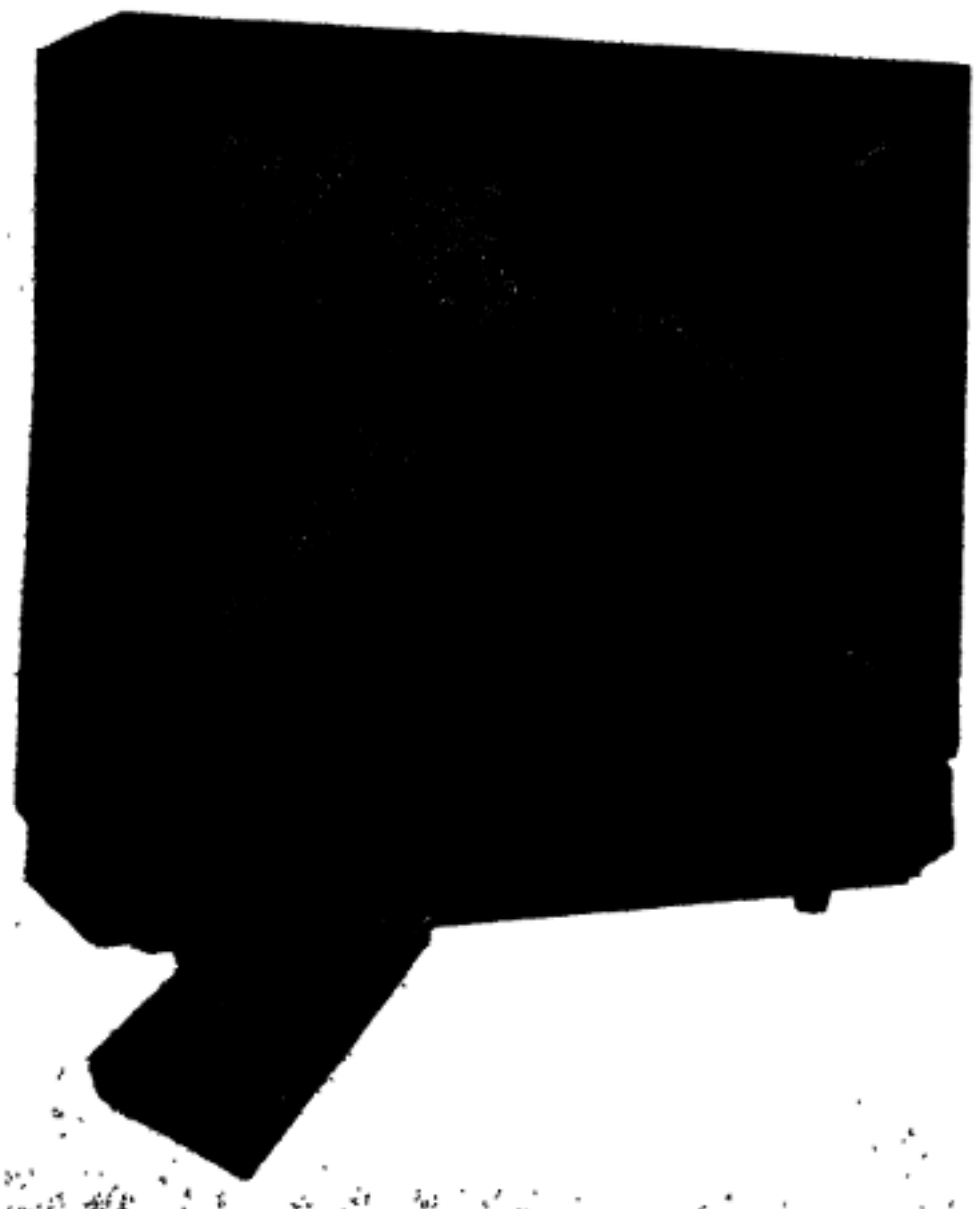
Judging by Janata's shenanigans, probably not. And so, while Hegde and Chandra Shekhar played chess with Janata unity, they seemed on the verge of conceding a walkover to Rajiv Gandhi. All things considered, that was the real tragedy.

Kuldeep Kumar/*New Delhi* with Olga Tellis/*Bombay* and Prakash Belawadi/*Bangalore*

... and Zeus would have smiled if he saw this Galaxy



GALAXY CTi 7 System — with technology to take you into the Olympics of the future



Exquisite perfection and impeccable performance are the core of a unique TV set like the GALAXY CTI 7 System. Created by Konark, backed by the world renowned Grundig technology. With in-built features unmatched by any other TV set in the country today.

- ☐ Multi-functions that can be updated at a touch to additional new systems yet to be introduced in many other foreign brands.
- ☐ CTI for perfect colour transient improvement and colour contour sharpness.
- ☐ 39 + AV with Auto-channel search and programmable memory. Just set it once and the TV does it all.
- ☐ 99 Channels to receive the widest range of frequencies from 1 MHZ to 800 MHZ. Truly professional in all respects.
- ☐ Automatic cut-off for longer life and low power consumption at 60 watts with in-built standby controls to guard against voltage fluctuations
- ☐ Tint control for soothing viewing pleasure

All these and more make the Galaxy unique in all respects. It's tomorrow's TV today, because it can never be outdated. From now till the Olympics of 2000 A.D.

[redacted]

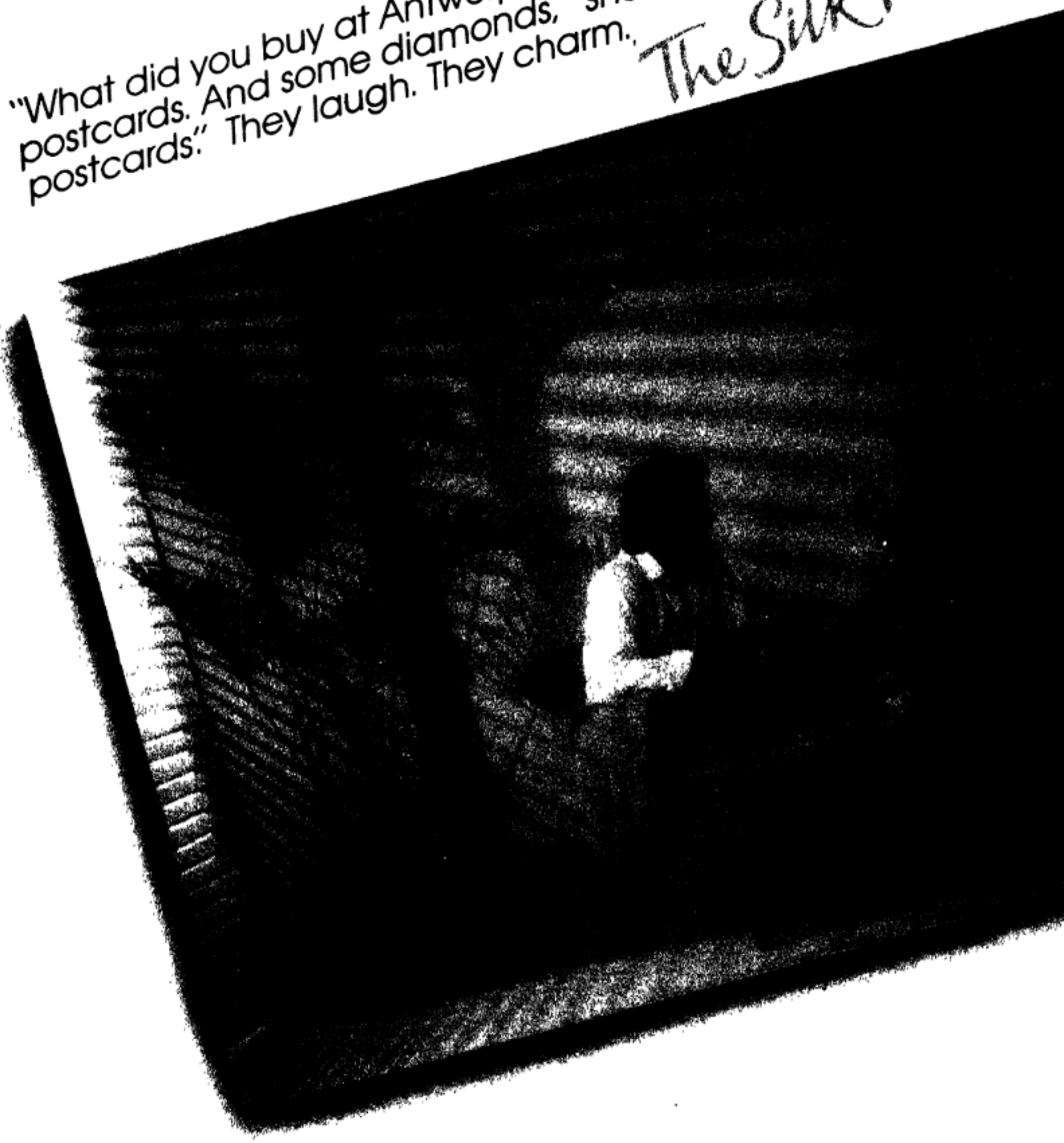
A very personal experience

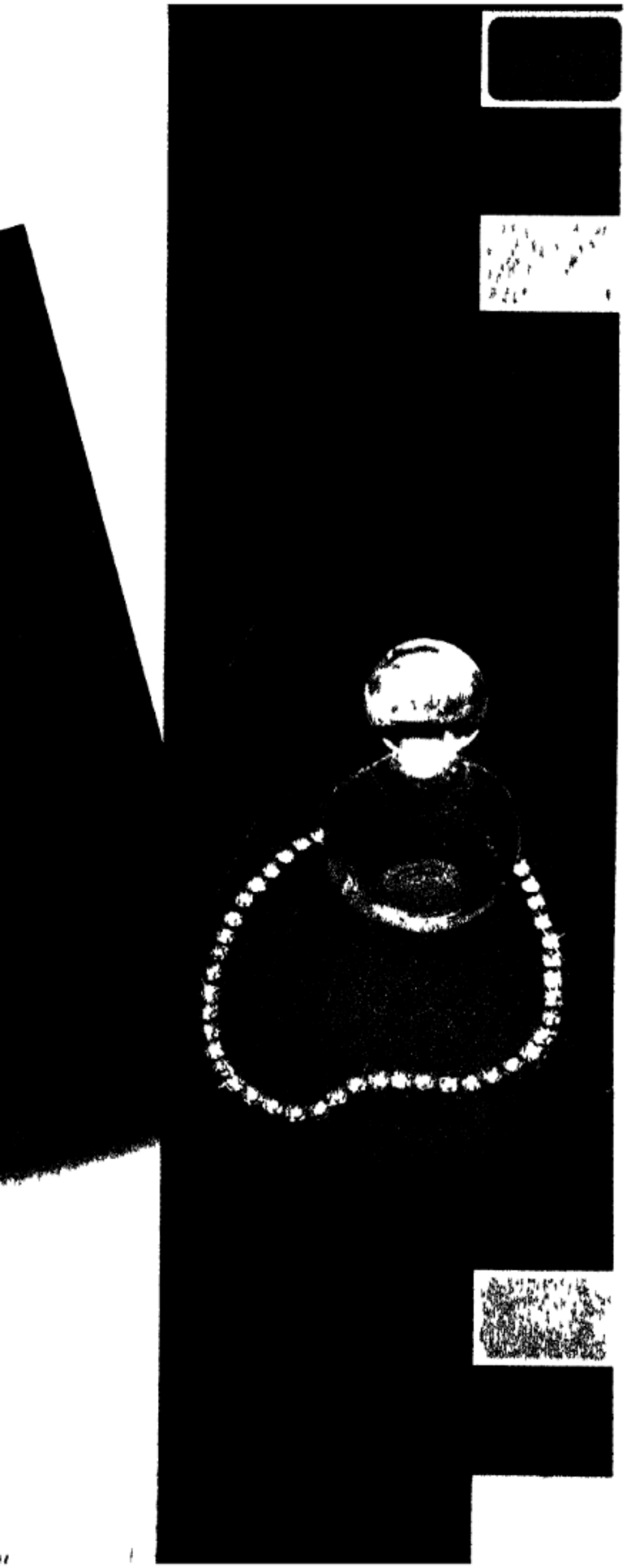
CC/KTV-10/88

[redacted] Television Limited (A Government of Orissa Enterprise) Electronics Bhawan, Bhubaneswar [redacted]

"What did you buy at Antwerp?" he asked. "Picture postcards. And some diamonds," she said. "Here's to the postcards." They laugh. They charm.

The Silk People





Elegant Exclusive Enchanting
The Silk People

And the wall finish to
complement their style

Luxol Silk

The softest sheen In shades
of sophistication With a feel
richer than ever before

Luxol Silk

For walls that are Silk to the
touch

Drape your walls with Luxol Silk
— the richest emulsion in the world.

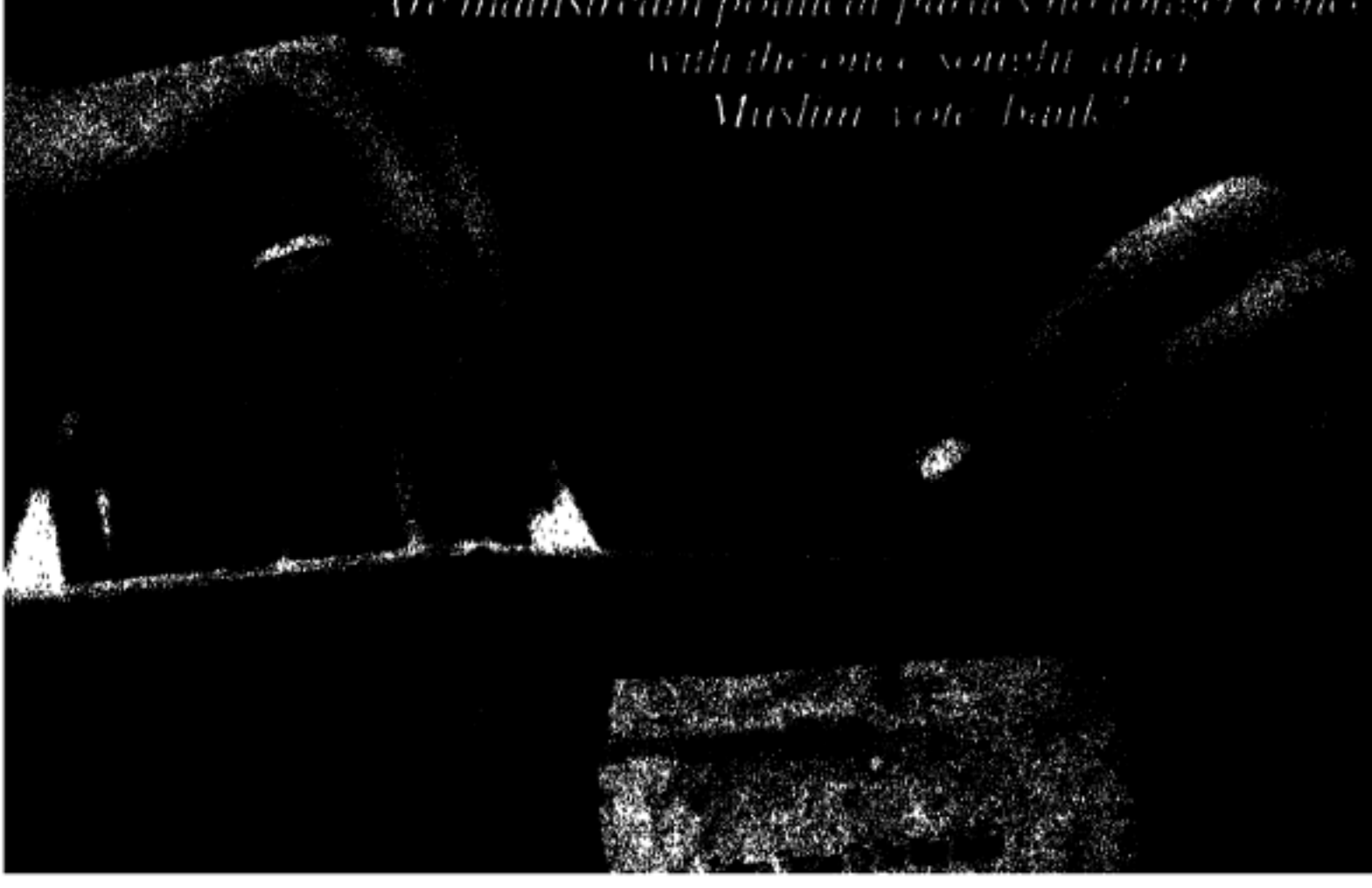


Luxol Silk

from **BERGER PAINTS**

The search for the Muslim vote

Are mainstream political parties no longer concerned with the once sought after Muslim vote bank?



Has the Muslim vote—considered a formidable factor in any election in the Hindi belt—dwindled in strength and influence? Or has an opportunistic political leadership drawing a short-sighted lesson from the 1984 general election (when Mrs Gandhi's assassination consolidated a divided Hindu vote) decided to go to the polls without Muslim support? The answers are unclear now that the Congress(I) and the non-left Opposition parties are refusing to take a stand on what they consider to be essentially "Muslim issues".

The political attitude towards the Muslim vote bank has undergone a sea-change since 1984, when Indira Gandhi's assassination brought the Congress back to power with 401 seats in the Lok Sabha. Till 1980, the Muslims' "traditional" support for the Congress was considered a major asset and every election centred around the effort to assure Muslims that they were very important in the political scheme of things and that their lives and property would be protected as never before. The Opposition tried equally hard to make out that the Congress' promises were insincere but did not meet with much success except in 1977, when this vote, upset at indiscriminate implementation of family-planning measures, went its way.

The Muslims are a decisive factor in at least 30 (out of 85) Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh although, as one Congress(I) leader observes, they influence the outcome in all the parliamentary constituencies in the state except Tehri Garhwal, Pauri Garhwal and Almora, where the Muslim presence is negligible. In Bihar, at least 15 of the 54 seats depend crucially on the Muslim vote and, according to former chief minister Abdul Ghafoor, is a "determining" factor in at least 400 Lok Sabha seats.

The Muslim vote is all the more crucial since the community has always tended to vote *en bloc*. It has also always, until perhaps recently, been a traditional vote bank of the Congress. Explaining this, CPI(M) stalwart B.T. Ranadive says that at the time of Independence, Jawaharlal Nehru's own commitment to secularism and the realisation that the ruling party alone could look after their interests influenced the Muslims, who stayed back in India to cast their lot with the Congress. Fear, according to Ranadive, was the prime motive which influenced the Muslims to support the ruling party. This is one of the reasons why, ever since Independence, the Muslims have by and large always voted for a national alternative and not sided with the many fundamentalist organisations which are active in some Muslim-dominated constituencies.

At the time of Independence, fundamentalist organisations were at work, some proving too strong for even Nehru to contain. This, despite Nehru having gone out of his way to assure the Muslims that the Congress would always keep their interests in mind. The Govind Ballabh Pant government in Uttar Pradesh, at about the same time, issued a government order stating that no Muslims would be taken into government services until their representation came down to 14 per cent. At the time, the percentage of Muslims in these services, including the state police, was considerably higher. Lest this measure mean fewer votes for the Congress, Pant, during what was perhaps the first byelection in Lucknow, virtually warned the Muslims that they should vote for the Congress or face the consequences. With Nehru and other Congress leaders committed to secularism, the Muslims were not daunted by these threats and continued to firmly support the Congress, anyway.



Army patrol in riot-hit Meerut: inspired by the state machinery?



Over the years, the Muslims, say the secularists, have realised that the Congress no longer represents security. The communal riots in which the state machinery (the PAC in UP, for instance) has worked against them have distanced the Muslims from the ruling party.

This continued until 1971 when, for the first time, the Muslim vote was not solidly behind the Congress but was split between various parties. One of the reasons for this was the Bangladesh war; the second being the Congress' assertion that it could do without the Muslim vote. But, even in many of the constituencies affected by repeated communal riots, the Muslims continued supporting the Congress, preferring to believe the lip-service paid to their demands rather than switch allegiance.

In the Seventies, both UP and Bihar had chief ministers who adopted a de-

cidedly pro-Muslim bias. In Bihar, Jagannath Mishra went out of his way to win over the Muslims and created considerable resentment amongst the majority community by deeming Urdu the second language of the state. He had got the green signal from the Centre, which, keen to win over this crucial vote bank, supported his strategy of convincing the Muslims that the Congress still stood by their interests. But, in introducing Urdu as the second language, Mishra restricted the order to just 15 districts of the state. Successive governments have neither had the courage to withdraw the order altogether nor extend it to cover the entire state.

Mishra also joined hands with the state's Muslim clergy and, as his colleague Abdul Ghafoor recalls, "He would go and address Muslim meetings along with the *mullahs*, sharing the same platform." It was a strategy that paid dividends and earned him a constituency which has stood him in good stead till now. Backwards, Harijans and Muslims were Mishra's target groups, accounting for 80 per cent of Bihar's population today.

H.N. Bahuguna, as the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, went several steps further. He refused to allow any *puja* during state functions and recalls flinging aside the paraphernalia laid out for a ceremony to inaugurate a telephone exchange. From Pant's time, it had been the practice not to appoint a Muslim



Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi: contentious issue





Jagdish Yadav

Syed Ahmed Bohari, who is next in line to the present Imam of the Jama Masjid, believes that the Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi issue will only further distance the Muslims from the Congress(I). Muslim resentment, he feels, will be translated into anti-Congress votes

commissioner in the Rohilkhand division of UP, which had a 40 per cent Muslim population. Amongst the first things Bahuguna did after taking over was to appoint a Muslim commissioner in this region. He also appointed a Muslim as the chief secretary and, as he himself says, "This was the first and the last time that a Muslim occupied this post."

Bahuguna saw to it that of the 4,000 policemen recruited during his chief ministership, 1,000 were Muslims. (Incidentally, of the 4,000, half were from the scheduled caste.) He also intervened to settle an old dispute concerning a mosque in Bahraich. The mosque had been closed for prayers since 1954 and when two decades later the matter was referred to Bahuguna, he saw to it that the mosque was reopened. But he admits today, "I did it (only) after my election." He went around the district and held eight meetings to convince non-Muslims that this was in no way an attack on them. He says that he succeeded only because he did what he did "with a clear mind".





The Centre intervened in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi dispute in Uttar Pradesh to direct the state government to abide by a lower court order and declare the disputed place open as the Ram Janambhoomi temple. Much blood has been shed since then but the problem still evades a solution

A section of the political leadership, including the Muslim, charged Bahuguna with trying to fool the Muslim masses. He defended himself by holding public meetings and asking the Muslims if they agreed with the charges levelled against him. There is no doubt that, by and large, Bahuguna was perceived by the Muslims of UP as being sympathetic and won the loyalty of this section of the electorate. The government at the Centre, which had earlier allowed him to go ahead with the policy of appeasing the minorities, was perturbed when it saw that the Muslims were drawn more to Bahuguna than to the Congress party. He was asked to stop wooing the Muslims in this manner by the party high command. When he did not agree, he was unceremoniously dropped. The message was clear: he had overshot his brief and it was time for him to go.

This was the last real effort, in concrete terms, to influence the Muslim vote. From the Emergency onwards, the Congress has not taken a single radical step towards meeting any of their demands. After coming back to power in 1980, Indira Gandhi formulated a 15-point programme, which has not yet been implemented. In fact, the Minorities Commission, set up by the Janata government (a body without teeth), has written to the Prime Minister pointing out that the 15-point programme is not being followed by any of the state governments. The former chairman of the Commission, Justice M. Beg, was so disillusioned with the manner in which the Commission was treated that he wrote to the government suggesting that it be wound up altogether. The Commission has submitted nine reports on various issues concerning minorities to different governments. Of them, none have been discussed and only four placed before Parliament.

Under Rajiv Gandhi the relationship between the Muslims and the Congress(I) has worsened. To appease Muslim fundamentalists and also in a misguided effort to capture the Muslim vote, the Centre passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill amidst a storm of protest from secular circles all over the country. The Bill sought to repeal a progressive judgement given by the Supreme Court that a Muslim woman was entitled to maintenance rights under Koranic law. Rajiv Gandhi's government stepped into the controversy and, aided and abetted by known Muslim fundamentalists, formulated the controversial Bill which has since become an Act.

This set off a Hindu reaction and to appease the fundamentalists among them, the Centre intervened again in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi dispute in Uttar Pradesh. It directed the state government to abide by a lower court order and declared the disputed place open as the Ram Janambhoomi temple. Much blood has been shed since then and the Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi controversy still evades a solution.

Most political leaders in the Opposition insist that the Congress(I) is using this as an electoral issue and will take a decision on the eve of the general elections, depending on which vote bank it wants to please. Those within the Congress(I) counter that the government is caught in a quandary and cannot find a way out. But there is no doubt that

H.N. Bahuguna (left) and Jagannath Mishra : two former pro-Muslim chief ministers







Protesting against the Muslim Women's Bill. unpopular decision

any solution to this will have a pronounced effect on the Muslim vote one way or the other. As Bihar PCC(I) president Tariq Anwar says: "If the Ram Janambhoomi issue is solved, the Congress(I) will derive a great deal of benefit from it. It can consolidate the Muslim vote as no other issue can."

In the quest for a solution, Union home minister Buta Singh initiated talks with fundamentalists from both communities. The first meeting was with Muslim MPs from the ruling party who suggested that the matter be referred to the courts or that all political parties be invited to suggest a solution. The latter suggestion, Tariq Anwar explains, was to ensure that the Opposition parties took a stand on the matter.

There is no doubt that the non-left parties prefer to be kept out of this major controversy altogether. As Ranadive says, "Not one of them (political leaders from the Congress or the Opposition) will say that Muslims are being treated as second-class citizens and not one of them has taken a forthright position on the Babri Masjid issue." Avers Janata Party president Ajit Singh, "The Muslims have begun to realise that the Congress is playing the politics of appeasement. And why should we intervene in the matter? We will not help the Congress(I) in resolving this problem. Let them resolve it themselves."

This is the stand taken by most of the centrist and right-wing Opposition parties. Even the Jan Morcha has refused to take a categorical stance on this. Its members say, "Why should we alienate either community at this point of time? Let them reach a solution and we will make our views clear at the time of the elections."

Urdu, communal riots, the deployment of the PAC (Provincial Armed Constabulary), Babri Masjid—these are all issues on which no politician from the centre-right is willing to stick his neck out. Except for the leftists, whose secularism is beyond doubt, the others all have an eye on the non-Muslim vote bank. As CPI(M) MP Saifuddin Chowdhury observes, "After Independence, supporting the Muslim cause was not considered communal, but today anyone who does so risks this charge." He is highly critical of the Centre's efforts to reach a solution on the Babri Masjid problem by talking to fundamentalist leaders of both communities. By doing so, "You are giving them credence," he says. Chowdhury, like most secularists, is of the view that the disputed site should be taken over as an archaeological monument by the state.



Jaidev Yadav

Shahabuddin: playing on communal sentiment



Under Rajiv Gandhi the relationship between the Muslims and the Congress(I) has worsened. To appease Muslim fundamentalists and also in a misguided effort to capture the Muslim vote, the Centre passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill, amidst a storm of protest from secular forces all over the country

Syed Ahmed Bohari, who is next in line to the present Imam of the Jama Masjid, is categorical that Chowdhury's suggestion is not acceptable to the Muslims. He also believes that the vote will be determined by this highly emotive issue. He is of the view that the issue will only further distance the Muslims from the Congress(I) and that there is little that the Rajiv Gandhi government can do now to find a solution mutually acceptable to both communities. Muslim resentment over this issue Bohari feels will be translated into anti-

NOW

Horlicks WITH EXTRA CALCIUM





"That means extra health for everyone."

Horlicks is now enriched with extra Calcium—vital for strong teeth and healthy bones in growing children, and for the good health of the entire family. It also helps provide the additional Calcium essential for expectant and breast-feeding mothers.

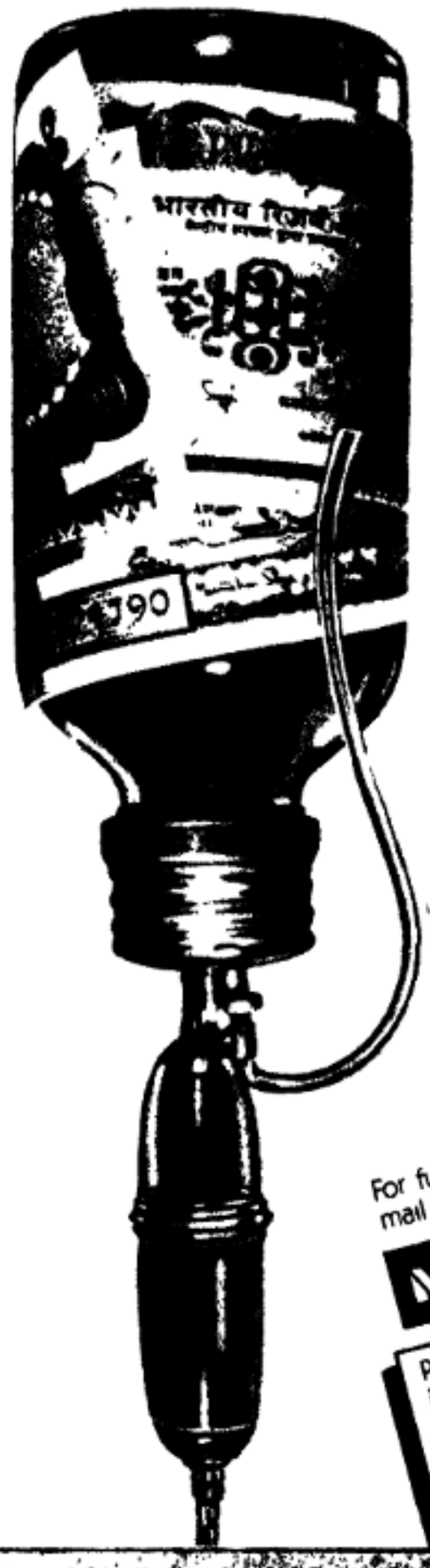
Horlicks is full of natural nutrients—protein, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates—that provide energy and vitality. And now, extra Calcium means extra health.

The Great Nourisher



HTA 6038

TO SAVE YOUR LIFE, YOU MIGHT NEED YOUR LIFE'S SAVINGS.



Major illnesses can be pretty expensive indeed. Reason why, United India has tailor-made Mediclaim slabs to help you when you need help most.

With its total hospitalisation and domiciliary hospitalisation scheme, UI Mediclaim helps you cope with the heavy expenses of major illnesses—a probability in everyone's life.

For a premium that amounts to less than 60p a day, Mediclaim reimburses your hospitalisation and domiciliary hospitalisation expenses upto Rs. 13,600/-per year (minimum slab) and you can avail of the best in medicare

Inexpensive and tax-deductable

The most attractive feature of UI Mediclaim is that premiums upto Rs. 3000/- enjoy a deduction on your taxable income

Family Discount

UI Mediclaim also offers a special family discount of 10% if you cover yourself, spouse, two children [illegible] Mediclaim Cover

Premium per day	Premium per annum	Hospitalisation	Domiciliary Hospitalisation
Rs 0.54	Rs 200	Rs 10,500	Rs 3,100
Rs 0 68	Rs 250	Rs 17,600	
Rs 0 95	Rs 350	Rs.25,500	
Rs.1 64	Rs 600*	Rs 37,750	Rs 5,250
Rs.2 30	Rs 840*	Rs.52,750	Rs 7,400
Rs.3 56	Rs.1,300*	Rs.82,500	Rs.11,500

* Personal Accident cover available on payment of additional premium

For further information, fill in the coupon and mail today.

MEDICLAIM

Please send me the Mediclaim folder with information on United India's Mediclaim

Name _____

Address _____

UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.

(A Subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India)

24, Whites Road, Madras - 600 014.

We cover you all the way through

Internish/UI/80

Congress(I) votes. He is, however, not very sure whether the vote will go to the mainstream Opposition and says that the chances are that it will be divided. This observation appears to be motivated by his own desire to create a following among the Muslims, independent of the ruling party and the Opposition.

Muslim leaders woo the community by appealing to emotional sentiment. The Janata Party's Syed Shahabuddin, for instance, sought to touch an emotional chord with the demand that all mosques under the Archaeological Survey of India be opened for prayer. He decided to begin with the Safdarjung Mosque in the heart of south Delhi and arranged for Muslims to be brought all the way from Old Delhi in buses to demonstrate in front of the monument. Obviously, he hoped the demand would translate into votes but, fortunately, his scheme found little support and was abandoned before assuming dangerous proportions.

All non-secular political forces have been bent on capitalising on the Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi issue. The Babri Masjid Action Committee, for example, decided to organise an Ayodhya march and all fundamentalists are working overtime to ensure that this issue is converted into votes. The Congress and the mainstream Opposition are, of course, no strangers to this game.

Most political leaders feel that the government will be able to use the Babri Masjid issue to cash in on either the Muslim or the Hindu vote. However, Saifuddin Chowdhury says, "No card can save Rajiv Gandi now." He points out that the electorate has always refused to be swayed by such considerations. Citing the example of the Allahabad byelection, he points out that by bringing in Arun Govil (the actor who had played Ram in the serial *Ramayan*) to campaign, the Congress(I) had expected to sweep to victory. Instead, their candidate was badly defeated, proving that such considerations do not matter to the people.

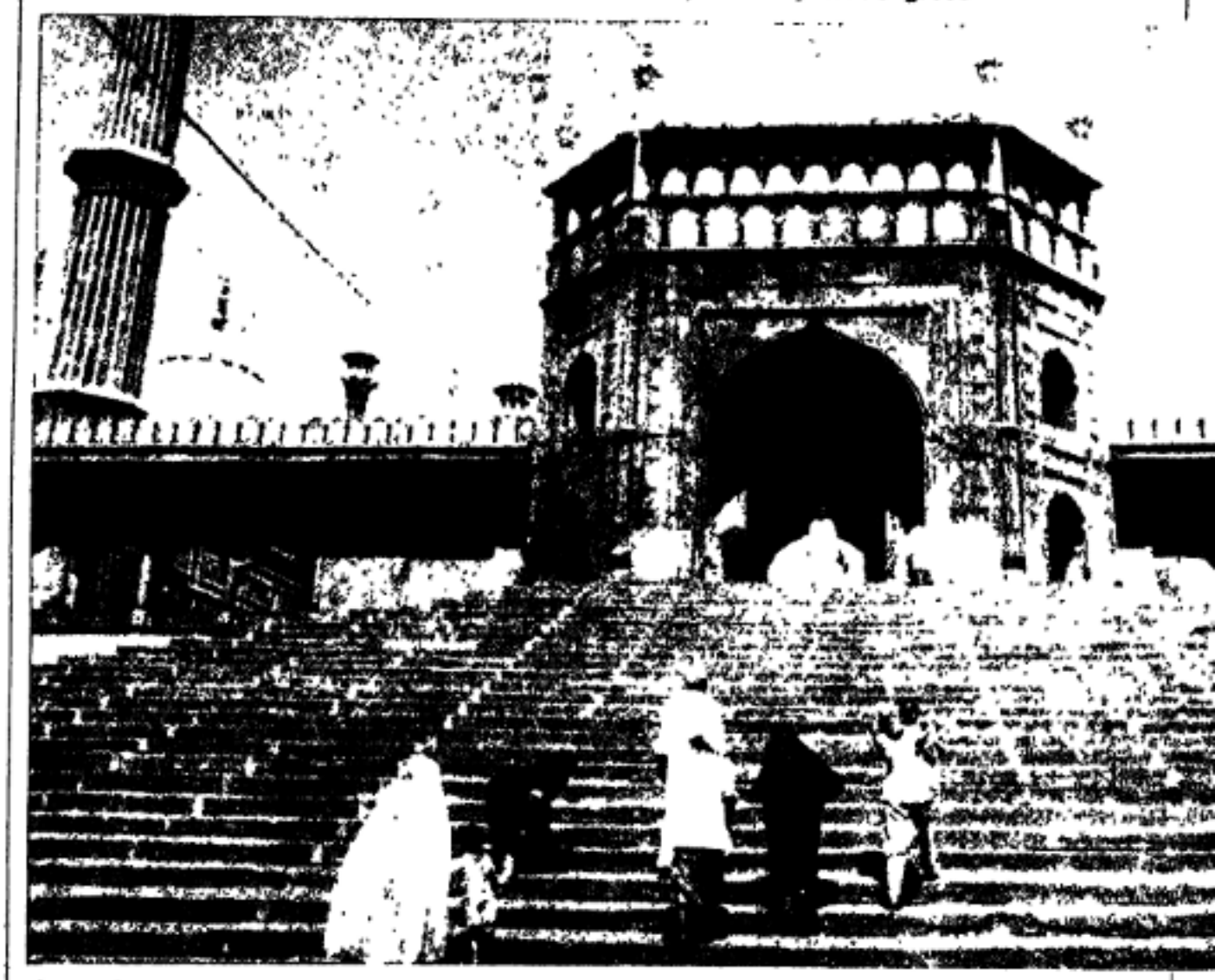
Over the years, the Muslims, according to secularists, have realised that the Congress no longer represents security. The communal riots in which the state machinery (such as the PAC in UP) has worked against them have distanced the Muslims from the ruling party. The search is on for an alternative and, as one Muslim leader says, "Now it will all depend on which political party comes out with the right kind of assertions where the Muslims are concerned." According to him, not a single party has so far won favour with the Muslims. His sentiments are echoed by Ahmed Bohari, who points out that in the 71-point programme of the new Opposition alliance, Muslim demands have received scant attention.



The Muslim vote is crucial since the community has always tended to vote *en bloc*. It has always, until perhaps recently, been a traditional vote bank of the Congress. According to CPI(M) leader B.T. Ranadive, fear was the prime motive which influenced the Muslims to support the ruling party



CPI(M) leader B.T. Ranadive: 'Muslims are manipulated by the Congress'



Jama Masjid: seat of Muslim power

However, there is little likelihood of the Muslim vote being captured by any communal organisation as the community's preoccupation with security will not allow it to vote *en bloc* for a marginal political party. The vote will either go to a national alternative or be fragmented amongst the various parties in the fray. As one Muslim leader explains, "The threat of Hindu revivalism can still push the Muslims behind the Congress(I)." Asked about this, Ahmed Bohari says, "In a year, 365 days just go by and it's on the last day that the Muslims will decide who to vote for. The last day is still a year away."

Everyone, however, agrees that the vote is going to be decisive. It cannot be wished away, but which way it will go will depend on the political events preceding the elections. And if B.T. Ranadive's assessment proves correct, then the Muslim masses will continue to be manipulated by the Congress(I) so that it can remain in power.

Seema Mustafa/*New Delhi*

The frame-up

Balbir Singh, recently acquitted in the Indira Gandhi assassination case, on how the police tried to implicate him

The curtain is finally coming down on the long-drawn, dramatic Indira Gandhi assassination trial. The revision petitions filed by Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh in the Supreme Court have been turned down. Now the two persons sentenced to death for the crime committed on 31 October, 1984, have only been left with an appeal to the President. As far as public opinion is concerned, justice has already been long delayed and the persons guilty of assassinating Indira Gandhi should face the gallows.

However, even as the final stage of the trial approaches, there are various questions regarding the case, which remained unanswered. How could both the Sessions Court and the High Court sentence Balbir Singh to death and only the highest court in the land imply that the evidence against him was fabricated? Who are the other suspects which the Special Investigating Team (SIT) has hinted it wants to include in a second charge-sheet? Who are the other people the police wanted to falsely implicate in the murder charge? In a frank interview a month after he was acquitted by the Supreme Court, Balbir Singh talks about the circles of conspiracy in the landmark assassination case. Excerpts:

SUNDAY: How was the prosecution able to implicate you in the Indira Gandhi assassination case? The Supreme Court judgment makes it clear that the case against you was only part truth...

Balbir Singh: The prosecution and the police wanted to involve some big personalities in the case so that the conspiracy befitted the status of the deceased. The assassination of a Prime Minister of a country by a mere sub-inspector and a constable does not look very credible. They, in fact, wanted to include Simranjeet Singh Mann, Jagjit Singh Chohan and others in the case. During the interrogation I was told repeatedly that if I took the names of these people in my statements, I would be made approver and allowed to go free.

What were the tactics deployed at the Yamuna Velodrome because of which people like Gurbux Singh, Virinder Singh and yourself did not toe the prosecution's line but another suspect-like sub-inspector Amarjeet Singh—turned approver for the police?

He did not exactly turn approver but he was induced to become a key witness against me. Let me tell you about myself. I was arrested on 3 December, 1984, and taken to the Vellodrome. There the police wanted me to make a statement before the magistrate that Beant Singh had told me that Simranjeet Singh Mann and Harinder Singh, who was the assistant high commissioner in Oslo had helped him in the assassination plot. R.P. Kotchar, who, was the investigating officer in this case, even showed me a photograph of a Sikh whom I did not recognise. But they persisted that I should try and identify him and even suggested that it was Mann's photograph. I said it may or may not be.



Balbir Singh: prosecution wanted him to turn approver

Are you convinced that if you had turned approver your name would not have figured in the charge-sheet of the case?

By becoming approver, a person does not absolve himself of any moral responsibility. One only implicates himself and in fact is committing a crime. I did not know anybody by the name of Mann or Jagjit Singh Chohan, except for the fact that they had been in the news. I knew that Mann had tendered his resignation after the police operation in the Golden Temple and that Jagjit Singh had made some threats of assassination on the BBC. I had not even heard the broadcast.

How well did you know Beant Singh, Satwant Singh, Kehar Singh and Amarjeet Singh?

I knew Beant Singh and Amarjeet Singh as colleagues—not as friends. I had seen Satwant Singh occasionally and had never seen Kehar Singh in my life.

What, in your opinion, was the exact role of Amarjeet Singh in the

case? He was initially a suspect, later turned approver and was given a promotion while three of you were facing trial in Tihar Jail...

The police simply used Amarjeet Singh against me as they wanted to use me against Mann, Chohan and the others. And while the Supreme Court said in the judgment that Amarjeet Singh was becoming more and more wiser with every statement, he was actually becoming more and more of a fool

He is believed to have been a very weak-minded person who occasionally took drugs. Is this true?

He was a drug addict. He was not only given drugs by the police in the Vellodrome but even on the day he was giving evidence in Tihar Jail he was in a drugged state. He could not walk properly and could not look into the face of Mahesh Chandra directly.

You may have heard that earlier this year Amarjeet Singh died in rather curious circumstances. Do you suspect any foul play in his death?

I do not know the details but I think his death was not a natural one. Maybe he was tortured so much that he committed suicide by taking an overdose of some drug. Or, maybe he had been poisoned or something.

The other thing is that if Amarjeet Singh knew about the conspiracy which was afoot to kill the Prime Minister he betrayed the trust of his office by not reporting it. Thus far he should also have been made responsible.

In your case the crucial piece of evidence was the note in which the calendar of events was written. How did the prosecution manage to plant this on you?



Relatives of Balbir Singh welcome his acquittal

In fact, what was written on that paper was the exact statement they wanted me to make so that more and more people could be implicated. People like Gurbux Singh, Virinder Singh and Amarjeet Singh. They wanted me to memorise the contents of that paper and later wanted me to include more things like Simranjeet Singh Mann's name. With the passage of a day or weeks they were changing their plans. So, there was one stage where they wanted me to make this statement. There were so many papers with them. As has been proved by the Supreme Court judgment, all the documents pertaining to my arrest were farcical. They had made me write so many papers -- not just this one which they eventually used against me. The first word on the paper was "felt like killing..." They knew they could exploit these words alone. Then if they wanted to make a larger conspiracy they could bring in the other people who had been named in it.

You said they wanted you to name important people. Then why did they not put their names in the forged confessional document in which you say "felt like killing..."?

It is at a later stage that they wanted Mann and the others to be implicated. There was total confusion since there were different batches of people who were interrogating batches of suspects. While in the beginning they might have wanted two conspiracies, later they decided to have one. That is why they had to fabricate papers to show my arrest from the Najafgarh bus stop. My detention actually began from the Red Fort. They were not concentrating on one thing -- it was simply a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth.

Then to widen the ring, why did they also not charge-sheet Gurbux Singh, Virinder Singh and the constable in the Prime Minister's security from whose barracks a cartridge was found?

Actually none of these people had conspired. The police were just torturing these people to make them witnesses against me or somebody else. That is why Dalip Singh, the Reserve Bank employee, and Rajinder Singh, Kehar Singh's nephew were detained under the National Security Act. They knew that nobody was going to help them so they were harrassing everybody

Did Beant Singh ever tell you that he knew either Simranjeet Singh Mann or Harinder Singh?

Nothing about Mann. But he had once mentioned that he knew Harinder Singh and had met him when he accompanied Mrs Gandhi on a trip to the Scandavian countries.

According to sources in the Special Investigating Team (SIT), the police do have some evidence to link Mann with this case. Did Beant Singh ever hint to you about this?

I simply think the government is trying to link Sikhs with crimes in general in the same way they wanted to implicate Mann. If they wanted me to take his name, that means they do not have any evidence. If he had done something they could surely find out the truth against him. Even Mann himself has been extensively interrogated

Do you think after your acquittal and after the sentences against Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh have been served, the government will issue a second charge-sheet in the assassination case?

They should not. At least they cannot rope me in the case again. Even when I had been put under formal arrest, members of the SIT had told me that though you have been arrested, if there is any justice meted out, you will be released Even the prosecution people had told me this one day after my arrest when I was being escorted from the interrogation chamber to the courts.

If Beant Singh had not been killed by the ITBP guards, what difference would it have made to the case?

They could have pressured and tortured him to any extent and implicated as many people as they wanted.

Interviewed by Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*

The assassination of a Prime Minister by a mere sub-inspector and a constable does not look very credible. The prosecution, in fact, wanted to include Simranjeet Singh Mann, Jagjit Singh Chohan and others in the case

Rebellion and rivalry

Jayalalitha is in a spot with four dissidents breaking away and a loyalist assaulted by rivals

TAMIL NADU

On 11 September yet another AIADMK faction was born. Having decided that they would no longer be able to get along with Jayalalitha, the group of four - as they are now known - has declared that it would function as a separate entity seeking close links with "other MGR followers". Former interim chief minister V.R. Nedunchezhiyan is the president of the new outfit and former minister Panrutti S. Ramachandran its general secretary. The two other leaders, S. Thirunavukarasu and C. Aranganayagam retain their previous titles of party treasurer and headquarters secretary respectively though now they have forsaken their membership of the Jayalalitha AIADMK.

"We will function as a separate entity," declared Panrutti Ramachandran at the meeting of the AIADMK general council convened on 11 September in Madras. Earlier, resolutions were passed stripping Jayalalitha of her general secretaryship and requesting the party's political affairs committee (PAC), dominated by the group of four, to launch criminal and civil proceedings against the lady for the recovery of the party funds that she had allegedly misappropriated. Jayalalitha had first declared that she had collected Rs 1.5 crores as contributions during her tour of Tamil Nadu and later scaled it down to Rs 80 lakhs which she said were remitted to her by the various district functionaries of the party.

"Jayalalitha does not have the qualities, capacity, culture and behaviour to wear the mantle of leadership," yet another resolution read while explaining the causes for her removal from the party's top post. Nedunchezhiyan claimed the general council was now empowered to take action against the "authoritarian and autocratic" Jayalalitha because it was the same body that had in the first place made her the general secretary.

With the group of four electing a new set of office bearers -- as authorised by the AIADMK general council--a body about whose real identity and constitution no one seems to have a clue--the AIADMK of the late M.G. Ramachandran has split into three groups: one led by his widow Janaki, the second by his ex-heroine Jayalalitha and the third captained by Nedunchezhiyan. At the general council meeting, the four rebels also resolved to fight the "common enemy", DMK president, M. Karunanidhi and declared that in this aim the group would even consider aligning with other MGR followers. Obviously this was an attempt to mend their bridges with Janaki and Thirunavukarasu even made this clear when he said, "Janakiamma is not our enemy. Besides, we must all realise that it is important to keep Karunanidhi out."

However, the Annai, as Janaki Ramachandran is now known, is not bending backwards to welcome the rebels. She apparently told Panrutti and Thirunavukarasu that they should not expect to be given prominent positions if they did return. That was no doubt an insult for Nedunchezhiyan, who has been nurturing hopes of becoming the state's chief minister in the near future. And after being snubbed by Janaki he declared, "Our merger with the Janaki group might lead to practical and political problems at this point of time."

Further, at the general council meeting, not only did the group of four remove Jayalalitha from her position but also appointed MGR's niece, Leelavathi as the new propaganda secretary. Leelavathi, an unknown housewife till recently, shot to fame after she donated a kidney to her critically ill uncle, MGR.

As for Jayalalitha, she did not seem to be perturbed by the 11 September proceedings. According to her, the group of four constitute a tiny minority which has drifted away due to the machinations of the "Congress(I) agent", Panrutti Ramachandran. She now claims that she is well rid of the scheming men. But Jayalalitha's statements belie the fact that intra-party rivalry is here to stay.

Moreover, Jayalalitha has also to contend with her rivals in the AIADMK



Sudha News Service

(L to r) Aranganayagam, Thirunavukarasu, Nedunchezhiyan and Panrutti Ramachandran at the rival general council meeting: another faction is born

(Janaki). On 5 September her propaganda secretary, K.K.S.S.R. Ramachandran was assaulted with knives and the assailants also threw acid on his face, injuring him severely. The ex-minister has been admitted to Madras' Apollo Hospital where he will undergo plastic surgery to undo the damage done to his face and scalp.

The incident occurred at his hometown, Sattur, just as he emerged from a marriage function at a friend's place. First eggshells filled with acid were hurled at his face and the fleeing victim was then attacked with sickles and swords. Jayalalitha rushed to Madurai

where Ramachandran had been admitted to a private hospital. She had him shifted to Madras for better treatment.

The police nabbed two men near the place where Ramachandran was assaulted and followed it up with more arrests. The main accused, Thamaraikkani, a former legislator belonging to the rival Janaki AIADMK faction, was picked up from his room in the MLAs' hostel at Madras. It was said that he was being "guarded" by several henchmen when the police party arrived.

One of the first reactions to the ghastly attack came from Janaki Ramachandran who declared that such acts went against democratic values. She demanded that the culprits be brought to book quickly. The police say they are also on the lookout for Amrutharaj, the main henchman of Thamaraikkani, who was allegedly involved in the attack on Ramachandran. Amrutharaj reportedly nursed a grudge against the former minister because of



Sipa Press Service

K.K.S.S.R. Ramachandran after he was assaulted by rival partymen: vicious attack

his belief that Ramachandran was hostile towards Thamaraikkani's group in that area.

Making the best of the distressing attack on her party colleague, Jayalalitha issued a long statement which alleged that her rivals were making fun of her little private army. Their intention, she said, was to cause personal harm to her in the event of her dismissing the bodyguards bowing to such pressure. And though for a few days Jayalalitha earned the sympathy of the people, it seems that either rivalry or rebellion will finish the Jayalalitha faction of the AIADMK.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

Fear is the key

A bomb rips through a bus, rudely reminding the residents that they are still targets for terrorist attacks

DELHI

The capital is once again enveloped in a blanket of fear. On the evening of 12 September, a powerful bomb ripped through a privately operated bus, killing one and injuring 20, at the Shahdara bus terminal in east Delhi. After a relatively long calm, the residents of the capital were rudely reminded that they were still targets of terrorist attacks.

The bomb went off when the bus had barely started moving out of Shahdara terminal for a trip to Central Secretariat. The explosive, which was concealed under a single seat at the front of the bus, badly injured those sitting in the front rows. Of the 21 people injured by the shrapnel, 30-year old Rajiv Kumar succumbed after being admitted to hospital.

As usual, the police became wiser after the event and there is talk of setting up an "anti-terrorist squad" which is expected to concentrate on gathering intelligence about the movements of terrorists in the city. Lack of intelligence has been a problem in dealing with such attacks for some time now. In fact, only a day before the Shahdara blast, two identical bombs were discovered and deactivated in the city. One was found in a bus and the other near a roundabout in the city. Again, two hand grenades with army markings were found near Rail Yatri Niwas, a day after the blast. But despite all this, the police remain very much in the dark about the identity of the people masterminding the attacks and their contacts in the capital.

The terrorists were apparently trying to take advantage of the sense of complacency which has crept into the city's security set-up. The lull in the attacks had led to a let-up in the vigil—for instance, buses were not being checked for unclaimed objects as they were in the past. Soon after the explosion, the Delhi police decreed that police control room staff would be posted (along with senior officers of the



Forensic experts examine the bus which was ripped apart by a bomb : lax security

Delhi Transport Corporation) at all the 30 city depots to check buses as they were entering and leaving the terminals. Policemen were also instructed to check buses *en route*. There was also the predictable announcement from the DTC asking people to inform the staff if they found "suspicious objects" lying unattended in buses.

The question being asked is why these measures were not taken before the blast. After all, the threat of an impending attack was signalled with the discovery of bombs in the capital just 24 hours before the Shahdara explosion. Whatever the reason for the inaction, the police have not made headway in tracking down those responsible for the blast. A dozen people have been detained for interrogation and teams sent to neighbouring states (Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab). The police say that they have acquired "valuable information" but are not parting with any details.

Patraleikha Chatterjee/*New Delhi*

A pre-emptive move

As the DK whips up a campaign for the release of LTTE militants, the police react by arresting Kittu

TAMIL NADU

Relations between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Indian government have hit an all-time low. Though the process had begun way back in 1987, when M.G. Ramachandran, the then chief minister of Tamil Nadu and chief patron of the militants, had withdrawn his unstinting support to the LTTE due to pressure from the Centre, the final nail in the coffin was struck with the arrest of Sadasivam 'Kittu' Krishnakumar.

Kittu's arrest under the National Security Act on 12 September, however, was not without its share of drama. Ever since MGR had given the cold shoulder to Prabhakaran and his men, the LTTE had turned to the DMK and Dravida Kazhagam (DK) for political support. So when the government clamped down on the militants who had taken refuge in Madras, and arrested 154 Tigers from their propaganda offices in Indira Nagar, the DK functionaries moved the courts for their release.

Anticipating such a move, the government had booked the Tigers under the National Security Act (NSA) and thus effectively pre-empted their DK patrons. But Kittu, the former Jaffna commander of the LTTE, had escaped arrest because of his reputation of being 'soft' towards New Delhi. In fact, Kittu was the only link between the Indian intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the LTTE leadership which were secretly carrying on negotiations. But in July the talks broke down and it was then that the police swooped down on the militants.

Kittu and some of his close associates, though not immediately arrested, were kept under a 24-hour surveillance. But the DK general secretary K. Veeramani, a close friend of Kittu, tried to storm into the lame guerrilla leader's house on 10 September in defiance of the police cordon. Veeramani had effectively registered his protest against the arrest of the 154 militants, but it soon backfired for the DK leader and his militant friends.

Alerted by Veeramani's 'protest programme', the Tamil Nadu police feared that though they had prevented Veeramani from meeting Kittu on 10 September, other politicians who were friendly with Kittu might stage similar protests and demonstrations leading to a serious law and order problem. Besides, there was also the possibility of the militants slipping away quietly while attention was focussed on the actions of the local politicians. And if Kittu and his associates did escape, it would not just be a loss of face for the police but a major source of embarrassment for the Centre.

So, the best thing in the circumstances was to lock up Kittu under the NSA and that was what the police did on 12 September. Now, Veeramani must be rueing his impulsive action which provoked the police's counter-move.

R. Bhagwan Singh / *Madras*

Kittu (on the terrace) watches as Veeramani tries to break through the police cordon





And then, the deluge

Millions of people reel under the onslaught of floods, believed to be the worst of its kind in decades

BANGLADESH

If there are floods in Assam, can they be far behind in Bangladesh? Even as the Brahmaputra swelled and breached its banks submerging towns, villages and cities in Assam, in neighbouring Bangladesh, millions reeled under the onslaught of the floods. In the capital, Dhaka, nearly four million people battle for survival while in the rest of the country, the scenario is even more grim.

Bangladeshis are not unfamiliar with floods, but the deluge of 1988 has been the most severe and the fury of the two rivers which flow through Bangladesh–the Ganges and the Brahamputra–have wreaked widespread destruction. What has made matters worse is the fact that there was little prior information about it as weathermen had forecast that apart from a few showers, the monsoon had lost most of its impact.

But August seemed to be the month for natural calamities. Earthquakes rocked Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Nepal and experts feel that this may have affected the behaviour of the river systems in the entire region resulting in floods. However, the Bangladesh Water Development Board was not exactly bending over backwards to discover the geological reasons that had resulted in the floods during 1987; and once again



An aerial view of Dhaka: no solution to the flood problem

the deluge of 1988 caught the Board's experts flat-footed.

Nevertheless, the deluge has spurred experts to speculate about the causes for the floods. One theory has it that excessive rainfall in the range of eight to 15 inches a day for more than a week in the foothills of the Himalayas could have resulted in the floods. It is also the experts' contention that since 92 per cent of the total catchment areas of the two river systems lie outside Bangladesh, any activity leading to an increase in the water level of the rivers remains unknown to Bangladeshi experts which makes it difficult for them to make reliable weather forecasts.

The Krug mission which had studied the flood problem in East Pakistan years ago under the aegis of the United Nations, had pointed out that siltation in the Ganges and Brahmaputra had reached dangerous proportions aggravating the flood problem of the country. It is estimated that the river beds are rising at the rate of three feet during a period of two decades and are therefore, unable to contain the huge volume of water that passes through them.

As for the impact of the floods on the country's economy, it is unlikely that Bangladesh is going to recover from it in a hurry. Government sources point out that nearly 40 million farmers, whose contribution to the gross domestic product is as much as 75 per cent, have been affected. Also, the country would have to import large quantities of foodgrains, necessitated by the huge shortfall of foodgrains. And though the government has appealed to all countries and international donors for food supplies, there has been no definite response so far. The traditional food donors like Canada, Australia, USA and the EEC are still assessing the situation.

Alamgir Hossain/*Dhaka*

The angry hills

A 36-hour bandh *for an Uttarakhand state paralyses life in the region*

UTTAR PRADESH

To the tourist, Nainital Lake is a beautiful spectacle. But on 12 September, the calm of the lake was marred by ugly demonstrations that took place in its vicinity. The 36-hour Uttarakhand *bandh* had begun.

The call for the *bandh* was given by the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal (UKD), which, since its inception nine years ago, has been pressing for a separate state in the Uttarakhand region (which comprises the eight districts of Pithoragarh, Nainital, Chamoli, Tehri Garhwal, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarkashi, Dehradun and Almora). The decision for the *bandh* was taken at the UKD's annual convention held on 13 July at Rishikesh.

Normal life was affected in the eight hill districts of Uttar Pradesh, barring Dehradun Valley. The *bandh* was total in Rishikesh, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Pauri, Chamoli, Narendranagar, Laxmanjhula, Kotdwara, Almora and Nainital. Private bus services were affected and all shops and business establishments remained closed. Government offices and educational institutions wore a deserted look. Roadblocks were put up in several places. At one stretch—between Nainital and Kathgodam (the nearest railhead to Nainital)—boulders were placed across the roads. Trains going from Kathgodam to Bareilly were packed with passengers who were stranded on account of the *bandh*.

The president of the UKD and MLA, Kashi Singh, remarked that the 36-hour *bandh* would be a historic one and warned the authorities of dire consequences if anything untoward happened to his party cadres. The authorities did not take any chances. Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) and police personnel were deployed in large numbers in all eight districts.

In the past two years, the UKD has organised mass demonstrations at Nainital, Pauri and on the lawns of the Boat Club in Delhi. Its leaders complain that the UP government has done little for the economic uplift of the Uttarakhand region. Unemployment has been growing in the area, which also lacks civic amenities. The UKD bemoans the fact that the Uttarakhand region has very poor representation in the state Assembly. The area, which has a population of 52 lakhs, has barely 19 MLAs, while Gorakhpur district alone boasts of 15 MLAs. They also complain that the Lucknow-based Uttarakhand Development Board has done little to improve the lot of the people in the region. And that although a sum of Rs 152 crores has been earmarked by the government for the development of Uttarakhand, 80 per cent of this has been misused.



Security forces remove roadblocks set up by the UKD in Nainital: a contentious issue

The Uttarakhand area boasts of four important leaders—G.B. Pant, N.D. Tiwari, K.C. Pant and H.N. Bahuguna. But none of them have reportedly done anything for its development. Political observers feel that chief minister Tiwari who is already under flak for being indecisive on several policy issues, may face the music in the next Assembly elections if he doesn't take steps to improve the lot of this region.

Henry Jacob/*Nainital*

Facing a barrage of protests

The government faces stiff opposition from environmentalists over its ambitious Narmada Valley Project

GUJARAT

The project was jinxed from the word go. While the government continued to shovel money into its ambitious Rs 13,500-crore Narmada Valley Project environmentalists have continued to fight the government tooth and nail. And it seems now that a showdown is imminent.

On 2 and 3 September, members of two action groups working for the rights of Adivasis who are to be evacuated held *dharnas* in Bombay. The 200 activists of the Narmada Dharagrast Samiti and the Narmada Ghati Sangharsh Samiti, led by



Amarsinh Chaudhary: handing out sops

playwright Vijay Tendulkar and Janata Party leader Mrinal Gore, distributed, what they termed, "citizens' memorandum" and demanded that the Narmada project, which comprises the Narmada Sagar Scheme in Madhya Pradesh and Sardar Sarovar Scheme in Gujarat, be scrapped. Their main contention is that despite the government's claims of rehabilitating the Adivasis, none of the three state governments–Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat–has done anything to acquire land for the 2.5 lakh people of some 489 villages who will be displaced.

The memorandum states that the project which proposes the construction of 30 big dams will submerge 80,000 hectares of forest land and cause irreparable damage to the environment. Scoffing at the Gujarat government's efforts to seek a Rs 45-crore loan from the World Bank for purchasing land for the would-be evacuees, the environmentalists say that the project will sound the death knell for wild life in the region.

The activists have planned to intensify their stir by launching a nation-wide campaign against the project, beginning on 20 October.

But so keen is the government to see the project through that it has not hesitated to hand out sops in a bid to appease the angry environmentalists. The Amarsinh Chaudhary regime has chalked out a scheme by which, government sources claim, nearly 4,000 families will be provided free land and other facilities at 17 sites earmarked for housing them. Moreover, electricity will be provided to them free of cost and the government promises to plant more trees than those that may be destroyed during the construction of the dams.

And in order to stem criticism about the project Chaudhary has even set up the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Development Corporation headed by ex-finance minister, Sanat Mehta, to speed up the completion of the project. When completed, the dams, says the government, will irrigate 18 lakh hectares of land in 12 districts and provide drinking water to 4,720 villages and 131 towns besides solving the perennial water shortage problem in drought-prone Kutch. It is little wonder then that Chaudhary sees red whenever he is confronted with the environmentalists' arguments. "These people are worried over destruction of forests. But have they ever seen jungles? Can they recognise Adivasis?" asks Chaudhary, who is himself an Adivasi.

Chaudhary is not alone in his defence of the project. The Opposition has, surprisingly, all along supported the Narmada Valley Project and recently, the chief minister won the support of the Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini too. Said Anil Patel of the Vahini, which is also fighting for the rights of the evacuees, "the demand for scrapping the Narmada project altogether is unrealistic and impractical. The Samitis should concentrate their efforts on seeking a square deal for the hapless Adivasis." And so, the tussle goes on.

Mahesh Trivedi/*Ahmedabad*



In deep waters

The controversy over the clearance of NTR's pet Telugu Ganga project takes a new turn

ANDHRA PRADESH

For weeks now chief minister N.T. Rama Rao has been neck-deep in trouble. And the reason for his plight is water. First, it was a group of Congress(I) MLAs who went on a hunger-strike demanding more water for the Rayalseema region of Andhra Pradesh. Next, the Telugu Desam MPs and MLAs staged a *dharna* in Delhi to protest against the Centre's non-clearance of the Telugu Ganga project. They were dispersed by the police but as soon as the dust had settled following the hue and cry raised by Opposition members in Parliament, there was fresh trouble in store for the Telugu Desam Party (TDP).

On 4 September, the controversy over the clearance of the Telugu Ganga project took a new turn. The chief minister of Karnataka, S.R. Bommai, declared in Bangalore that he would personally lead a delegation to Delhi to impress on the Prime Minister that clearance of the project was against the interests of the Karnataka people. "My government's stand on the issue (the dispute over the sharing of Krishna waters) is very clear and there cannot be





The Delhi *dharna* which was broken up by the police; (inset) NTR: fresh trouble

any compromise with Andhra Pradesh on the controversial Telugu Ganga project. The Andhra Pradesh government is guilty of violating the Bachawat Award," Bommai said.

While Bommai was getting ready to cross swords with NTR over the issue, the central leadership of the Janata Party had, ironically, supported NTR's demand for "early clearance of Andhra Pradesh's projects by the Centre". Congress(I) MPs were quick to pounce on the anomalous behaviour of the Janata Party members and in a statement on 4 September 14 Congress MPs questioned the wisdom of the Janata Party in supporting the *dharna* when the Janata government of Karnataka was opposed to it.

But Telugu Desam's P. Upendra was quick to come to the defence of the Janata leaders like Ajit Singh and Madhu Dandavate and said that the Delhi *dharna* was meant to protest against the Centre's apathy towards Andhra Pradesh and not for the clearance of any one project.

Nevertheless, clearance of the Telugu Ganga project is a major demand of the TDP government. The entire controversy revolves around the Bachawat Award of 1976 which isolated 2060 tmc ft water in Krishna river and allotted it for distribution to Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra in the proportion of 800 tmc, 700 tmc and 560 tmc respectively. The Award also allowed Andhra Pradesh to use the surplus water till 2000 AD. Since the state had already allocated 800 tmc of water to Rayalseema, Telengana and the coastal regions in the state, the allocation of water for the Telugu Ganga project was done on the basis of surplus water in Krishna river.

The neighbouring states of Karnataka and Maharashtra were naturally displeased with the arrangement as it meant that when the Bachawat Award came up for review in 2000 AD, Andhra Pradesh would be in a better position to bargain and ensure for itself surplus water in the future too. And NTR has steadfastly stood by the Bachawat Award countering every criticism with the claim that "as the tail-end state, Andhra Pradesh can utilise the surplus water" of the Krishna river as it wishes.

NTR also refused to attend the chief ministers' meeting convened by the Centre and claimed that "the onus of resolving the tangle lay squarely with the central government which had appointed the Bachawat Tribunal. All the governments concerned had accepted the Award and it would be totally meaningless if we allow the issue to be reopened." With Karnataka intent on contesting Andhra Pradesh's claim to the surplus water, it seems that N.T. Rama Rao has not yet heard the last of the contentious problem.

Mukundan C. Menon/*Hyderabad*

Deceit and dissension

Is the Opposition's efforts to oust Ershad from power being foiled by its own leaders?

BANGLADESH

Who is the autocrat? President H. M. Ershad or the Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) leader, Begum Khaleda Zia? Even as Begum Zia makes unsuccessful bids to send the army back to the barracks, she faces the threat of a major break-up within her own party. Prominent leaders of the BNP led by its erstwhile secretary general, Obaidur Rahman, claim that Begum Zia is guilty of autocratic behaviour herself as she has dissolved the central and executive committees and



Khaleda Zia: under fire

restructured them to suit her own whims and fancies.

Rahman held a meeting of his followers at which it was resolved that by reconstituting the two committees, Begum Zia had violated the spirit of the party's Constitution. The BNP secretary general Salam Talukder hit back by saying that the Obaidur faction had itself violated the party's Constitution and alleged that Obaidur Rahman and his cohorts were trying to destroy the BNP by ganging up with Ershad. In a press release, Talukder warned that if the Obaidur faction did not desist from such

anti-party activities, stern action would be taken against them

According to some political observers, Tahkider's claim is not as far-fetched as it seems. If rumours are to be believed, some of the supporters of the Obaidur faction, and a few prominent leaders of the Awami League, have been in touch with the government. Also, there is some speculation that these people are willing to ditch the Opposition and its 'Dhaka Siege' programme--the movement which was initiated to remove Ershad from power--if they are offered ministerial portfolios at the next Cabinet reshuffle

As the BNP weathers the storm within its party, the other Opposition party, Awami League, is also keeping a low profile. Though Sheikh Hasina Wazed has announced a mass contact campaign, it has not made much headway as Dhaka and the rest of the country is in the grip of one of the severest floods in recent times.

The movement which was launched by the Opposition to oust Ershad seems to have fizzled out as the various parties struggle to cope with dissension in their ranks.



Obaidur Rahman ganging up with Ershad?

The people too are growing increasingly disillusioned with the Opposition parties as they seem incapable of forging a united alliance. Moreover, the politicians' covert links with the ruling government is hardly likely to inspire confidence among the masses. In such a scenario, it would seem as if Ershad's continued reign at the helm is a much better proposition than a fragmented Opposition being entrusted with the administration. And though the Opposition parties under the leadership of Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina are desperately trying to renew their agitation against Ershad it is unlikely that they will be any more successful than they were during the first round.

Alamgir Hossain/*Dhaka*



Boarders protesting against the AIWC management: many charges

Secret Eye

Making room for controversy

Women boarders accuse the AIWC authorities of misusing hostel facilities and other corrupt practices

DELHI

It was just one of the many demonstrations that take place in Delhi's very own Hyde Park, the Boat Club. Nearly 350 young, placard-waving women had decided to focus attention on the alleged malpractices in the working women's hostel run by the All-India Women's Conference (AIWC). While resentment against the AIWC management had been building up in the hostels run by it all over the country, things came to a head in September this year when the management tried to push through a fresh set of rules.

As the agitation by the women boarders gained momentum, the issue gained political hues. The administrators of the New Delhi AIWC hostel located at Bhagwandass Road, the residents complain, have made good use of their political connections. While Mrs Raghuramayaah, the founder member of the Agha Khan Hostel is believed to be vying for a Rajya Sabha seat, Padma Seth, the secretary general of the hostel, and Bina Jain, the superintendent, are known to have approached ruling party members to quell the agitation. So much so, when the boarders' grievances came out in the open and the minister of state for women's affairs, Margaret Alva, was called to intervene, she declared that she had little to do with AIWC affairs. This, despite the fact that Alva is a member of the social Welfare Board.

The boarders then decided to submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister seeking redress for their grievances. In the letter they stated that more and more hostel space was being illegally converted into guest room accommodation for commercial gains. They also expressed fears that the entire Kamla Devi Hostel would be converted into a guesthouse by the administrators. The residents also alleged that the management was planning resort to "draconian" measures, such as preventing the boarders from staying at the hostel for more than three years.

Such rules, the residents feel, would enable the management to intimidate and victimise them. One of the main demands of the residents is the right to participate in the AIWC management and to vote in their elections. Also they feel that a representative body of the residents should be allowed to study the audit reports as it would prevent crores of rupees from being siphoned off for commercial purposes. With the AIWC hostel inmates having stepped up their campaign for the right to deal with the government directly, it remains to be seen how the AIWC management will react to the pressure.

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*

FESTIVAL OF THE USSR
INDIA 1987-88

Extravaganza Beyond compare!



Soviet Circus

Presented by:

Festival of India,
Indian Council for Cultural Relations
and
Shree Digvijay Cement Company Limited

City	Dates	Venue	Time
Calcutta	Sept. 29 – Nov. 2, 1988 (excluding Oct. 3, 7, 12, 18, 20 24, 28 & 31)	Netaji Indoor Stadium	6.30 P.M.
Bombay	Dec. 1 – 28, 1988 (excluding Dec. 5, 9 13, 19 & 23)	to be announced	7.00 P.M.

Tickets : Rs. 500/-, 300/-, 200/-, 100/-, 50/-, & 25/-

RILAXON

Sobhagya/188/88


inst India

In 1978 Pakistan and India had resumed cricketing relations after some 18 years It had taken that long to overcome the hostility engendered by two wars between the countries Sporting encounters between Pakistan and India have always generated high passions even now, in one-day cricket winning against each other is considered more important than eventual success in the competition Sporting encounters strain the fragile relationship between Muslim and Hindu in India people die of heart attacks during Tests and ten-year-old boys have stabbed each other during heated arguments about cricket matches

The Indian team was comprehensively beaten on its tour of Pakistan in 1978 9 When we returned to India the following year, we were clear favourites even Gavaskar, then India's captain, issued a statement saying that we would win easily India's great spinners, Bedi, Chandrasekhar and Prasanna, had retired, while Venkataraghavan was out of form and favour India's bowling attack of Kapil Dev, Ghavri, Binny, Doshi and Yadav didn't seem to pose much of a threat to our array of stroke-makers

But we were overconfident Mistakes had been made in selection Sarfraz was omitted because Asif Iqbal, our new captain, felt he could not handle him, and Mushtaq, the only survivor from the previous tour of India, was left out, as he was considered suspect against high pace. Although this was true, he would not have been in trouble against India's limited pace attack

None of the players had any notion of the pressures of an Indian tour From the moment we arrived it seemed as though the entire country had become a huge spotlight, trained solely on us The relentless publicity, the huge partisan crowds in the jam-packed stadiums, the expectations of our own public—all these were too much for some of our players. Our batting, never famous for its resilience, went to pieces Zaheer, always highly strung, was the first to crack The previous year he had scored 583 runs, averaging 194 33, in the three Tests against India. This time he averaged 19, and seemed visibly relieved when he was dropped for the final Test Majid looked shaky, and averaged only 20 despite being dropped down the order in the later matches Mudassar, our other opener, hit a century in the first Test but never passed 30 after that After the first Test we never reached 300 in any innings Only Wasim Raja, and to some extent Javed Miandad, emerged with any credit from the tour

Despite the fact that our batting flopped, we should have drawn, or even won, the series The wicket for the second Test at Delhi helped the seamers, but I was hampered by a rib-muscle injury and bowled only 8 3 overs Sikander Bakht bowled his heart out and took 11 wickets but it was not enough, and India were able to bat out the last day and a half

After this Test it was suggested that Sarfraz should be called in to reinforce the team, but Asif refused even to consider the proposal I was therefore under great pressure to play in the third Test, which I did the rib muscle went again in my first over, and I was in acute pain afterwards I did dismiss Chauhan, after which Iqbal Qasim and Sikander reduced India to 154 for 6, but I was unable to come back, and the tail-enders added 180 Neither side topped 200 in the other innings, and India won on the fourth day.

Knowing I would definitely miss the fourth Test at Kanpur, India produced a well-grassed pitch, supposedly to assist Kapil Dev They batted, and struggled to 162 against our back-up seamers, Sikander and Ehteshamuddin. We replied with 249, thanks almost entirely to Wasim Raja's brilliant 94 not out, and were in a useful position before rain, which penetrated the covers, washed out the final day's play

Although I was still not fully fit I felt I had to play in the fifth Test, but it was apparent that our team had given up They were thoroughly despondent there was an atmosphere of despair in the dressing room, and when we batted some players were too nervous to watch On a perfect batting pitch we were dismissed for 272, with a number of batsmen reaching 30 but none of them having the patience or the will to stick it out Zaheer, who was convinced that someone had put a spell on him, made a duck When India batted, Gavaskar, a master of attrition, made 166 in almost ten hours, and set up the match for his side I took five wickets, not a bad effort as my injury was even worse, and India won easily by 10 wickets

By the last Test I was fully fit and took nine wickets I thought that we had a chance to salvage some self respect before going home, but there was to be no fairy-tale ending We dropped a number of catches and let India off the hook they took the series 2-0

All of us dreaded returning home, and we were right No Pakistani team has ever had to face such humiliation, collec-

Sporting encounters between Pakistan and India have always generated high passions and they strain the fragile relationship between Muslims and Hindus in India. People die of heart attacks during Tests and ten-year-old boys have stabbed each other during heated arguments...



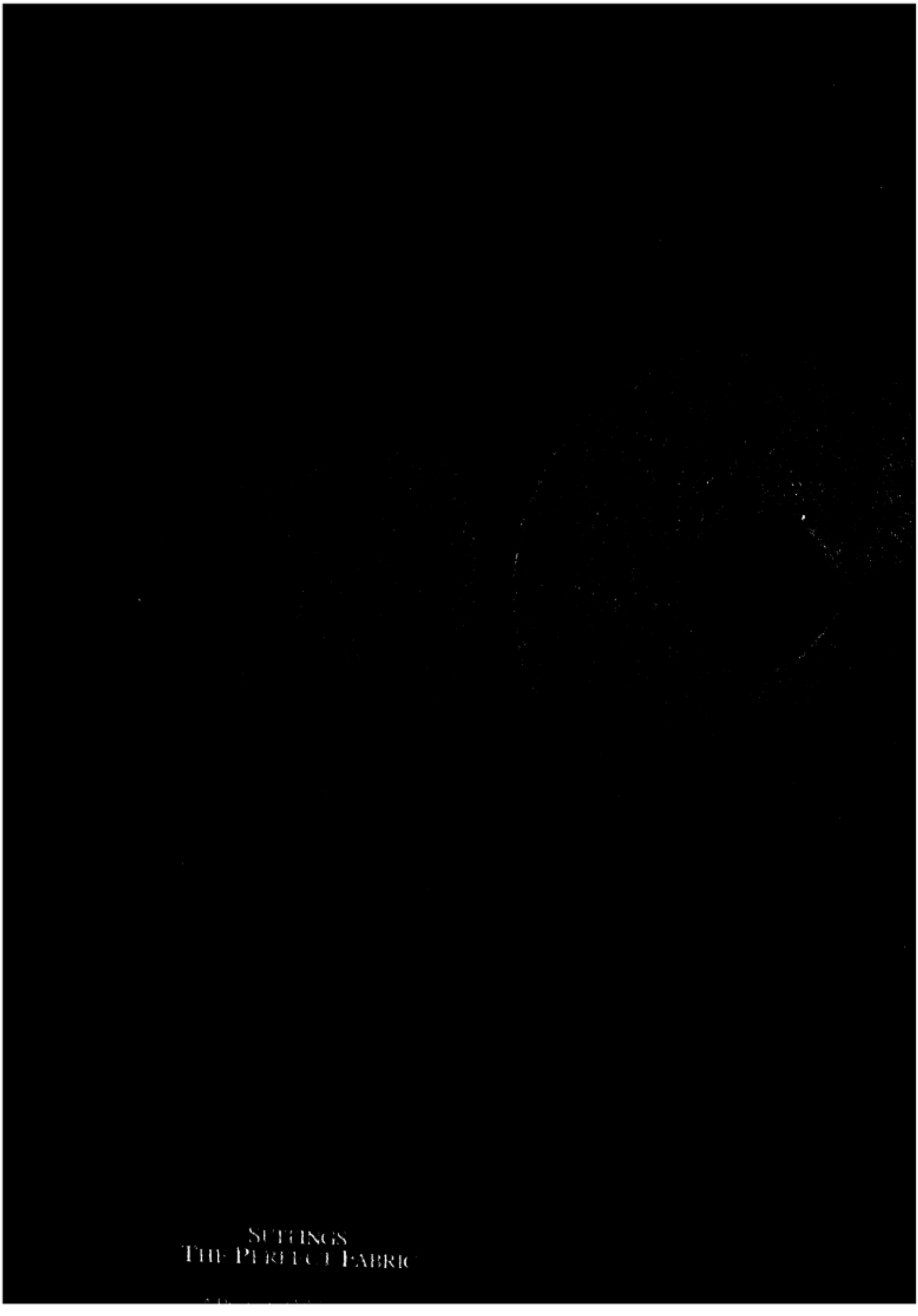
Imran filming for an ad campaign not just a cricketer



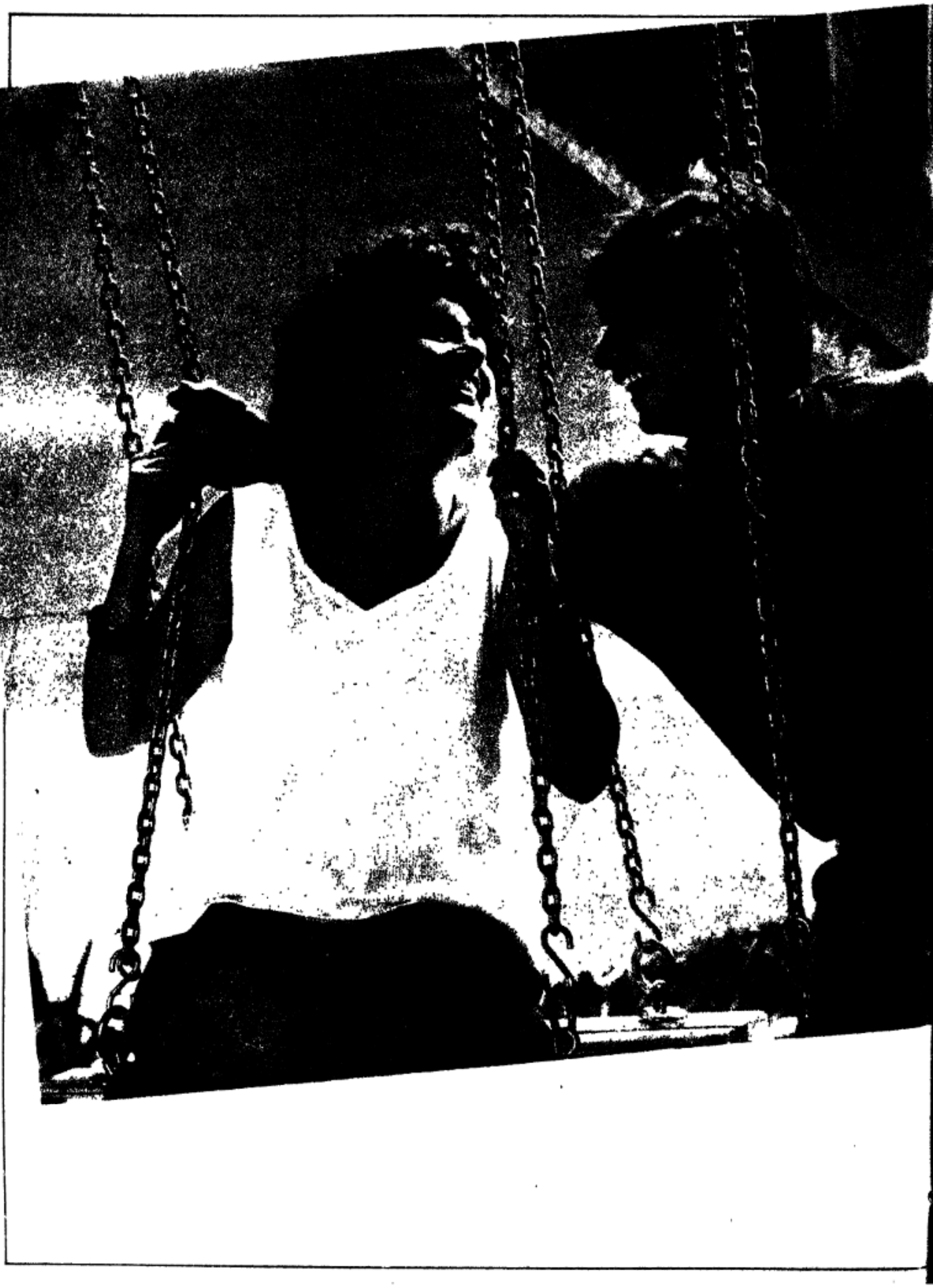
Limbering up before a match, keeping fit

Mahiuddin Hameed

(Continued on Page 46)


SUITINGS
THE PERFECT FABRIC







grindlays. Such a pleasure!

Banking, Grindlays believes, should be one of life's conveniences.

Which is why, while Grindlays offers every major service the best international banks offer, there are some specialised services only Grindlays offers.

Each designed to make banking a pleasure.

Because by improving the quality of banking, we believe, we could ultimately improve the quality of the way you live.

Grindlays Bank

Member ANZ Group

Contract.GB.91.88

tively and individually. Our failure was attributed to non-stop partying and a thoroughly irresponsible way of life. Apparently we had all indulged in wining, dining and womanising throughout the tour. There was little sympathy for my muscle injury, which I had evidently contracted while performing debauched calisthenics with Indian actresses.

Realistically, it should have been pointed out that our batting had always tended to collapse under pressure, but in the context of an India-Pakistan series rational analysis is rare indeed. The press thrives on innuendo, gossip, rumour and outright slander, and still more so at the first sign of defeat. My biggest crime was to have been outperformed by India's star all-rounder, Kapil Dev.

Foreseeing these recriminations, Asif Iqbal announced his retirement before we arrived home. During the tour he was a shadow of his former self. He was on tranquillisers and, already a wiry man, he lost a lot of weight. It was not until 1986-7, when I toured India as captain and lost half a stone, that I understood the pressures he must have been under.

It was this story of dishonour and disgrace that was primarily responsible for my continuing to bowl through the 1982-3 series against India with a leg fracture. The desire to erase the bad memories of that tour by comprehensively beating the old enemy was too strong. Since then I have realised that such passions are out of place on the cricket field, and can only do harm: but it is difficult to be objective when one's country's hopes and one's self-respect are riding on the result of a series.



Imran Khan being interviewed: a source of inspiration

I bowled through the 1982-'83 series against India with a fractured leg as the desire to erase the bad memories of the 1980 tour by comprehensively beating the old enemy was too strong

Imran Khan: praises for Gavaskar



* * *

When we arrived in India I found that there was not as much publicity or interest in the tour as had been the case in 1979. There were a number of reasons for this. To begin with, this was the third series in India that season, and we had been squeezed in at the end, after the Australian and Sri Lankan teams. Secondly, our team, unlike that of 1979, was not rated very highly. Our batting was thought to be weak and inexperienced, and our bowling not strong enough to make much of an impact on the Indian batting in these conditions. Finally, the low-key, unfriendly reception we received reflected the border tension between the two countries at the time. All in all it was going to be a tough and tiring tour. In two months we would have to play five Tests, six one-day internationals, and some side games. And since it was an off-season tour we would also have to play in hot weather—particularly in the south, where we were due to play the first Test of the series.

The pitch at Madras was somewhat under-prepared and the ball was spinning after tea on the first day. After a long partnership by Shoaib and Javed we lost some quick wickets, and were then 247 for 5 at the end of the first day. Then I made my third Test century and took Pakistan to a total of 487. This long innings on a slow spinning wicket set up

my batting for the rest of the series. However, when I bowled in India's first innings I couldn't get any kind of rhythm. The wicket was under-prepared, the run-up soft and sandy. Because of my jump, I need a good foothold, and in India there was no grip in the landing area. I couldn't find my rhythm, and lost pace and accuracy, and produced some of the worst bowling of my career. Our bowlers made very little impression on the Indians batting in their first innings at Madras. They scored over 500, and the match petered out in a draw with the third innings of the match only half over.

After the first Test we realised that we would be playing most of the tour under such conditions, and that the Indian attack would rely mainly on the two left-arm spinners, Maninder Singh and Ravi Shastri. Javed Miandad suggested that it would be a good move to call up Younis Ahmed, who was a left-hander and a good player of spin bowling, to counter the threat posed by the Indian spinners. I asked the Board to send him, and he joined us before the second Test. He had not played Test cricket for more than 17 years and was not included in the team for the second Test, since it was the only one likely to be played on a pitch that promised to be of assistance to seam bowlers. However, Kapil Dev didn't have sufficient confidence in India's vaunted batting line-up, and the pitch was shorn on the eve of the Test.

We won the toss and put India in to bat, because this was the only way we could hope to bowl them out twice. I knew that although the grass had been cut, this was the best track for fast bowling we would encounter throughout the tour. We had them in some trouble at 149 for 5, and then Azharuddin and Kapil Dev both played good innings and took India beyond 400. On the one pitch with a relatively firm surface, I bowled extremely badly and took 0 for 93 in India's first innings. Our reply began well, but we progressed too slowly against the Indian spinners and made 46 in 26 overs before lunch on the third day. By the time India took the second new ball after tea, we had reached only 170. For some reason the second new ball was really seaming on the evening of the third day. Binny put in an inspired spell of seam bowling, taking 4 for 9 in 30 balls after tea, and we were in danger of having to follow on. Salim Yousuf played a determined innings of 33 and got us out of a corner. When India batted again on the fourth morning they had a lead of 174. Strangely, after Srikkanth was out relatively early on, they made little attempt to push the pace and leave themselves sufficient time to bowl us out again. I was somewhat surprised by these tactics and I think we were lucky to save the match in the end.

Realising that we were going to play the last three Tests on a succession of slow, spinning pitches, I called for reinforcements. Iqbal Qasim, the orthodox left-arm spinner, joined us and played in the third Test, as did Younis Ahmed. India batted first at Jaipur, making the worst possible start when I had Gavaskar caught at slip off the first ball of the match. The pitch was easy-paced, and the rest of the batting did not have much trouble on it: India again scored over 400 in two full days.





Imran at his fiery best; (top) Javed Miandad: the backbone of the Pakistani team

As far as other captains are concerned, the only Indian skipper who impressed me was Sunil Gavaskar mainly because of his extensive knowledge of the game. People talk about Mike Brearley as the outstanding cricket brain, but I think Gavaskar lost nothing by comparison

When we arrived for play on the scheduled third day, which followed the rest day, we found that overnight rain had seeped under the covers. There were patches on one side of the pitch just on a good length for a left-arm spinner. The Indian cricket authorities wanted us to play, but the umpires agreed with us that the pitch was unplayable and not fit to be played on according to the rule whereby it has to be in the same condition as it was at the close of play on the day before. On the fourth day the umpires were overruled and the match restarted on a pitch that had not yet recovered sufficiently. The



Zia-ul Haq with Pakistani players: cricket diplomacy

administrators did not want to make it obvious that the covering facilities were not up to Test standard. We made a written protest but it was overruled. There was nothing more we could do, because General Zia-ul-Haq was visiting Jaipur as part of his "cricket diplomacy"– an attempt to defuse tension between the two countries. For some reason, Kapil Dev chose to bat on for a couple of overs before declaring. I suppose he wanted to prove that the pitch was perfectly all right. We lost two quick wickets and then Rameez and Javed, with sound and patient defence, righted matters. Luckily for us Maninder wasn't playing, and India's two off-spinners, Shivlal Yadav and Gopal Sharma, and the left-armer, Shastri, were unable to exploit the conditions. By the end of the fourth day we were 228 for 6 and still needed 38 runs to save the follow-on, which we did fairly easily next day. I continued to bat well, making 66.

Tauseef Ahmed and Javed Miandad were both unfit and did not play in the fourth Test at Ahmedabad. Ijaz Faqih, another reinforcement, was included in the team. Everyone was expecting a turning pitch that would crumble, but the Ahmedabad wicket turned out to be another slow turner. We batted first and scored only 130 runs on the first day. Rizwan-uz-Zaman and Younis were almost strokeless for hours on end. At 167 for 6 on the second day our situation didn't look too good until Ijaz Faqih and I set up a seventh-wicket partnership of 163. Ijaz went on to make a century in his third Test, and I made 72. He played the spinners with confidence and never allowed them to pin him down. India in their turn also played cautiously, reaching 165 for 3 at stumps on the third day. The Ahmedabad crowd was fiercely anti-Pakistani throughout the match. On the fourth day some of the Pakistan fielders were stoned and I had to take the team off the field. We were able to resume play after a 70-minute stoppage only because the Pakistani deep fielders put on helmets to protect themselves against stone-throwing by the crowd.

It had been a dull, uninspiring series so far. After the fourth Test, Kapil Dev issued a statement blaming me for negative cricket and for the lack of interest in the series. His statement annoyed me immensely. It was clear that we were not at fault either for the boring and tedious series of draws or for the general disenchantment of the public. India, who had the advantage of playing at home, had chosen to make pitches on which exciting cricket was just not possible. If they were unwilling to take chances when conditions favoured them, I was certainly not going to oblige them by taking the initiative. As I mentioned earlier, Kapil Dev had specifically asked the groundsmen to cut the grass of the pitch at Calcutta. He was content to play a waiting cat-and-mouse game, thinking that at some point our inexperienced side would crack, and was unwilling to take any risks to force the issue. He chose to release a statement attacking me so as to defend himself against criticism of the Indian team's inability to beat us in spite of their alleged superiority.

Imran Khan relaxing in his hotel room: working out a strategy



By this time the public was screaming for results, and everyone knew that the pitch at Bangalore would be a genuine turner. Qadir had been out of form throughout the tour and his confidence was low, so, despite the wicket, I chose not to include him, and we went into the match with three seamers and only two spinners. Had Iqaz Faqih been fit, he would have played again in place of Salim Jaffer. At a team meeting before the game I told the players that only one side had played under pressure during the series, and that the Indian batsmen had never been in a difficult situation in the previous Test matches. I told them that this was to our advantage and that if we didn't panic we could win the match. We won the toss and after a dozen overs the Indian spinners were on: the ball was turning square before lunch on the first day. Our middle order made the mistake of going for their shots in an attempt to get runs before they got out. This was an unwise tactic on a pitch that required application and the slow accumulation of runs. We were all out for 116, and by the end of the day India had made 68 for 2 in reply. On the second day they passed our first innings total for the loss of only four wickets, but then proceeded to make exactly the same mistakes as we had committed.

Vengsarkar, who was batting well and had made 50, played a strange attacking stroke and was caught. The rest of the batsmen followed him to the pavilion in a



Kapil Dev hooks one from Imran Khan: a classic encounter



similar fashion and India were all out for 145, only 29 runs ahead. They had certainly let us off the hook by their purposeless batting. To take some of the pressure off the team, I told the players before we began our second innings that I didn't care if we won or lost as long as every player went out there determined not to sell his wicket cheaply, and this was exactly what happened. Everyone fought, and each batsman had to be prised out. Rameez Raja and Salim Malik scored 47 and 33 respectively, after which each player played above himself. I got 39, Salim Yousuf made his usual plucky contribution, and Iqbal Qasim, whom I promoted to the middle order because he was a left-hander, managed 26. As our score grew, the pressure on the Indian spinners mounted. Every run mattered on a pitch like this, and any inaccuracy on their part yielded vital runs. Having an extra spinner didn't really help them as Kapil, in an attempt to get quick wickets, was bowling the three spinners in rotation and every change led to a few more runs as the new bowler settled down. It was spinning and bouncing so much that it was hard to bowl on.

Gavaskar suffered far more abuse from the Indian press than he deserved. Factions are polarised between the two major Indian cricketing centres of Bombay and Delhi just as they are between Lahore and Karachi in Pakistan. Gavaskar came from Bombay, and no matter what he achieved, he could never win over the Delhi writers

India had to make 221 to win the match. Wasim Akram gave us just the start we needed, taking two early wickets with his version of the fast leg-break. We knew that the only obstacle between us and victory was Sunil Gavaskar. On the fourth day we worked our way slowly through the Indian batting, but he kept up one end with a display of controlled, organised batting. He countered the spin by playing the ball very late. Tauseef and Qasim were magnificent and bowled unchanged throughout the day. Qasim's experience was a great asset.

I found this the most difficult match I have ever had to captain. I knew I shouldn't say anything discouraging to the spinners, because any critical comments would merely have put more pressure on them. The fielders were very tense and, with marginal decisions going against us, I knew I had to keep calm. If I showed any anger, the entire team's nervous energy might spill over and we would lose the match. When



Imran in action; (inset) Gavaskar in a punishing mood: a battle of wits

Qasim finally dismissed Gavaskar for a brilliant 96 we knew the match was over. A few late blows from Binny were like the death throes of a landed fish. We won the match by 16 runs and took the series 1-0.

The fifth Test was a nail-biter from start to finish–a dream Test match. The tensions of a great Test are of a different order from those of any other game, or the instant excitement of one-day cricket. It is unique because it is a complex, subtle story that develops over five days and, like great fiction, encompasses many moods and situations. After a Test match like that at Bangalore the rest of the tour was bound to be an anticlimax.

We annihilated a depressed Indian team in the one-day matches and then returned home to the sort of reception that makes a whole career worthwhile. The crowd that came to welcome us at Lahore stretched from the airport to the heart of the city. It took us hours to wend our way home through a singing, dancing multitude of over 200,000 that lined the roads in celebration of Pakistan's first victory over India on their soil. But another first remained to be accomplished–beating England in England. After what we had just achieved, anything seemed possible.

Kapil Dev issued a statement blaming me for negative cricket and for the lack of interest in the series. His statement annoyed me immensely. We were not at fault for the boring and tedious series of draws. India, who had the advantage of playing at home, had chosen to make pitches on which exciting cricket was just not possible

* * *

As far as other countries' captains are concerned, the only Indian skipper who impressed me was Sunil Gavaskar, mainly because of his extensive knowledge of the game. People talk about Mike Brearley as the outstanding cricket brain, but I think that Gavaskar lost nothing by comparison. He was a very sound captain, and had to cope with the knowledge that often his only hope was to draw matches, because India's bowling attack was not good enough to bowl out the other side twice. It may be that this sense of frustration eventually led him to give up the captaincy. He captained India against me in the 1982-3 series which we won—although his leadership was good, our team was much better. Gavaskar produced one of the best spells of captaincy I have seen when he led India to success in the World Championship of Cricket in Australia in 1984-5, and the way in which he handled his bowling resources was quite brilliant.

Gavaskar suffered far more abuse from the Indian press than he deserved. As we have seen, factions are polarised between the two major Indian cricketing centres of Bombay and Delhi, just as they are between Lahore and Karachi in Pakistan. Gavaskar came from Bombay, and no matter what he achieved, he could never win over the Delhi writers. In the end, he realised that India were unlikely to do well in Tests with the side he had, and I think he was frustrated by the public's apparent inability to distinguish between the tactics necessary for Tests and one-day matches. The Indian public did not seem to be able to understand that the two versions of the game are very different—they thought that if India was so successful in one-day cricket, they ought to win Test matches as well. In the end, I believe, Sunil got fed up with the extra pressure.

All Round View by Imran Khan Published by Chatto & Windus, London, 1988. Distributed in India by Dass Media Price £ 12.95

Is it goodbye to Jain?

A shake-up at The Times' *Bombay edition annoys editor Girilal Jain*

The Times of India's Bombay edition is the jewel in the paper's crown. It is the most profitable newspaper edition in the business and according to one view, should The Times decide to close down everything else and only run its Bombay edition, profits would actually go up. Over the years, the edition has survived a determined assault from the *Indian Express* for the number one slot and its popularity is such that newcomers like *The Indian Post* have found the going tough.

Last month, *The Times'* management showed that it was not taking the edition's popularity for granted and made several editorial changes. In the process, it shook up the paper's hierarchy and—if reports are to believed—annoyed Girilal Jain, *The Times'* venerable editor.

The changes were necessitated by the resignation of A.S. Abraham, an old *Times'* hand who was its resident editor, Bombay. Abraham left *The Times* to join *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi as executive editor, a job that puts him on par with Dilip Padgaonkar, *The Times'* executive editor. Girilal Jain reacted to Abraham's departure by placing Fatma Zakaria in charge of the edition. Zakaria has edited the paper's Sunday Review for nearly eight years now and as a senior assistant editor was ready for a change. It was widely expected that her appointment would be confirmed.

But this was not to be. In a surprise move, the management recruited Darryl D'Monte. Zakaria, it was made clear, would not be moved. The choice of D'Monte was widely perceived as a sound one. A former assistant editor of *The Times*, he left to edit the *Indian Express'* Bombay edition and then, when he was forced out by Anil Agarwal, Ramnath Goenka's son-in-law, took a lengthy sabbatical which resulted in an universally-praised book on the environment.

Jain, it seems clear, had no objections to D'Monte personally but regarded it as unnecessary to go looking for a resident editor when one of his assistant editors was ready to be promoted. D'Monte's appointment coincided with Jain's taking leave on health grounds and *Times'* offices in Delhi's Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg and Bombay's Bori Bunder resounded with speculation to the effect that Jain's illness was 'diplomatic' and no more than an expression of his displeasure.

The speculation died down somewhat when Jain returned to office and refused to openly criticise his employers. He had, apparently, been visited by Ashok Jain, the chairman of Bennett, Coleman and Co., who had urged him to resume work and assured him of the management's support. Girilal Jain, however, expressed dismay over the company's decision to overrule the editor's choice for the resident editor's job and expressed a desire to retire.

So far, nobody is commenting on whether Girilal Jain will actually retire at the end of the year (his term expired in 1986; he is on extension) or whether the Jains will be able to mollify him.

But already, speculation over his successor has begun. The favourite for the job is the urbane, French-speaking Dilip Padgaonkar who left his job as an assistant editor of *The Times* to join UNESCO in Paris. Padgaonkar returned as associate editor a year ago and since then, has overseen an improvement in the paper's news coverage. He is also known to have the support of *The Times'* young managing director, Samir Jain.





Dilip Padgaonkar (left): a Samir Jain (right) protege

Another school of thought holds that the Jains will retain Girilal as some kind of editorial advisor and find another heavyweight (S. Nihal Singh is frequently mentioned) to hold the fort for two years.

All of this, however, remains conjecture: nobody is even willing to state, on the record, that Jain might step down soon. What is clear though, is that *The Times*, having recruited many bright young things to man its Delhi edition, is now extending that principle to Bombay.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*





Darryl D'Monte and (right) Girilal Jain

Girilal Jain had no objection to D'Monte personally but wanted his own senior assistant editor promoted

Caught ...on tape

The Shiv Sena's grand designs to plant a saffron flag atop Mantralaya in Bombay are exposed by an Independent councillor

All one ever wanted to know about the Shiv Sena's *shakha*-financing activities but was afraid to ask, is now available on tape. It is authentic (the Mayor of Bombay testifies). One can hear the voice of Shiv Sena councillor Diwakar Raote, who alternately cajoles, threatens and abuses in the choicest of invectives, a bunch of small businessmen who 'dared' to offer him only Rs 5,000 together, when they had promised Rs 1,500 each. This when there were 77 of them.

The tape in question was produced by Independent councillor Rustom Tirandaz before the mayor, Chandrakant Padwal, who is also a Shiv Sena member, and other members of the House. The tape was brought by Tirandaz when he was asked to prove his allegation of corruption against Raote. According to Tirandaz, he received the tape in a box of sweets that was sent to him on Parsi New Year's day in August. Tirandaz also said that he had come to know that 15 others had also received copies of the tape but they had obviously decided to ignore it for reasons best known to them.

Raote was elected as a councillor from the Prabhadevi ward in 1985. In three years he had a meteoric rise to become chairman of the standing committee. In fact, his name was mentioned as the next mayor (in 1989), since Bal Thackeray, the Shiv Sena chief, rotates the post every year between his councillors. Raote, according to corporation circles, has now blown up his chances. Or to put it in political perspective, Raote's chances have been blown up by a rival group within the Sena.

It is a well-known fact that the Shiv Sena has two main factions: one led by Manohar Joshi, now a big-time builder, and the other led by the former mayor Chhagan Bhujbal. The former group comprises those commonly known as the white collar gentry. They run money-spinning coaching classes, own hotels and buildings. Bhujbal represents the "file" part of the rank and file of the Shiv Sena. He is from the flower sellers' community in Nasik and his meteoric rise has been the envy of Manohar Joshi's group. It is argued in party circles that if the Shiv Sena which has ambitions

Incriminating evidence

Diwakar Raote's tape contains explosive material. Excerpts:

"All of us are *Wada Bhajiwalas*. If you were giants I would have taken Rs 10,000 from each of you.

You are businessmen who count the feathers on the wings of a flying bird. What can I explain to you? I am also a businessman. I spend Rs 7,000 to Rs 8,000 per month out of my own pocket. I am not living on anyone's obligation. That is why I am undoubtedly a big shot. Do you know that I pay Rs three lakhs income tax annually?

I have to build my *shakha*. The programme of the *shakha*, and for the *shakha* has to be financed by businessmen of the *shakha*. In the past 20 years not a rupee has been collected from anyone. Even if we agreed to pay Rs 100 per year, by now we would have collected Rs 2,000 from you, firstly, and secondly, suppose you take Rs 100 per year, it would not amount to even half a cup of tea per day. Have you understood? And I don't like my boys going around asking for money from time to time. I have told them to collect it all at once. I have taken the responsibility to see that no businessman is ever troubled. Till today, has any Shiv Sainik given any of you a slap or shown you a knife or done this or done that?

During the Hindu-Muslim riots, don't we go forward to receive bullets? Muslims are always prepared but what we have are only sticks and stones. We have brains and you have the money, and if we two combine we will conquer any type of force.

Money can be collected by me at any time. I shall collect money only once and never again. I have told my



(Left to right) Tirandaz with Congress(I) councillors R.R. Singh (right) and G. Seth (centre) displays the Raote tape

to plant a saffron flag atop the state's administrative headquarters, Mantralaya, in the next elections, it will have to become a grass-roots' party and there is no way white collar leaders like the two Joshis, Manohar and Sudhir, or Pramod Navalkar and a host of other second-ranking ones can appeal to the masses. It is only the Chhagan Bhujbals who will matter. For instance, the Shiv Sena has now dumped the former mayor, Ramesh Prabhoo, because he does not belong to the elite Brahmin group that controls the Shiv Sena organisation along with Bal Thackeray. Prabhoo is currently facing a case where the defeated Congress candidate in an Assembly byelection, Prabhakar Kunte, has challenged his election to the state Legislature. Kunte alleged that he contested the election on religious lines on a Shiv Sena ticket. And the Shiv Sena's was a Hindu platform. The Sena has ditched Prabhoo, ostensibly because it now says that he was a candidate imposed on them by Congress leader Vasantdada Patil whose close links with the Shiv Sena are well-known. The Shiv Sena wanted their star trade-unionist Sarpotdar to be the candidate. Naturally, Prabhoo has been looking elsewhere for help.



Dungarpurkar

Bal Thackeray: grand designs

According to corporation circles, the tape-recording of Raote's harangue was obviously done by a Shiv Sainik who was with Raote, because none of the businessmen present would have had the courage to carry a tape-recorder to the meeting. Whoever may have taken the tape, it is revealing for several reasons. Foremost among these is the extortion indulged in by the Shiv Sena even if it is for a good cause like running medical centres and teaching classes. It also reveals the nefarious role of the Shiv Sena in fomenting riots and killing Muslims while protecting the Hindus.

The tape created a stir for a while. But it soon died down when Chhagan Bhujbal produced another tape. This one had the voice of the Congress(I) councillor Devchand Gala allegedly demanding 1,000 sq feet of space from a builder. The recording which was on the expensive TDK cassettes of which Bhujbal made several copies to be distributed to the press and others, does not sound authentic. It was obvious that the builder was made to talk to Gala and he kept asking him: "How much do you want as a councillor?" Gala later explained that he was bargaining with the builder over the compensation payable to him in lieu of his legitimate tenancy rights. Samant, the builder, wanted Gala to vacate the premises and was offering him alternative accommodation

The Raote tape has been viewed "seriously" by the ruling party and it is learnt that the tape has been handed over to the CBI for further investigation. Congressmen and those whom the Shiv Sena ousted from the flourishing underworld business of bootlegging, gambling, prostitution, dock thefts, etc. would like to see the Shiv Sena taken to task on this issue. It is well-known that, over the years, the Shiv Sena has successfully edged out the South Indians and the Muslims from several areas in Bombay's underworld. Where they have been unable to push the dons out they have joined hands in partnership, as was seen in the case of the late Matunga and Antop Hill don, Vardarajan and Haji Mastan. Both had very good relations with the Shiv Sena. The Congress, perhaps, is the one left out in the cold. The party leaders were during the Rajini Patel regime, the big bosses of Bombay, totally in control of the underworld.

Olga Tellis/Bombay

Shakhapramukh, that once I keep this amount in fixed deposit then our *shakha* will run on it. I am of the view that one should not go begging for petty cash like Rs two. The boys only learn one thing: to collect money and then just do not do anything else, and then if anybody refuses to pay them, they carry a grudge which is given vent to some time or the other.

I informed my Marwari partner that I had prevented his petrol pump from being set on fire all these years. They wanted to burn it down completely, but I alone stood by him. When I extended my begging bowl to raise money for a worthy cause I talked to him. If I have done anything wrong, you are supposed to inform me.

You should have been mortally scared to talk of giving me Rs 5,000. Take your money back happily. Not a single boy of mine will go to your house to question you about why you did not pay. But when you are raided, then don't come to me on your knees. Catch some other political partymen then... For the last 20 years we have not demanded a single paise—you all deserve the *goondas* who will make you dance at sword and knife-point. You only deserve people who extort money. You don't like social workers who work for the public and in exchange demand money.

In order to save the lives of your people in Bhiwandi, I have slaughtered Muslims taking a sword in my hand. Even so, you don't know who Diwakar Raote is? I have carried you Gujaratis on my shoulders. Go to Thane and see how the whole Gujarati community recognises me. The Gujarati businessmen of Thane have given us truckloads of *pau* and bread. They can do only that. They cannot take swords in their hands Understand?

In one riot we slaughtered 300 Muslims and you businessmen had witnessed that with your own eyes. What have you seen till now? You are happy here in Dadar and when the same Muslims will attack you and when they will take away your women, then you will remember us. I am warning you that whatever we do we are playing with our own lives.

Instead of giving us arms, you behaved as if you were throwing ten paise coins to the eunuch. Go. Take care of your children. You are challenging Diwakar Raote. Diwakar Raote is not a weak man. I have now told you everything openly. There is no question of anger. You must remember one thing. Diwakar Raote will never do anything in anger.

Trouble-makers are not allowed in my office. When Hindu-Muslim riots took place in Gujarat, 60 persons were brought. You had to pay lakhs of rupees as *supari* (which in underworld parlance means a hired killer), for hiring them. What is so great about it?"

A damsel in distress

Jayalalitha seems to be losing her popularity in the battle with Janaki over MGR's party flag and symbol

A crucial question is expected to be answered at the end of this month. The reply is sure to tilt the scales in the bitter fight for the legacy of the late AIADMK chief minister, M.G. Ramachandran, between his sexagenarian widow, Janaki, and the charming ex-heroine, Ms Jayalalitha. The question relates to the allotment of MGR's flag and symbol and the claims of the two ladies are presently being debated by their counsels before the chief election commissioner, Pen Shastry.

It appears that the Jayalalitha faction has received a bad jolt following the quitting of the four rebel leaders led by former 'interim' chief minister, V.R. Nedunchezhiyan

The drama before the Election Commission began soon after MGR's death when both women began a fierce battle over his legacy. The women knew that whoever became MGR's benefactor would ultimately win over his followers and eventually sit on the chief minister's chair in Fort St George. The deft handling of the situation by former minister R.M. Veerappan in January this year ensured that 94 out of the 130 AIADMK Legislators in a House of 234 were ensnared in the camp of Janaki.

That left Jayalalitha holding on to 33 members, a number of them with dreams of assuming power by either toppling the lady or better still by subjugating her in course of time. Both women claimed they had the support of a majority of the party's rank and file, while their strength in Parliament at that time was almost even. Jayalalitha contended before the Election Commission that Janaki Ramachandran was "only a political novice" propped up by "certain persons in order to fulfill their own political ambitions".

"On the other hand, there was overwhelming support to the group headed by the first respondent (Jayalalitha) which had the undisputed majority support in the organisational wing as well as the support of the Legislators in Pondicherry and the support of Members of Parliament elected on the two-leaves symbol being more or less equal, it was apparent that as per the democratic norms, the party headed by the first respondent commands a clear majority..." thus ran Jayalalitha's petition.

Both Jayalalitha and Janaki have, in their petitions before Pen Shastry, recalled the post-MGR events and given their respective analyses blaming each other for the split in the AIADMK. While Janaki said the split occurred on 2 January, 1988, with Jayalalitha forming a splinter group of 33 MLAs while she herself had with her as many as 97 Legislators, in addition to the solid support of the majority in the general council of the party, Jayalalitha said the method adopted by Janaki to secure the support of the 97 members in the Assembly were questionable.

Jayalalitha also enclosed press clippings to prove her contention that not only had Governor S.L. Khurana made a mistake in inviting Janaki to form the government on the basis of her 97 MLAs' support, but also that her rival had adopted unfair methods to keep herself in power. The supporting documents to Janaki's petition had details of the general council members in the AIADMK who have signed in the "permanent register" and attended the meeting, she had convened early this year, which elected her as the party president, a post which Jayalalitha pointed out did not exist in the party constitution.

Durai Arasan in the Jayalalitha camp who claimed he had been in charge of the party headquarters right from the inception of the AIADMK in 1972, said in his affidavit to the Election Commission that there was no such "permanent register" to record the general council membership. "We used to take the signatures in 15 or 20 note-books at the rate of one notebook for one or sometimes two districts. All the documents, account books and registers of the party were lying in the AIADMK headquarters...the list of general council members supplied by the respondent (Janaki) is incorrect; either it contains the names of persons who were removed or persons who were not at all general council members," Durai alleged.

Interestingly, even those 15 or 20 notebooks whose existence has been sworn to by Durai are not in the custody



of Jayalalitha's group. It is said that rebel leader Panrutti S. Ramachandran managed to take them away with him when he quit Javalalitha's company "In fact, we do not have a single paper or document to support our claims (that) we enjoy majority backing in the organisation," admitted a source in the Jayalalitha camp. While S. Raghavanandam, the party's senior deputy general secretary, who is in the Janaki camp, claimed he possessed the "permanent register" and that it proved his group commanded majority support in the general council, Jayalalitha contended that she had a list with signatures of 354 members out of a general council consisting of a total strength of 632.

Now both the sides have given their respective lists of general council members supporting them and also the complete general council membership as claimed by them. The last general council meeting was conducted by MGR sometime in 1986 and one cannot assume that the list of attended members at that time gave the true and total general council membership, because MGR would send out invitations for the meeting at his will and pleasure--quite often ignoring genuine general council members and calling in "special invitees" Further, there were 105 town secretaries who often found themselves invited for the meeting of the general council.

It thus came to be that until the "group-of-four" quit Jayalalitha's company, the competition between the two MGR women for his party symbol and flag was a closed door affair. There were rumours that the commission would decide to freeze the symbol and the flag, but now the situation has changed in favour of Janaki. In fact, the four leaders have been busy proclaiming their intentions to work for Janaki to get the two-leaves symbol and the flag "because that is the least we can now do to express our gratitude to our late leader, MGR"

The commission adjourned the hearing of the case to 19 September and agreed to a further postponement to the end of the month to suit the counsels of both sides. Janaki's counsel has urged the commission to dispose off the case at the earliest since the elections were round the corner and that she should have more time. He was confident of winning the case for Janaki even without the help and support of the "group-of-four", the counsel reportedly told the commission.

The Jayalalitha faction has received a bad jolt following the quitting of the four rebel leaders. If one goes by simple arithmetic, MGR's widow should soon be able to add the party symbol to her growing list

Janaki is now understandably jubilant because the recent intra-group squabbles in the rival camp have not only enhanced her own public image but also led to a significant erosion of Jayalalitha's popularity in the minds of the yet-undecided AIADMK cadres. The allegations of the "group-of-four" --that despite their high-positions in the party they were insulted by Jayalalitha--have caused considerable damage to the claimant to MGR's legacy "Added to this, if the Election Commission should now decide to give the symbol and the flag to Janaki, we are in deep trouble. At least a third of the MGR followers in the countryside will blindly vote for the two-leaves symbol on the ballot paper," a flustered Jayalalitha camp functionary told SUNDAY.

Peri Shastry's job has now become complicated with the "group-of four" sending in their individual affidavits stating that they had made a mistake in supporting Jayalalitha and that they wanted the commission to award the two leaves symbol and the party flag to Janaki. Claiming that the political affairs committee had removed Jayalalitha from the post of party general-secretary and so she had no more any *locus standi* in the contest before the commission, the four men have now told Shastry: "The AIADMK party led by Janaki MGR is truly representing the legacy of the late M.G. Ramachandran and they alone should be entitled to the usage of the reserved two-leaves symbol...in the changed circumstances."

A lone optimist in the Jayalalitha camp appears to be her lawyer, K. Subramaniam. Said he: "The guidelines before the commission are not concerned with whether these four men support her today or not. The commission can award the symbol and the flag to the other side only if it is satisfied that Ms Jayalalitha does not enjoy the support of the party rank and file and that a majority of the general council members are also not behind her. The affidavits of these four persons now cannot reflect such an averment."



Jayalalitha: nowhere near a majority

The sad truth for him and his ebullient client is that when the four rebels left Jayalalitha's camp, the support to her in the dissolved Assembly dropped to 29 Members. Further, it is claimed, some more Legislators would lean towards the "group-of-four" and even among Jayalalitha's supporters in the general council, there would be an erosion in the ranks. That adds up to tough times ahead for Ms Jayalalitha unless the Congress(I) goes to the rescue of the damsel in distress, a prospect that is bleak at the moment because the Tamil Nadu Congress(I) president, G.K. Moopanar, still thinks the lady is too arrogant to be helped out.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

MGR and wife Janaki: squabbling over a legacy



COMPANIES

India's global leaders

A number of Indian firms have successfully battled their way to the top in their fields

India may be one of the world's poorest nations outside the communist world, but some of her entrepreneurs, it would appear, have what it takes to make it big on the world stage. Recently, several companies have been making tall claims about the size of their operations. Are they justified and can Indians walk tall in some of these fields? SUNDAY takes a look at some of these claims.

Amongst the planks used by Hero Cycles (sales: Rs 84.25 crores in June 1985) to induce investors to buy shares of Gujarat Cycles in its recent public issue, was the former's position as the world's No. 1 bicycle manufacturer, which has found mention in the *Guinness Book of Records*. This is no mean achievement for a company which started out as a small bicycle manufacturing unit in Ludhiana in 1956. Manufacturing over 2 million cycles annually, Hero Cycles' lead is fairly slim. In 1985, the latest year for which accurate data are available, the company made 2.03 million cycles while its nearest competitor, Huffy Corporation (USA), churned out 2 million units. With the promotion of Gujarat Cycles which would make 1.2 million units, it appears that Hero Cycles will be able to maintain and even increase its global edge without much huffing and puffing.

This achievement assumes greater significance considering that India, despite having four manufacturers among the world's top ten cycle companies, is by no means a major world bicycle manufacturer. The total world cycle production in 1985 was estimated to be 90 million. In 1983 the official figure for the USSR was 5,410,000. It is estimated that the total production in the communist bloc is more than 40 million.

Apart from China with its output of 30 million bicycles, the major bicycle producing countries are Japan, Taiwan, the USA, the USSR, West Germany and Italy.

With scooters and three-wheelers having become unfashionable in so many countries, Bajaj Auto (sales: Rs 610 crores in June 1987) has few global competitors. Reportedly, Bajaj Auto is the world's largest three-wheeler manufacturer, the second largest scooter maker and the fourth largest two-wheeler manufacturer. Somewhat gallingly, Bajaj Auto's supremacy in the first two categories is challenged only by Piaggio & Company, Italy.

THE TWO AND THREE-WHEELER GIANTS (1987)



The real fight for the top spots is in the two-wheeler category where the Japanese rule supreme. Holding an unsurpassable number one position with more than the combined output of Yamaha, Suzuki and Bajaj, is Honda. The second and third positions have traditionally alternated between Yamaha and Suzuki, Yamaha losing out to Suzuki only after 1985.

However, the picture may radically change over the next few years. Government restrictions on production which had stifled Bajaj Auto in the 1960s and 1970s have been removed; a spanking new plant at Waluj, Maharashtra, has been built; major labour differences ironed out and an expansion programme geared to manufacture a million vehicles undertaken. The fierce race for the position of the world's second biggest two-wheeler company should make for interesting corporate drama.

By itself the fact that Reliance Industries Ltd (sales: Rs 1,232 crores in March 1988) has the second largest shareholders' population in the world may not have any particular importance or benefit. Nonetheless, it is

THE BICYCLE LEADERS (1985)



Company	Million units
Hero Cycles (India)	2 03
Huffy Corpn. (USA)	2.00
Murray Ohio (USA)	1 75
Atlas Cycle (India)	1.48
Bridgestone (Japan)	1.31
Avon Cycle (India)	1 25
Kynast (W Germany)	1.02
Giant (Taiwan)	1.00
TI Cycles (India)	0.89
Raleigh (UK)	0.80

significant for a host of minor reasons. It denotes an ability to process vast amounts of data, to handle an enormous amount of paperwork and to communicate with so many people. In the event of adverse publicity, it implies a certain class of a vote-giving society which will back the company. More than any other single factor, RIL has been instrumental in creating an equity cult in India.

Interestingly, in the absence of reliable official information on the size of India's investor population (a vital statistic for a country banking on rapid economic growth through the mobilisation of capital investment), many stock exchange analysts suggest a thumb-rule solution: count the RIL investors–both equity and debentures–and multiply by three. At 3 million (that is, before the Reliance Petrochemicals issue), this suggests that there could be nearly 10 million investors in the country.

Apart from Reliance, all the other most widely held companies are British. AT&T, the American telecommunications giant which formerly had nearly 4 million shareholders, lost its position to British Gas when American courts forcibly divided the company into six separate units. Japanese companies by and large are closely held. The flop of British Petroleum's recent public offering of 2 billion shares has also affected the pecking order.

ompany	Million units
onda (Japan)	2 62
uzuki (Japan)	1.09
amaha (Japan)	0 91
ajaj (India)	0.60
aggio (Italy)	0.54
iwasaki (Japan)	0.21

THE LARGEST SHAREHOLDERS' FAMILIES



Company	Shareholders (million)
British Gas (UK)	3 1
Reliance (India)	1.6
British Telecom (UK)	1 3
British Airways (UK)	0 4
British Petroleum (UK)	0 3

Luggage manufacturers are engaged in one of the few truly global industries, with bags of various styles being made in every country. The most widely held companies are housed in Britain, while major two-wheeler manufacturers are concentrated in Japan and bicycle producers in Asia. But luggage manufacturers from widely dispersed countries compete for a global ranking. While Samsonite of the USA claims to be way ahead at 8 million units annually, India's very own VIP, even with a much smaller production of 2.8 million units of baggage carriers, has bagged a creditable third place on the international market.

But incredibly, an Indian small-scale sector company has matched–and overtaken–mighty American multinationals like Procter & Gamble (sales: $17 billion in 1987) and Lever Brothers (sales: $2.85 billion in 1987) in the detergent industry. Producing and selling 550,000 tonnes of detergent sin both cake and powder form, Nirma Chemical Works (sales: Rs 460 crores in 1987) is already said to be the world leader in this highly competitive industry.

Unfortunately, international figures are not available, but according to Gurcharan Das, chairman, Procter & Gamble (India), and Irfan Khan, general manager, corporate communications, Hindustan Lever, Nirma Chemical's tonnage might well be the highest within a

Nirma, a small-scale sector company, has matched—and overtaken—mighty multinationals like Procter & Gamble and Lever Brothers in the detergent industry. Nirma is said to be the world leader in this highly competitive field

MAJOR LUGGAGE PRODUCERS (1987)



Company	Million units
Samsonite (USA)	8.00
Ace (Japan)	5.00
VIP (India)	2.80
Ecolac (Taiwan)	1.50
Delsey (France)	1.50
American Tourister (USA)	1.00

INDIAN COMPANIES IN FORTUNE 500 (NON-US INDUSTRIAL FIRMS)



Company	Rank
Indian Oil	63
ONGC	171
SAIL	250
Hind Petroleum	291
Coal India	301
Bharat Petroleum	412
BHEL	447
State Bank of India	74*

* Among top 100 banks

single country though not on a worldwide basis.

If global production of detergents by a single company is taken into consideration, then Nirma would probably come third, with Lever Brothers in second place, and Procter & Gamble taking the top slot. While the latter is big in the USA, Lever dominates the European detergent market. Nonetheless, as a single brand, Nirma would still be the largest-selling detergent in the world–and by a long shot at that.

No less than seven Indian companies, all of them in the public sector, and one bank, have made it to the Fortune International 500. There is little enough cause to engage in back-slapping however, for Coal India has the dubious distinction of being the seventh biggest money loser of 1987, having lost $259.7 million. Incidentally, it ranks first in terms of employment with 673,456 workers on its payroll. Nor is SAIL's fall in profit of 68.2 per cent something to write home about.

Amongst the biggest banks outside the USA, State Bank of India rivals Coal India in its position as the biggest employer with 284,802 employees. Barclays Bank, National Westminster Bank, and Banco do Brazil with over 1 lakh employees each do not come anywhere near SBI. Featured at 74th position, SBI has assets of $46.83 billion, deposits of $30.18 billion, loans of $20.15 billion, and net income of $43.4 million. SBI also holds the record for the highest number of offices–11,361–in the world but the lowest assets per employee at $164,413.

This list does not mean to imply that India is nowhere on the world map in other areas. India probably has the biggest *pan masala* manufacturing capacity. Our jute mills are undoubtedly the biggest in the world–the Anglo-India Jute Mills in West Bengal professes to be the biggest jute mill "under one roof". The National Textile Corporation may possibly be one of the larger textile conglomerates in the world. But to be the biggest, there should be some major grounds for comparison with a competitor drawn from one of the developed countries. And what is the use of measuring losses?

Gita Piramal/*Bombay*

PEERLESS

Call for nationalisation

There is fresh trouble for the management with the new demand by both the employees' unions

Is Peerless General Finance and Investment Company Ltd in for another bout of problems? The bogey of nationalisation, once a strong call in the troubled days of the country's non-banking financial institution, seems to have reared its head again. On 30 August, a few members of the Peerless Employees Union, affiliated to CITU, along with Basudeb Acharya and Ashis Sen, both CPI(M) Members of Parliament, met Eduardo Faleiro, the Union minister of state for banking and economic affairs, in Delhi. According to a statement issued by the parliamentary office of the CPI(M), the delegation submitted a memorandum to the minister and reminded him of the employees' demand for nationalisation of the company.

Not to be left behind, the Peerless Karmachari Samiti, affiliated to INTUC, also reiterated its demand for nationalisation. In a resolution passed at a convention held in New Delhi on 5 September, the *samiti* said that the company should be nationalised immediately in the interests of 25 million depositors, 4,000 employees and lakhs of field agents. Atish Chandra Sinha, Congress(I) MP and president of the union, expressed concern over the fact that the present board of directors was diversifying the assets of the company to other sectors.


Sunil Ghosh

Says Sitangshu Joardar, president of the Peerless Karmachari Samiti, "The way we see it, nationalisation is the only way out and we are emphasising the need for this drastic step to protect the interests of 4,000 employees and millions of field staff." Claiming to be one of the largest unions in the Peerless fold, Joardar is, however, reluctant to discuss his membership strength. Not quite so vociferous but also agreed on the need to nationalise is the 2,200-strong CITU affiliated Peerless Employees' Union. "We are not against diversification but the company seems to be moving further and further away from its traditional business," says Jahar Mukherjee, secretary of the CITU.

What is worrying both the unions is the likely loss of livelihood. Presiding over this yet another impediment in Peerless' troubled functioning is the chairman and managing director, P.C. Sen. Appointed managing director in August 1986, Sen was made chairman of the company at a meeting of the board of directors held recently. Interestingly, the chairman's slot in Peerless has remained vacant ever since the death of the current incumbent's father-in-law, H.K. Sen. And having weathered many a storm in the last two years—the entry and exit of various shareholders several lawsuits —Sen handles this yet another hurdle with equanimity. In early June, Eduardo Faleiro had ruled out any immediate possibility of the company being nationalised, he points out.



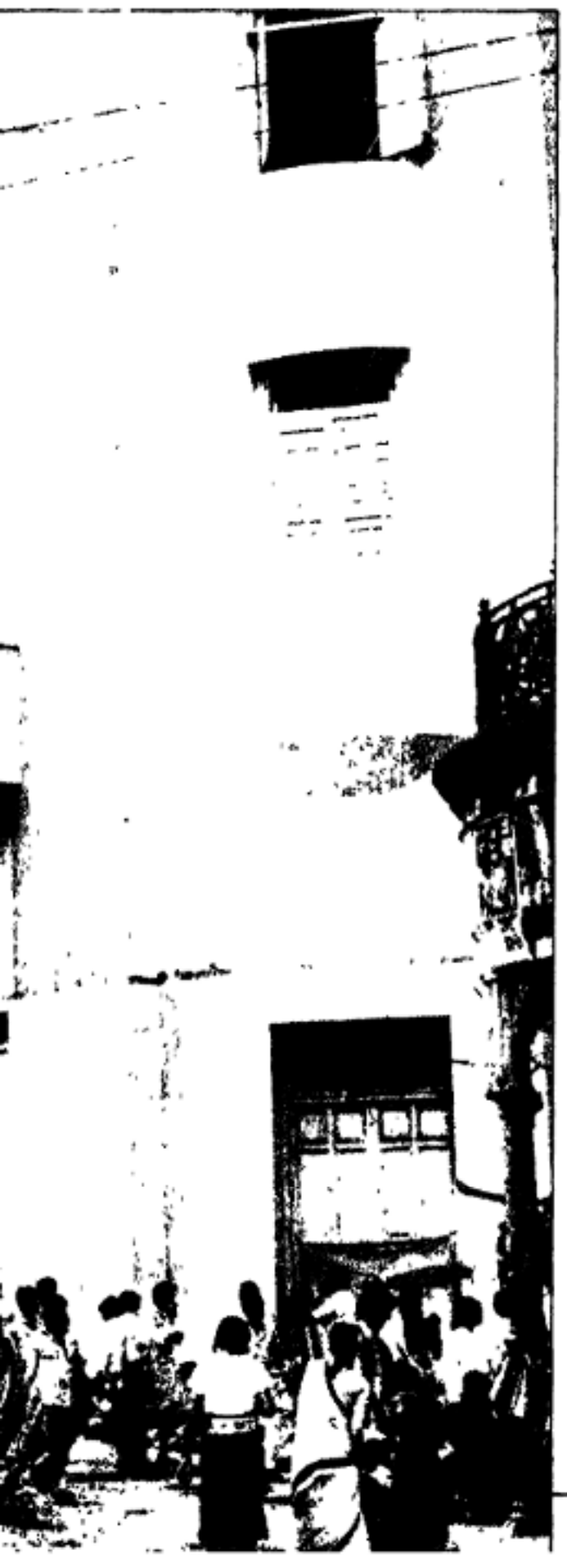
What is worrying both the Peerless unions is the likely loss of livelihood, and hence their demand for nationalisation. And presiding over this new phase of trouble is the new chairman P.C. Sen

Meanwhile, the question of the much-awaited transfer of Tuhin Kanti Ghosh's 5 per cent stake in Peerles' equity is still not resolved. Shortly after Parasmal Lodha severed his ties with Peerless on 31 March this year, it was believed that Ghosh and Arun Poddar, two close associates of Lodha, would also offload their holding in Peerless. But despite several assurances in the last few months, Ghosh, as had been expected, has not sold out his shares to S.K. Roy, the largest shareholder of Peerless. However, Peerless sources indicate that a sale is now imminent and that an undertaking has been obtained from Lodha that Ghosh's equity will be transferred to S.K. Roy soon. Lodha's other associate, Arun Poddar, however denies that he will follow suit. "I have never said I will sell my holding in Peerless and I am not likely to do so now," says Poddar who continues to be a director of Peerless.

In the meantime, at the annual general meeting of the company held in Calcutta on 12 September, the board of directors recommended a record dividend of 35 per cent for the 15-month period from 1 January, 1987 to 31 March, 1988. At the meeting which lasted merely 17 minutes and no awkward questions were asked, Sen said that the company was on an even keel after three years of turmoil. But is it?

Debjani Sinha/*Calcutta*

The Peerless headquarters: not yet out of the woods



TOURISM

The deserted valley

General Zia's death coupled with the cholera epidemic in Delhi has dealt a severe blow to international tourist traffic to Kashmir

The death of President Zia-ul Haq has been a loss to India in more senses than one. The General's death sparked off a spate of violence in the tourists' haven—Kashmir. Coming close on the heels of the cholera epidemic in Delhi, between them the two incidents have dealt a severe blow to the north Indian tourism industry. A fine summer's tourist season has been lost and the tour operators and airlines are virtually biting the dust. Air-India, for example, has received heavy cancellations of group tours bound for Kashmir, after violence flared up in the valley. Earlier, the cholera epidemic—which received front-page coverage in newspapers in all neighbouring and South-East Asian countries—had scared away a large number of tourists.

The double disappointment came at a time when the official apparatus and the private tour operators had laid out a carefully woven red carpet for international tourists. Both had made efforts for almost one year now for wooing tourists from the high-spending segments of the international tourism market. Ironically enough, Kashmir had been given a special thrust with the officials providing all kinds of new facilities and diversions. The private tourism industry had also made efforts to cash in on the expected boom. And now, at that end of it, instead of tourists, their cancellations are coming in. In the last two weeks the tour

EASY TO FILE
EASIER TO FIND





Crucial papers misplaced or files lost. Irritating hold-ups, tension, anxiety. You just cannot afford it.

Godrej Instafile — the only solution.

Sturdy, high quality Filing Cabinets from Godrej help you enhance office productivity through systematic storage and retrieval of files.

The functionally designed Instafiles offer a set of unmatched benefits.

- Fully enclosed drawers prevent files and papers from falling out.
- A unique Godrej double extension telescopic slide facilitates smooth, effortless movement of fully loaded drawers and easy access upto the last file.
- The Godrej lock with a 'push and lock' action ensures confidentiality.
- Automated airless electrostatic painting process and special Alkyd-amino paint give the Instafiles longer life and a lasting, attractive finish.

Godrej also offers two choices for Filing Systems:

VISAFILE®—Interconnected file folders house individual files—recommended where files are referred to frequently.

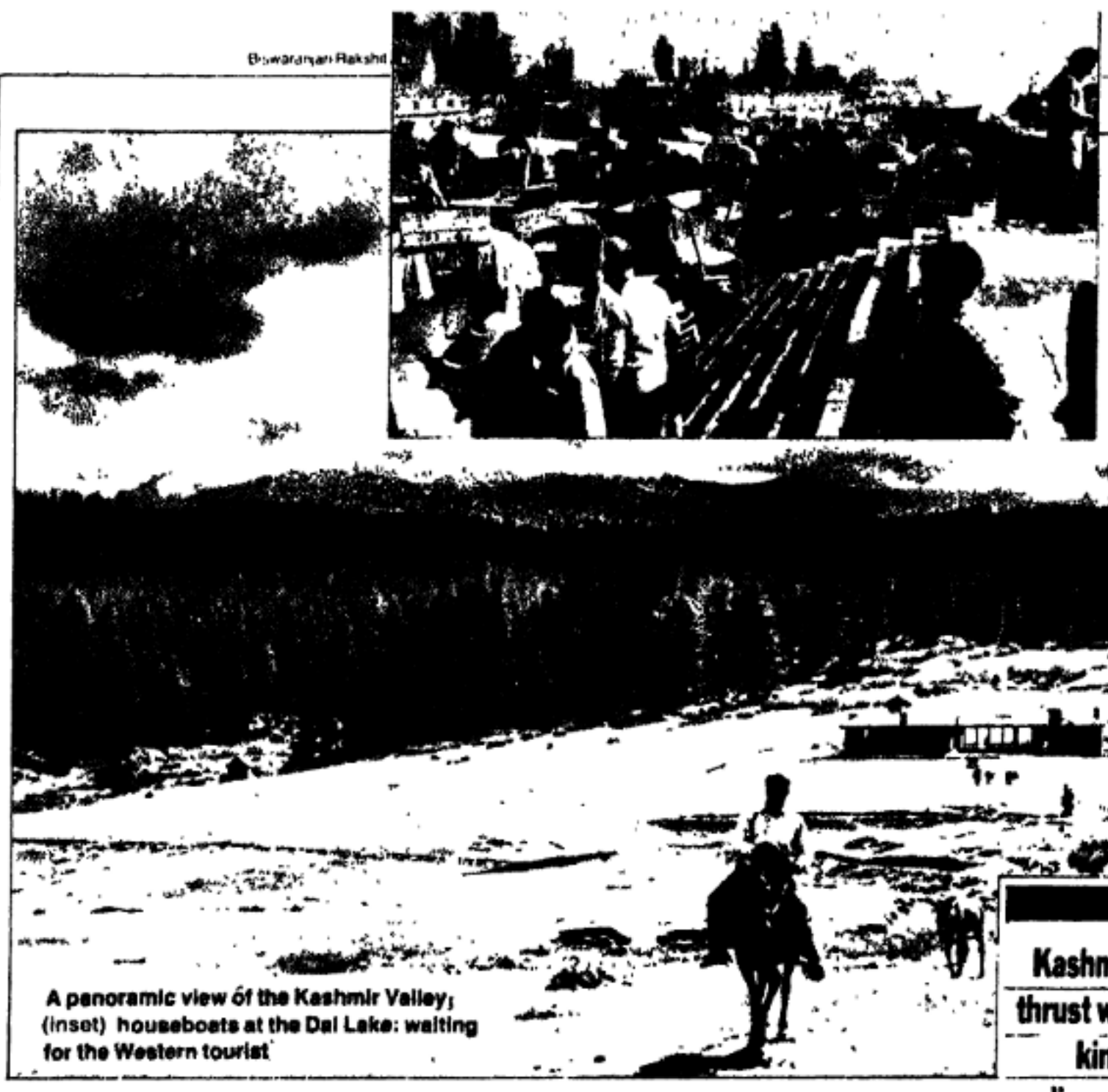
EEZEEFILE®—Individual files suspended directly from the top of the drawer—an economic alternative.

To put an end to disorganised office routines and boost efficiency,buy Godrej Instafiles and Filing Systems today.

Godrej® **INSTAFILE AND FILING SYSTEMS.**

File it. You are sure to find it.

ULKA-GB-17-88



A panoramic view of the Kashmir Valley; (inset) houseboats at the Dal Lake: waiting for the Western tourist

operators received no less than 2,000 cancellations for Kashmir alone.

The private industry had set up a close liaison with overseas agents for organising package tours as well as other "products" (as the tourism industry christens its offers). Apart from organising trekking, rafting, hang gliding, canoeing, golf matches and other sporting activities, both the authorities and the tour operators had banked heavily on promoting skiing in Kashmir's mountain slopes. Though skiing is primarily a winter activity, it is feared that repeated untoward incidents would scare away a large chunk of the potential clientele. Being high-spenders, this segment of the market has a wide range of choice destinations and are likely to be tempted away.

It is hardly surprising then, that tour operators and industry people are desperate. Ram Kohli, president of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), gave expression to his frustration: "Every now and then something crops up which sets at nought all our efforts." Kohli explained that the cholera epidemic was so highly publicised in newpapers in South-East Asia (Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia) that it spoilt their flourishing market. So much so, that a high-level team, comprising officials of the Union tourism ministry as well as representatives from the private tourism industry, had to explain that it was confined to only a small area in Delhi. "We did not tell them that it was in some outlying slums of Delhi, but conveyed that impression. We explained that tourists in good hotels would be safe", one delegation member told SUNDAY.

An official delegation might not mention in so many words that the cholera epidemic was restricted to the Delhi slums alone, but foreign tourists would understandably take no chances. How sensitive foreign tourists could be can be gauged from the fact that disturbances in the region—even as far off as in Afghanistan—had affected tourist flow in times of stress. Kohli confides that Western TV news reports depicting wars, insurgencies or riots in neighbouring countries with maps had also spoiled the chances for the Indian tourism industry. On a map of the South Asian region, India occupies the biggest chunk. Potential visitors confuse India with whatever is happening in the whole region as such, feels Kohli.

Faced with the sudden development, the tourism ministry had asked all its overseas offices to launch a campaign to project a more "positive" image. The ministry cleared the arrival of a 20-member all-women delegation from

Kashmir had been given a special thrust with the officials providing all kinds of new facilities and diversions. The private tourism industry had also made efforts to cash in on the expected boom...But at the end of it the tour operators have received no less then 2,000 cancellations for Kashmir alone

Malaysia in the first week of September. The women were fairly important people, comprising ministers, former ministers, members of the Malaysian parliament, who went sight-seeing as well as visiting co-operatives in Delhi and Kashmir. Incidentally, the team was led by a former Cabinet minister. The special attention for Malaysia is not entirely accidental, for no less than 28,500 tourists from that country visited India last year.

Possibly, the latest developments do carry a message for the tourism ministry, as well as those in the tour and travel trade. Instead of seeking to promote tourism in small pockets, the authorities would do well to adopt a new strategy for promotion of international tourism in the country. Why not promote other destinations as well instead of making visitors converge on Kashmir and the traditional Golden Triangle?

Anjan Roy/*New Delhi*

David and Goliath vie for L&T

The battle for Larsen and Toubro has either hotted up or is over, depending on which version you choose to believe. One version is that the battle is still between the Ambanis and the Chhabrias and that both will keep picking up shares in the market till they are near gaining control. The Chhabrias



Chhabria (left) and Ambani

deny–on the record–that they are at all interested, but off the record this is their story.

The other version has it that the Chhabrias still don't understand how the government industry nexus works. Since 49 per cent of L&T is owned by the institutions, it is their will that will prevail. N.M. Desai, the current chairman, has a negligible shareholding (as did his predecessor H. Holck-Larsen) but enjoys the support of the institutions. The Chhabrias may control 5 per cent of L&T through official and *benami* investment companies but this is nothing compared to the institutional shareholding.

Now, if the institutions back Ambani (who, these days, all but runs the finance ministry), then the Chhabria shareholding is useless. Apparently, an agreement has been reached between the finance ministry, N.M. Desai and the Ambanis whereby Desai will cede control to Dhirubhai next year.

According to this version, the only problem is that the Chhabrias are behaving like children and are refusing to sell their five per cent to the Ambanis. It seems that Manu Chhabria keeps bragging about how he won the Shaw Wallace battle and threatening, "The Ambanis don't know who they are up against."

Says one Bombay stockbroker, "Poor chap, Dhirubhai could eat him for breakfast and not notice."

ITDC, Hotel Corp. to merge

At first, it seemed like the obvious move. Air-India would launch a hotel division and compete effectively with other international airlines that owned hotel chains. (In 1974, Hilton International was owned by TWA, Intercontinental by Pan Am, and Penta by a consortium of European carriers.) Of course, it didn't work out that way. Though the two metropolitan Centaur properties (Delhi airport and Bombay airport) have maintained high occupancies, they are widely regarded as third-rate properties.

Now, the aviation and tourism ministry has finally decided to merge Hotel Corporation of India (HCI), Air-India's hotel division, with the state-run India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC). Given ITDC's record, however, it is questionable whether the Centaurs will now be substantially better run.



Inside the Centaur Hotel in Bombay

P&G gears up for battle

Procter and Gamble is taking its first tentative steps to build up its strength in India. For starters, it is using this country as a base to export to Russia. It has already started exporting Crest toothpaste to the USSR. In addition, it is studying the possibility of exporting a whole range of products to the Soviets.

Procter and Gamble which made its debut in India when it took over the parent company of the highly successful Hindustan Richardson Ltd, is also exploring the possibilities of bringing its highly successful range of soaps and toilet products to India. Intensive market surveys are being conducted to establish whether its products like Camay soap will be able to find a niche in the Indian market. But whichever product it introduces, there is no doubt that it will face stiff competition from the Hindustan Lever juggernaut.

One stag presence at all recent parties has been that of Jackie Shroff. He hangs around, well into the early hours of the morning, his hang-dog expression a sight for sore eyes. His only topic of conversation, rue bored bystanders, is wife Ayesha, conspicuous by her absence.

Rumour has it that the marriage is on the rocks, *femme fatale* Dimple made out the vamp of the piece according to some. Others snigger that Jackie puts off going home to Papillon (the house that Ayesha built) because the sometime *chawl*-resident still feels uncomfortable in the plush environs



Jackie Shroff: a marriage gone sour?

created by his moneyed wife. Yet another version has it that Ayesha disapproves of Jackie's male friends, for reasons best left unexplored.

If you're wondering why Anil Kapoor's hair has been standing on end even more of late, we have the answer. It is competition he fears, especially if it comes from within the clan, which, if elder brother Boney Kapoor is to be believed, holds a monopoly on talent in the industry. And the youngest of the family, Sanjay, is being launched by Boney in his latest film. So Anil is, not surprisingly, running scared.

As is Farah Naaz, whose



Farah Naaz: sibling rivalry

kid sister Tabbu is co-starring with Sanjay. The stiff-upper-lip routine being quite unknown to her, she makes no bones about her rancour, going as far as to boycott the party hosted to launch the film and the lead pair.

Blood, evidently, is not thicker than rivalry.

Much maligned Sonam! She has been accused of various misdemeanours, the least of them being deliberate rudeness. With any validity? Her behaviour at Govinda's recent party provided food for thought.

Sonam sat in a corner with dear aunt Sabia, concentrating on shoving spoonfuls of Pan Parag into her mouth. All the men, coming on like never before, were ignored. The film industry's favourite floozie was tired after a hard day's work and PR was the last thing on her mind. So, even when the great K.C. Bokadia came up to...um... speak to her, she yawned disinterestedly in his direction and flounced off towards her car, a good night's rest obviously on her mind.

But give the poor kid a break. Hormone injections, or no hormone injections, she is, after all, yet a child.

Sonam: poor little rich girl

She obviously has what it takes, for Sangeeta Bijlani's latest godfather (with feelings far from paternal, one suspects) is the saturnine idol of the silver screen:



Sangeeta Bijlani: got what it takes

Mithun Chakraborty. Our *desi* Michael Jackson recommends Bijli to all the producers these days, but, true to form, is very secretive about this, his latest passion.

The sexy Sridevi has smitten yet another. And that, too, none other than superstar Amitabh Bachchan. Amitji, say usually reliable sources, has yet to recover from watching Sridevi perform a provocative dance in a forthcoming film.

Absolutely taken, the Bachchan just had to communicate his appreciation. So, a truckload of flowers made their way to Madras where the lady was shooting, with the compliments of the mega-star. And how,you may wonder,did Sridevi react to this saying-it-with-flowers stunt? **Ask Mummy!** ■

HIGH-FLYING INDUSTRIALIST **Vijaypat Singhania** touched ground at New Delhi's Safdarjung airport, having covered 9,600 kms in a flight which began at Biggin Hill, Kent and ended in the capital a mere 23 days later. Singhania had, in the process, created a world record in solo flights and on hand to congratulate him, as he emerged, heat rashes and all, from the cockpit of his tiny red and white 15-kg plane, were family and friends, the Prime Minister's secretariat in-charge, Sheila Dixit, and British journalist Brian Milton, whose record Singhania had shattered.

The warm welcome extended by all led a touched



Vijaypat Singhania: record feat

Singhania to say: "I am choked with emotion and find it very difficult to express my gratitude to all the people assembled here." Talking about his flight, he disclosed, "There were moments when I would begin to get tired. But it is the spirit of man which keeps you going."

And, of course, *L'esprit d'Indian Post*

◆

ANOTHER PRODIGAL son returneth. **Abdur Rehman Antulay**, whose prodigious talents at setting up trusts, named after the venerable Indira Gandhi, are now legend, has been re-admitted into the fold of the faithful (the Congress-I) by Rajiv Gandhi, who has, evidently, decided that with elections a mere year-and a-half away,



A.R. Antulay: back in the fold

he needs all the help he can get with fund-raising.

Antulay, the fifth "old-guarder" to be re-admitted into the Congress(I) (after Chandrajit Yadav, Nandini Satpathy, Sayed Mohammed Hashmi and S.C. Shukla), was informed over the phone of the decision to take him back, by K.N. Singh, general secretary of the party, and was, as expected, ecstatic.

None more fanatic than the recently-converted; so we had Antulay hold forth: "I



Sunil Dutt: framed

lie prostrate before God Almighty, thanking Rajiv Gandhi profusely and assuring him of my total commitment and loyalty as the *karta* of this joint Indian family of the Congress(I) party."

Not for nothing is Indian politics said to be a family affair.

◆

BEING IN the eye of the camera couldn't be a novel experience for him. Nonetheless, **Sunil Dutt**, member of Parliament from Bombay North-West and foremost among our political *padayatris* was more than a little rattled by the tactics adopted by Japanese lensmen to frame him.

On a visit to Japan to walk, this time round, in memory of Hiroshima victims, Dutt found cameras zooming in on him every which place he went. The legendary Japanese drive, rues Dutt, made even bathing a hazardous venture, him never knowing when a flash would go pop, immortalising the honourable member, for the benefit of posterity, in a pose fit to do a Mandakini proud. Even his bedroom Dutt recounts with horror, was not sacrosanct. One night, he woke up to find a camera looming above him as he lay supine.

Viewed from anything but a wide angle, this must surely qualify as a shutter and close case.

◆

A TOUCH of Parisian chic visited Atasua village, (50 kms from Calcutta) recently, in the person of **Danielle Mitterrand**, wife of the French President, Francois Mitterrand and driving force behind the Danielle Mitterrand Foundation. The occasion: the inauguration of a housing project for the poorest of the poor, executed by Mass Education, a non-government organisation and financed by the foundation named after the French First Lady.

Danielle Mitterrand: a lady of substance



The journey to the village under the scorching blaze of the Bengal sun was well worth it, the visitor being extended a tumultuous welcome. Hundreds lined the route the convoy was to take, cheering the lady and at the village itself, schoolchildren provided musical entertainment for her benefit. Inauguration and a tour of the centre over, Madame Mitterrand confessed admiration for the good work done by Mass Education.

The French President, disclosed his wife, would be

visiting India next year in connection with the Festival of France and she promised, tight schedule permitting, to visit the centre again.

"CALCUTTA IS my world." Or so says **Mrinal Sen**, the Bengali director, who is variously perceived—by some serious cinema buffs as the maestro who made socially-relevant films like *Mrigaya*, *Interview* and *Genesis* and by others as a dreadfully boring 'Park Street' Marxist who hasn't come up with a single decent thing since *Bhuvan Shome*. Whatever the truth, Calcutta will be his cinematic world for his next venture.

Sen has been chosen to do the film by Holland's City Life Foundation. So has Calcutta—one of the 12 cities around the world on which similar features will be made. For instance, the celebrated Jean Luc Goddard has been selected to capture gay Paree, Bernado Bertolucci will present Rome and Tokyo will be 'done' by Nagisa Oshima. Later, these various clips will be put together to create a full-length documentary. As you see, both the director and the city are in very good company.



Tarapada Banerjee

Mrinal Sen: Oh, Calcutta!

RIGHT FROM day one, when she stepped into the world of cinema in a not-so-glamorous but critically-acclaimed role in Mrinal Sen's *Mrigaya*, **Mamata Shankar** has had a dream. A role in a Ray film. That very special director has at last looked sideways and noticed her. He has decided to cast her (or so says Mamata) in his forthcoming film based on an Ibsen play, either *The Doll's House* or *The Enemy of the People*. Satyajit Ray has not, as yet, said anything either way for public consumption, refusing to answer the queries of inquisitive scribes, who wanted to know the identity of his new heroine.

Mamata, however, is full of her next venture. In fact,



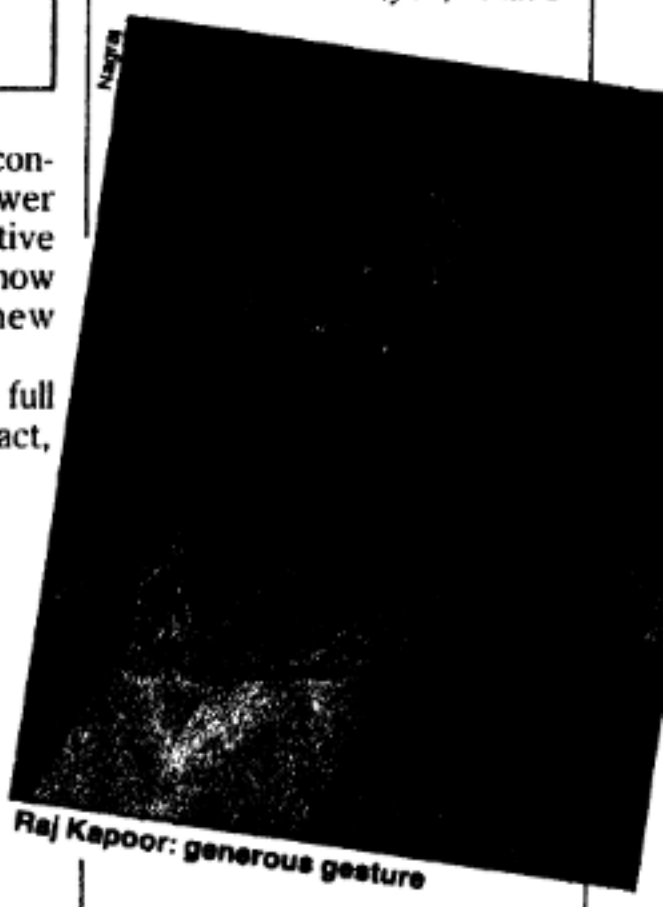
Salim Pal

Mamata Shankar: dream come true

at a recent seminar on Ray, held in Calcutta, all she said when asked to take the stage was how she had visited the maestro at his house to ask him for a role. Ray, evidently, stared back at her and then boomed in his impressive baritone, "But, naturally, you are my new heroine."

Of such stuff are dreams made.

TRUST A showman to exit on a generous if not grand gesture. **Raj Kapoor**, late patriarch of the first family of Indian filmdom (yes, that's what the Kapoors make themselves out to be) had been presented the Dadasaheb Phalke Award on 2 May and suffered an asthamatic attack the same day, which proved fatal a month later. The award came with Rs 1 lakh in cash and Raj, says eldest son Randhir, had confided to wife Krishna that he wished to donate the amount to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. The wishes of the dead being sacrosanct, Randhir Kapoor visited the capital recently to present Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi with the amount, in deference to dear Papaji's desire. So, even after the maestro's exit, his mystique lives on.



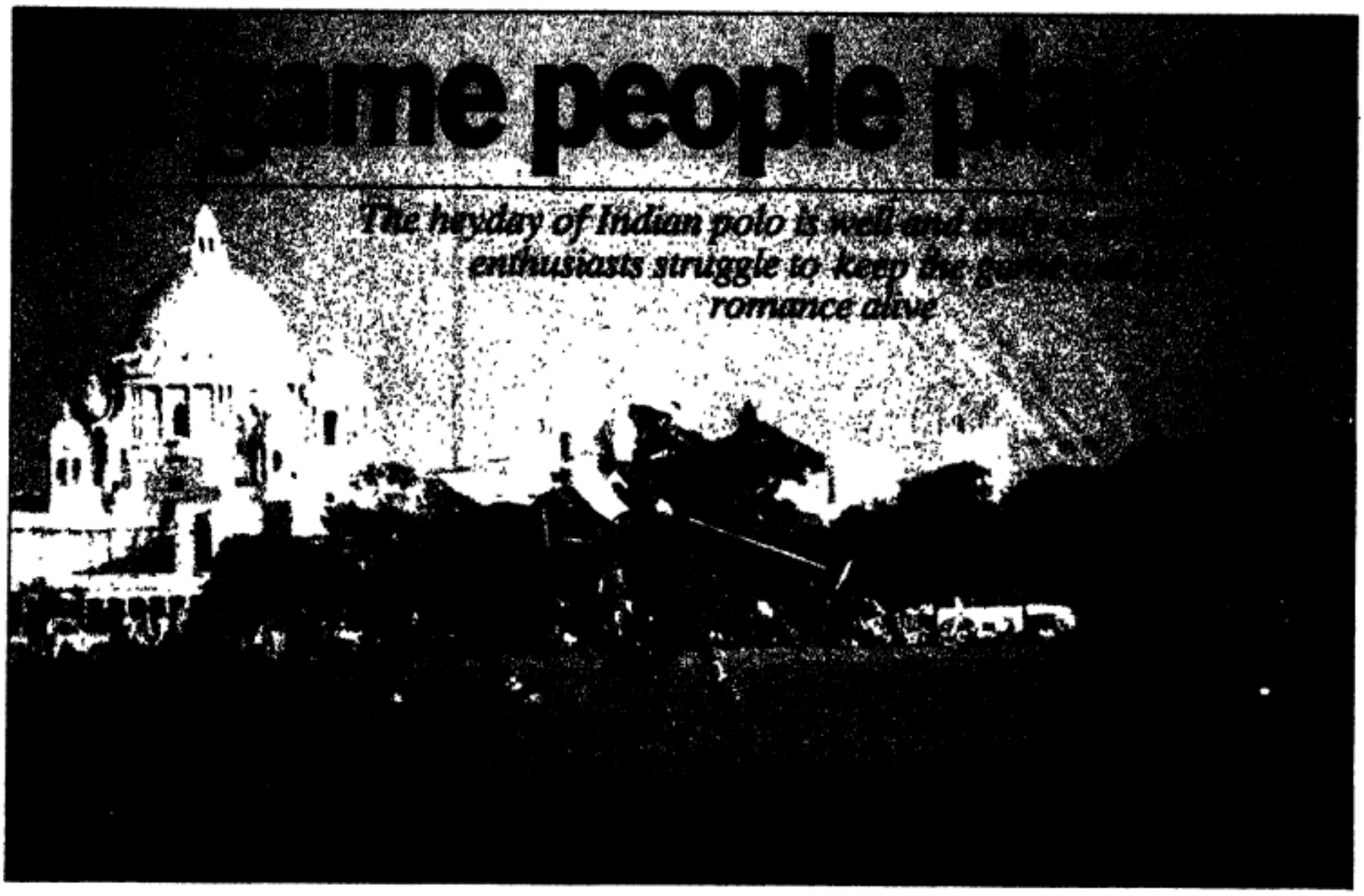
Nagma

Raj Kapoor: generous gesture

Compiled by Seema Goswami

ame people p

The heyday of Indian polo is well and ... enthusiasts struggle to keep the g... romance alive



The end was wholly unexpected, a little tragic and, strangest of all, incredibly apt. The maharani of Jaipur, Rajmata Gayatri Devi, and prince Bhawani Singh drove down from London to watch His Highness of Jaipur, Sawai Man (Jai) Singh play polo at the ground in Cinecester. They parked off the road near the ground and from inside the car watched the play through the light drizzle. During a pause in the game, in between two chukkers, mother and stepson saw the maharaja suddenly falling to the ground. By the time they crossed the field and got to him, he was dead, of heart failure. And with him, on that wet English afternoon of the summer of 1970, died the best and most glorious moments of Indian polo.

Jai Singh, more than any other man, had symbolised, for India, the evanescent glory of polo. He was the figure that stood out during the heydays of Indian polo, especially in the radiant seasons of the Pink decade. "That was the best time for Indian polo," recalls the late maharaja Jai Singh's heir, Lt Col Bhawani (Bubbles) Singh. Beginning from 1933, the Indians had gone on a winning spree picking up every available trophy, starting from the 1933 Coronation Cup to the Olympic gold medal in 1935. That was a magnificent era for the players from Jaipur, Jodhpur, Patiala and other Indian polo clubs. It was an era that mixed equestrian skills with the romance of high society and adventure on the field. These old moments of greatness survive in the form of old paintings, including one retouched canvas proudly displayed to this day in Jaipur's Rambagh Palace Hotel Polo Bar, showing the late maharaja, young and athletic then, receiving the Coronation Cup from Queen Mary in 1933, and in old, solid silver trophies and memories.

If Jai was the central figure of Indian polo, then Calcutta, till then still the jewel of the British empire, was its grandest venue. The sporting event of the Indian year was traditionally "Christmas Polo" at Calcutta. Down the road from the Belvedere of white-washed bungalows, and in the middle of the Calcutta race course, was the carefully manicured championship polo ground, the scene of some of the finest polo exhibitions in the world. Every winter afternoon witnessed this ground filled with Indian royalty, bejewelled ladies, cavalrymen, outstanding players from abroad and the elite of Calcutta. The players in their colourful outfits mingled with the ladies, the chukkers thundered on, and the exhilarating afternoons were celebrated with pink gins and beer.

Pickles Sodhi getting ready for a match



Calcutta remains the polo capital of India, the venue of its most prestigious trophy, the Indian Polo Association (IPA) Cup, and every winter the best teams from all over the country still congregate here. On winter afternoons, the bearers serve gin and beer, the polo ponies and their colourful riders thunder on with their chukkers, and the old-timers still recall seasons past with nostalgia and clipped accents. But the crowds have disappeared. The ladies are beautiful but rare. Patrons virtually non-existent. And Indian polo in total eclipse.

Just how bad the times are for Indian polo is evident in the sharp decline in the number of polo players and ponies. In

Colour photographs: Ahmad Ali

pre-independent India, the Indian army alone had 8-10 regiments of cavalry and princely states had their own army and cavalry. The royalty and the landed gentry in many parts of the country also maintained their own stables. Amongst all of them they had thousands of horses and several hundred were trained for polo. In the 1930s, the Maharaja of Jaipur alone had 200 polo ponies and in 1933 had taken 130 ponies in two shiploads all the way to England.

Today, the number of polo ponies in the country is estimated at 250, the bulk of them with various army establishments like the 61st cavalry at Jaipur, the National Defence Academy (Karakvasla), the Indian Military Academy (Dehra Dun), the President's bodyguard (New Delhi) and various veterinary, supply and artillery units. Even this would not have remained had it not been for Jawaharlal Nehru. After World War II the British had planned to disband all the cavalry regiments of the Indian army but at Nehru's insistence had left one cavalry regiment and horses for gentlemen cadets to train on.

The worst hit have been the civilian polo clubs. Out of the total of 29 clubs in the country, about 17 are entirely civilian and not supported by the armed forces or the police. And polo clubs do not possess horses. The Rajasthan Polo Club at Jaipur, which is one of the most famous and oldest in the country, operates with just six polo ponies, all of them owned by the maharaja of Jaipur. Shortage of ponies has bred a predictable decline in the spread and quality of the game. Even the number of chukkers in one polo game has been cut from the original six to four for want of horses.

The game, at the same time, has become far more expensive to play. Even in the early 1970s, clubs that possessed horses would hire them out to players at the rate of Rs 7.50 per chukker but today the same clubs charge an average of Rs 30 a chukker. Not surprisingly, the game today has few takers in this country and the number of polo players has stagnated at just 200. A leading polo playing country like Argentina, in contrast, is reported to have 7-8,000 horses and about 4,000 players.

The quality of polo players too has declined. For the past ten years only three players, all of them from the army–Colonel R.S. 'Pickles' Sodhi, Maj K.S. Garcha and Lt Col R. Brar–have dominated the game in this country. Polo players are rated on a zero to ten handicap scale. The best Indian players today are 5-goal players, whereas in the 1930s the country could boast of at least four 10-goal players. The very last time when an Indian team won in international competition was the 1954 World Cup in America. Indian players are still occasionally invited by foreign clubs, but not so much for their gamesmanship as for old times' sake. "Standards have gone down, admits Maharaja Bhawani Singh, "today players desperately need sponsorship, and the finances to go abroad to improve their skills."

Polo has become far more expensive these days. Not surprisingly the game has few takers and the number of polo players has stagnated at just 200. The quality of players, too, has declined



A game of polo in progress: declining standards

"Polo has become boring with the same faces at every match," complains a polo enthusiast, Raghubendra (Bonny) Singh Dunlod. "In Jaipur alone, we had over a hundred players at one time, whereas today it is the same 14-odd players who are seen at every match." Not surprisingly, says Bonny Dunlod, "the excitement has gone out of the game". The situation in the rest of the country is no different. "The same handful of players travel all over the country to play in different seasons and at different venues", he laments.

Bonny Dunlod recalls a time when even his ancestral village had a local polo ground. Today, Dunlod's village ground is ploughed over and the remainder of his stable has been shifted to Jaipur where the horses are hired out to children and foreign tourists. With the advent of the motor car, tractors and mass transportation and the decline of the landed gentry, the horse has become an exotic, irrelevant object of the past.

"It's a terrible pity," says Col R.S. (Pickles) Sodhi, the Commandant of the 61st Cavalry and one of the finest polo players in the country. "The Indian nation at one time was associated with the horse and the world discovered polo from this country." Polo is believed to have been played by the Mongols, the Persians, the Moghuls and Tibetans. In

illustrating the way polo was



Ladakh, the game is played on the streets. But the British discovered polo through the Manipuris, who learnt the game centuries ago from the Tibetans.

In Manipur, the game, called *Kanjia*, was traditionally played on short, sturdy ponies by everybody--royalty, commoners, young and old. Manipuris who migrated to the Cachar valley in present-day Assam took the game with them. The first record of Englishmen playing polo is of assistant deputy commissioner of Silchar, Captain Robert Stewart. In 1859, when Stewart was promoted, his place was taken by Lt Joe Shearer. The two men pioneered the spread of polo and, along with local tea planters, started a club to play in conjunction with the Manipuris. The game was next taken to Dhaka by Captain Eustace Hill of the Lahore Light Horse.

Meanwhile, merchants and cavalry men from Calcutta had come to hear about polo and, in 1861-62, Captain Stewart came over from Silchar to organise the first polo games at the Ballygunge Parade Grounds. The Calcutta Polo Club was established in 1863 and survives as the oldest polo club. But it barely survives. It lacks enthusiasts, players, good ponies and patrons. The state of its office--a dingy, two-roomed affair of peeling plaster, mouldy records and a solitary, aging factotum--reflects the faded fortunes of Calcutta polo.

The one institution that really keeps the game alive is the army. With the bulk of horses, the best players and official patronage, the army can boast of polo being its exclusive preserve. And this is only to be expected. "Proficiency in polo is directly related to the availability of trained horses," points out Col Sodhi. The army has also the kind of people who are prepared to take the risks of the game. "Money has shifted from one type of people to another. And today's rich no longer encourage their kids to ride horses or play polo," says Sodhi. Besides, businessmen today prefer to buy race horses and not polo ponies. Indian polo, unlike Indian horse racing, is not a paying proposition. Since the poor and the majority of the middle class cannot afford the equipment or the cost of hiring horses, it is mainly the army that plays.

The army's dominance has predictably bred some amount of bitterness and might even be partially responsible for the game's stagnation. "Polo is a glamorous game and the army does not want it out of its control," complains Bonny Dunlod. He feels that the army, which has the best horses, does not encourage youngsters and, a few years ago, had passed an order barring civilians and foreigners from using their horses. Recently, however, the army amended the order, allowing ex-servicemen and their children to ride army horses.

"The army might be a little possessive about their horses but it would not be fair to hold them responsible for the game's stagnation," says the maharaja of Jaipur. For, whatever little is left of the game is largely because of the army. Bonny Dunlod, on the other hand, feels that "if polo is to survive, it must go to the hands of businessmen". And Indian big business, fortunately, is beginning to take a closer look at polo.



Playing the game with verve; (inset) the Telegraph-Darbhanga Cup Polo Tournament begins

The one institution that really keeps the game alive is the army. With plenty of horses, the best players and official patronage, the army can boast that polo is its exclusive preserve



That polo can arouse mass enthusiasm in this country was proved when a team from Pakistan came to play in Jaipur, a couple of years ago. But the Pakistanis, who had brought their own ponies, soundly beat the Indians

In affluent Bombay, for instance, the local polo club is run entirely by businessmen and corporate executives, who pay for the maintenance of ponies and the salaries of the syces. The maharaja of Jaipur, too, is trying to get big companies to shell out money for buying horses and sponsoring young players to play abroad. Since 1987, Bikki Oberoi of the hotel group has begun sponsoring the Sudan Cup matches between the Indian and British armies. Last year, the Indian army won the Cup in England and next year, the British are scheduled to play in India.

The Indian Polo Association (IPA) is also trying to persuade the various polo clubs round the country to raise finances for buying their own horses. The Central government is being requested to help in the import of polo ponies. Meanwhile, as a member of the World Polo Federation, the IPA has started requesting teams from other countries to visit India. Already, teams from Pakistan, Britain and Mexico have agreed to come in March next year.

That polo can still rouse mass enthusiasm in this country was proved when a team from Pakistan came to play in Jaipur a couple of years ago. The Rajasthan Polo Club ground was packed with a record crowd of 15,000 spectators. The Pakistanis, who had brought their own ponies, soundly beat the Indians. "But it was a great moment and reminded me of the days when a polo match attracted thousands," remarks Bonny Dunlod.

Significantly, the Indians discovered that while most of the Pakistani players were civilians, their horses and syces were of the army. Every armoured regiment of the Pakistani army to this day has to maintain at least 40 horses to keep alive equestrian and polo traditions. The Moghul emperor, Akbar, had held similar views on polo and encouraged his officers to play the game to improve their reflexes and to train them to work as a team. The challenge of polo shows no signs of diminishing in the age of machines and computers. All over the world, interest in this ancient, exhilarating game is mounting. The Olympic Association plans to have this game reintroduced at its next meet. Only in India, polo is *passe*, the legacy of an era of colonialists and feudal princes, and interest in it has ebbed with the retreat of the Raj. India might as well not have rediscovered the game at all.

Indranil Banerjie /Jaipur and Calcutta

A missed opportunity

India's bid to host the 1994 Commonwealth Games fails

Even before the Olympics began in Seoul, there was despair and disappointment in the Indian camp. The over-confident bid by New Delhi to host the 1994 Commonwealth Games came to naught as India was outvoted by Canada. "The games," said minister of state for sports, Mrs Margaret Alva, who was sure New Delhi would be awarded the Games, "were allotted to Victoria for other considerations than reasonable claims." What must have obviously upset her was the voting pattern displayed by the Commonwealth members at Seoul as India lost its second consecutive bid to stage the Games.

Of the 56 ballots cast at the general assembly meeting of the Commonwealth Games Federation, New Delhi could only poll 18 votes against 29 for Victoria and seven for Cardiff (Wales). This was a poor show when compared with India's futile bid for the 1990 Commonwealth Games when it lost to Auckland, New Zealand, by four votes. Interestingly, in 1984, during the Los Angeles Olympics, the formal consent of the Indian government came only three hours before the federation meeting was convened. After that came India's vain bid for the Olympics. The then IOA (Indian Olympic Association) president, V.C. Shukla, who was keen to bring the games to the capital received no backing from the Indian government. The winner was Barcelona despite the stiff competition from Amsterdam.

Ever since the aborted Olympics bid, Margaret Alva and senior sports administrators have been boasting about India's chances to host the Commonwealth Games. Two months ago, New Delhi was the venue of an international sports seminar for which Rs 15 lakhs was spent. It was at best a public relations exercise to ensure that India could put up the Commonwealth Games. Though India's case was well-presented, this time even member-countries like Bangladesh and the Maldives were not forthcoming in their support. Both countries abstained from voting. It was the Caribbeans and the black votes that went against New Delhi. As one IOA member said: "It is indeed ironical that even India's neighbours did not cast their votes for her. And when we have taken the lead to ban the British team which has had sporting contacts with South Africa from coming to India, the majority of the Commonwealth nations votes against us."

The failure of New Delhi to corner the 1994 Commonwealth Games is being seen in sporting circles also as a failure of our foreign policy. "What is the use of having a globe-trotting Prime Minister if India cannot muster enough goodwill among a small group of nations?" demanded one sports administrator. There are also complaints that the nine-member delegation headed by Mrs Alva comprised some politicians who had no organisational experience for holding international meets and, therefore, were hardly an asset for the federation meeting. They cited the case of the Norwegian Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland's visit to Seoul to ensure that Lillehammer got the nod for the 1994 Winter Olympic Games.

Thanks to the inept handling of such proposals and lack of follow-up action, India has not been able to consolidate the facilities and infrastructure built up during the 1982 Asian Games. The bid for the 1992 Olympics was handled in a ham-handed manner. This time, on the first occasion, India made a concerted bid to host a major sporting event. The performance of the politicians at the Commonwealth Games Federation meeting will be a setback to the morale of the sports edifice in the country. It will also be seen as a major diplomatic failure.

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*



Margaret Alva: disappointing performance

Drawing the lines

Neeta Bhosale is now Bombay's top illustrator



Neeta Bhosale's illustrations: innovative style

The soft features, milk-white complexion and eyes peering through large glasses do not necessarily project an image of gutsy perseverance. But at 24, Neeta Bhosale has already become one of the best known illustrators in Bombay today. Remember the Sunil Gavaskar illustrations in the teaser ads asking readers to guess what Gavaskar was up to? They appeared just before Gavaskar took over as editor of *Sportsweek* and they were done by Bhosale. More recently, Bhosale's illustration of one of the best-known faces in the advertising world, that of Alyque Padamsee, created quite a sensation. It was the ad prepared by Trikaya for *The Times of India,* claiming that the paper had a circulation greater than that of all the other big names in the magazine world put together. Caricatures of Padamsee and other advertising bigwigs were used in the ad to buttress this extravagant claim. An outraged Padamsee demanded that the ad containing his caricature be withdrawn!

Of course Bhosale's work also contains a lot of fun, frolic and beauty. Garden Vareli's staid public issue ads caught the eye primarily because of Bhosale's illustrations of long-limbed, graceful women.

"I specialise in illustrations," says Neeta Bhosale, "because unlike in photography, you can give vent to your imagination and fantasy. Sometimes photographs can be dull, while an illustration can put life into it, bring out the contrast." Bhosale's illustrations for the Verrano hoardings depicting slender women behind huge sunglasses, are a classic example of her work. Mystery and glamour seem to be her dominant themes. Understandably, her work also includes pamphlets for beauty products.

Bhosale's style is varied and it is something she has developed on her own through practice. You certainly do not learn this kind of thing in school, particularly not in the J.J. School of Arts. "In fact," says Bhosale, what they teach you at the J.J. seems so useless and impractical when you go out into the ad world. Whether for printing or artwork, you have to start all over again." With her avant-garde style, Bhosale did not have an altogether easy time at the J.J. School. She failed in her illustration exam because she did not accept the style that the school sought to impose on her. "But I knew I was good and I decided to try my luck at an agency, and soon enough, I got a job with Clarion, one of the biggest ad agencies at that time. I worked there for 14 months. Later, since I wanted to do visualisation, I joined da Cunha's. I got a real big break as a freelancer after I did illustrations of pavement clothes stalls for the Taj colour magazine. Thereafter I got a lot of calls which generated a lot of work. And now there is no looking back," says Bhosale.

However, people often have fixed ideas about illustration techniques, complains Bhosale. "They think of freelancers at the last moment and this does not leave much time for experimenting. I want to discover new styles and techniques." For her pavement shops illustration she first used a simple black felt pen for drawing and then gave it a brush and water touch-up with telling effect. But there is plenty more that needs to be done, whether on handmade surfaces or steel plates.

"One handicap about being dubbed an illustrator," says Bhosale, "is that people don't let you do visualisation and art direction. But now I am doing a calendar where I have been given the entire work from designing to selecting the models, designing the clothes and doing the illustrations. Before this, I was always being directed. Now I am going to direct."

Portraits and dress designing are two hobbies that Bhosale cultivates assiduously. "I have been doing portraits of people since childhood. So now it comes very easily. Dress designing I have yet to take up seriously. I do not have the time at the moment, but I hope to do it professionally soon."

Among the most visible of her works is the mascot for Aristocrat luggage which appears on the bottom line of the Aristocrat ad. It is a take-off on the well-known actor, Harish Patel of *Bottoms Up* fame. Bhosale has also done packaging for Hareen Peas of MAFCO, and is now designing, among other things, a carton for a breakfast cereal marketed by a well-known pharmaceutical company.

Olga Tellis/Bombay

"The day when Profit stops being a dirty word in our country, we shall start growing prosperous."

— S.L. KIRLOSKAR

Kirloskar



We could not have survived for a hundred years without earning profits. Profits to plough back into new ventures. Profits to provide gainful employment. Profits to finance research and development. Profits to share with our shareholders. Profits to contribute to the National Exchequer. And profits to help us keep pace with the world.

Our capacity to make productive use of man's abilities by providing him with a personal motive to think, act and create instruments of wealth for himself, for us and for our country — this has been our mainstay. In the interest of Industry at large, and the Kirloskar enterprise in particular, we have to succeed and to earn profits.

We shall continue to contribute to India's social and economic betterment through engineering excellence — our chosen method.

100

KIRLOSKAR CENTENARY
1888-1988



Mukesh Parpiani

Rajiv's legal hatchet man

P. Shiv Shankar has made himself indispensable as Rajiv Gandhi's legal troubleshooter

His political stars have been on the ascendant since 1980. Notwithstanding a few ups and downs, P Shiv Shankar has managed to convince those he serves that his is a legal brain - some say uncharitably that it is devious--that can find a solution to any problem. Whenever his political masters find themselves in a fix they turn to Shiv Shankar to show them the way out. And those who know him say he has never let them down. Examples of his legal ruthlessness, when even public opinion ceases to matter, can be found in two of the most controversial Bills brought by Rajiv Gandhi's government. One seeks to take away the right to divorce of Muslim women under the guise of the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill, and the other amounts to an attack on the free press, in the garb of the more recent Defamation Bill.

Shiv Shankar's is a rags to riches story--with the riches coming to him after he joined politics in 1978. Hailing from a poor family, Shiv Shankar was educated in Chandigarh, being largely dependent on scholarships throughout his student life. He became a lawyer and grew in stature to become a judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court (1974-75). His legal acumen was never in question. The political bug bit him around this time and he quit the legal profession on the plea that the emoluments available to him as a judge were not enough to make ends meet. He moved to Delhi and came into prominence as one of the counsels representing Indira Gandhi in the many legal cases filed against her by the Janata government. Incidentally, at that time, he was living with H.R. Bhardwaj, who later became Union minister of state for law, in Delhi. He never forgot this and from 1980 onwards when Bhardwaj came back to power, Shiv Shankar's political course was set. Prior to this, however, he fought and won a Parliamentary election from Andhra Pradesh with the support of the then chief minister, M. Chenna Reddy.

Indira Gandhi called on Shiv Shankar all the time for legal advice. In fact, she specifically asked him and R Venkataraman to defend one of her chief ministers, A.R. Antulay, in the much-publicised case against him. Nothing was done in the legal field without Shiv Shankar's knowledge. The same situation continues. That Shiv Shankar lost no time in establishing an equation with the new leader, Rajiv Gandhi, was obvious when he was seen hovering around when the latter went to Sultanpur to file the nomination papers for the Amethi Lok Sabha election. A correspondent who was present asked a colleague what Shiv Shankar was doing there. Shiv Shankar's sharp ears picked up the question and he retorted, "You obviously do not know that I am a lawyer as well." He went on to personally scrutinise each piece of paper before forwarding it to Rajiv Gandhi sitting beside him, while the then chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, Narain Dutt Tiwari, and UPCC(I) president V.P. Singh stood respectfully behind. From that day on he has not looked back.

As Union law minister, a post which he held for some time, Shiv Shankar introduced the controversial resolution allowing for the transfer of judges from one state to another. This was one of the first political tools he offered his masters to control the judiciary and one which was deeply resented by the legal profession. Shiv Shankar has held several portfolios but has not proved particularly competent in any. As petroleum minister he earned the high command's displeasure when it became known that petroleum agencies had been given to people who were not members of the Congress(I). He also held dual charge of the external affairs and commerce ministries. He proved to be a 'disastrous' foreign minister and the portfolio was taken away from him following several complaints from bureaucrats who could not get used, as one of them put it, to his "ham-handed" style of functioning. As Union commerce minister he ran into trouble when he tried to push through a proposal to transfer international trade to the industry ministry and to abolish the commerce department altogether. A study paper was prepared but the idea had to be given up following protests from those involved.

In 1984, Shiv Shankar's political fortunes showed a decline. He contested the Lok Sabha elections from Medak, considered the safest constituency (Indira Gandhi too had been elected from there) for the Congress(I) in Andhra Pradesh and lost miserably. Initially T. Anjiah was to contest from Medak but because Shiv Shankar coveted this seat, the former was forced to contest the election from Secunderabad (Shankar's earlier Lok Sabha seat from which he was extremely reluctant to contest). The irony of it was that while Shiv Shankar was routed by the Medak electorate, Anjiah was one of the few Congress(I) candidates to win from Andhra Pradesh.

Shankar did not make it then to Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet He was later brought into the Rajya Sabha as the party's candidate from Gujarat. For a while it appeared that the Prime Minister's reliance on him was shaken and he was made to look after the Centre-state relations document for a while, or

Examples of his legal ruthlessness, when even public opinion ceases to matter, can be found in two controversial Bills: the Muslim Women's Bill and the more recent Defamation Bill

even head the Indo-Soviet friendship organisation, etc. There was also a proposal to despatch him as the high commissioner to UK or some other country. But Shiv Shankar survived and after a short while came back into the Cabinet.

He is Rajiv Gandhi's legal troubleshooter and there are no two opinions about that. He is not particularly popular in the Congress(I), most members disliking his brash and, as one insisted, 'crude' manner which antagonises more than it endears. He is a rough and ready type with little or no finesse as he seems to have only one mission in life: to serve his masters to the best of his ability. He has little vision and, according to one ruling party member who knows him well, "is short-sighted to a fault".

Analysing Shiv Shankar's approach to politics, a Congress(I) member who has seen him in action almost from day one, says that his utility lies in his ability to find a way out of any tight spot. When a solution defies the political mind, Shiv Shankar's legal brain comes into play and finds a way out, regardless of how unconstitutional or oppressive the final result might turn out to be. The Defamation Bill, most in the party feel, is his brainchild. They also point out that the man is so devious that he has managed to take a back seat while P. Chidambaram is projected as the fall guy. The Defamation Bill has re-established that reports of Shiv Shankar's declining fortunes were mere conjecture and that he continues to enjoy the Prime Minister's confidence.

There is no doubt that between the two Bills Shiv Shankar's political fortunes showed a downward trend, at least for a time. He was in the forefront when the Muslim Women's Bill was drafted and passed, receiving more than able assistance from the minister of state for law, H.R. Bhardwaj. Ashoke Sen, who was then the law minister, was completely sidetracked and apart from putting up a token defence of the Bill in Parliament he had little or no idea about what was happening in his ministry. Shiv Shankar stepped in and along with the Muslim fundamentalists, H.R. Bhardwaj and others brought in a Bill to repeal a progressive judgment of the Supreme Court and reinforce the conservative interpretation of the Muslim woman's right to divorce.

Again, or as the story goes, when Satish Sharma and others close to the Prime Minister expressed their disapproval about the role of the press in this country, Shiv Shankar was brought in to give it a concrete form. It was his legal brain that drafted the Defamation Bill in consultation,of course,with Chidambaram, H.K.L. Bhagat, H.R. Bhardwaj, etc. But most Congress(I) members feel that he was the prime drafter, putting his master's thoughts within a legal framework. It is his job to execute the orders and not to advise, as one Congress(I) leader said, and Shiv Shankar never departs from the norm he has set for himself. In this lies his secret to success. And, he has the ability to find out loopholes in any legal statute and to derive the utmost benefit out of them.

The difference between him and the other law ministers of Rajiv Gandhi's government is more than apparent. Bhardwaj could have been described as a protege at one time. Shiv Shankar's forte is constitutional law while Bhardwaj is better known for his prowess, or otherwise, in the criminal field. Ashoke Sen was the only other contender but lost out because his opinions on any matter were never quick, off-the-cuff assessments. And Sen, unlike Shiv Shankar, was always very concerned about the impact. For Shiv Shankar all this was, and remains, secondary. For him the first question is: what do the political masters want? And there is no second question. He goes about examining the law, looking for the way out. Almost always he manages to come up with an answer—freedom and public opinion be damned.

Seema Mustafa/*New Delhi*



Nature has gifted you eyes...
Keep them healthy and beautiful
— the natural way

Cineraria Schwabe

PROVEN HOMEOPATHIC FORMULA FOR EYE CARE



Available with all leading Chemists.

IT'S REGULAR USE SOOTHES, CLEANSES AND KEEPS YOUR EYES HEALTHY

Manufactured and packed in West Germany by Dr. Willmar Schwabe

SCHWABE

Schwabe
Trusted eye care

Quarries of contention

Is Bangladesh illegally mining limestone from the quarries along its border with Meghalaya?

The limestone quarries lying close to the Indo Bangladesh border in Meghalaya have become the centre of a fierce controversy Bangladesh has been working these quarries for the last few years to the mounting indignation of Meghalaya which has lodged strong protests both with the Indian and the Bangladesh governments Meghalaya maintains that these quarries legitimately belong to the state

The entire belt in the south west Khasi Hills of Meghalaya lying adjacent to Bangladesh is rich in limestone deposits, but the bulk of this resource is found in the Barsora area, where the two controversial quarries Bangerghat and Takerghat — are located Meghalaya claims that not only is it losing valuable limestone but that Bangladesh's quarrying is causing ecological damage as well



The Takerghat quarry at the centre of a controversy

Bangladesh possesses only a handful of limestone quarries in the Sylhet district, adjacent to Meghalaya But the output is small compared to its demand, the bulk of which is acquired by a large cement factory at Chatak in the Sylhet district.

Consequently, most of Bangladesh's limestone is imported from South Korea and India, with Meghalaya supplying the entire Indian consignment of 120,000 tonnes annually

Bangladesh's dependence on imports is all the greater since most of its own limestone deposits have gradually been exhausted The quarries have been reduced to barren land waterlogged for most of the year All Bangladesh is left with now is a narrow strip of land lying at the toothills of Meghalaya near the international border

When Bangladesh sought to mine this area sometime in 1974 an agreement was hastily drawn up between the deputy commissioners of the west Khasi Hills and Sylhet district saying that land lying within a distance of nine metres from the border will be left untouched According to mining experts in Shillong this stipulation formulated by non technical people who knew precious little about quarrying, has spelt disaster for Meghalaya Mining laws demand that the safety zone should not be less than 50 metres

Bangladesh's dependence on imports is all the greater since most of its own limestone deposits have gradually been exhausted. The quarries have been reduced to barren land, waterlogged for most of the year. All Bangladesh is left with now is a narrow strip of land lying at the foothills of Meghalaya near the international border

This law is all the more important in a region like the Khasi Hills where the land mass, composed mostly of limestone is soft and therefore vulnerable Not surprisingly the blasting that precedes the actual quarrying in Bangladesh causes strong vibrations which triggers off landslides in Meghalaya Large chunks of limestone slide and fall into Bangladesh's territory Heavy rainfall, frequent in this area, has the same effect but whether the catalyst is man or nature it is Bangladesh which stands to gain

The loss has been particularly great in the Bangerghat quarry, where the hills



One of the border pillars near the Takerghat quarry



The hill slopes near the quarries: causing ecological damage

are softer than at the Takerghat quarry. The revenue department of the Meghalaya government has estimated that about 32,000 square metres of land mass from Bangerghat containing 1.3 million tonnes of limestone, have already fallen across the border into Bangladesh. Revenue officials also say that the entire area has become a haven for smugglers who carry on a regular, lucrative operation in the smuggling of limestone into Bangladesh.

Some border pillars have been uprooted in the process, even those embedded three-four feet below the surface, with the result that in both the places the exact location of the international border is no longer clear. Using this opportunity, Meghalaya officials maintain, Bangladesh is staking its claim to areas which never belonged to it, and in effect quarrying up Indian territory. Thus while environmental problems can be overcome by a long-term solution, a territorial dispute could endanger relations between the two countries.

The entire belt in the south-west Khasi Hills of Meghalaya, lying adjacent to Bangladesh, is rich in limestone deposits. Meghalaya claims that not only is it losing valuable limestone but Bangladesh's quarrying operations in the area is causing ecological damage as well...The state government has complained both to the Bangladesh authorities and the Centre

The Meghalaya goverment first took cognisance of the problem in 1983, when the special director of land records and surveys raised the issue with his counterpart in Bangladesh. A joint inspection conducted by them in December 1983 concluded that boundary pillars had shifted from their original positions "due to the movement of the land mass which occurred due to the indiscriminate quarrying operations by Bangladesh". Later, when Bangladesh did nothing about it, the Meghalaya goverment took up the issue with the central goverment. The Centre, last year, proposed to the Bangladesh goverment that a joint committee of experts be constituted to study the problem. The committee was duly formed, met twice and paid a visit to the disputed sites, but nothing eventually came of it. "We agreed to disagree," remarked one of the committee members cynically. The committee could not come up with a solution as Bangladesh continued to insist that:

- Both countries were bound by the 1974 agreement;
- Landslides were a natural phenomenon and quarrying by Bangladesh had nothing to do with their occurrence;
- Banning of quarrying would throw the 300-odd mine workers out of jobs, besides forcing the closure of the Chatak cement factory and rendering another 800 jobless.

Some solutions have been thought of by India, but the implementation of at least two of them is incumbent on Bangladesh. One of them envisages constructing "bench marks" or "guard walls" against the hills, so that when a landslide occurs, the land mass remains within Meghalaya and the Indian boundary pillars are protected. But the hitch is that these walls will have to be built on land claimed by Bangladesh.

The other solution is for Meghalaya to work both the quarries to full capacity and not partially as is being done now. "Our main difficulty then will be the transportation of the huge quantities of limestone to the rail head at Guwahati," said S. Lyngdoh, managing director of the Meghalaya Mineral Development Corporation.

A third solution is to construct terraces on the hill slopes to prevent landslides. Experts feel that since limestone soil is extremely fertile, vegetables and fruits can be grown on the terraces.

Radhika Ramaseshan/Shillong

SUNDAY WEEK

BEGINNING 25 SEPTEMBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) The week will prove to be fairly successful for you. Those in service will make steady progress. Students will have an easy week. Those pursuing intellectual and artistic activities will be remarkably lucky this week. you will earn the praise of people who matter. Friends and relations will be rather helpful. A very good week for those romantically inclined.
Good dates: 28, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 3, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) The focus is on romance, courtship and marriage this week. A very good time for matrimonial correspondence. Financially this is a good week. luckier ones will gain through inheritance. For those in service, this is the time for you to approach your employers for favours. A friendship is in the offing. The domestic front will remain peaceful and be a source of joy.
Good dates. 25, 27 and 29
Lucky numbers. 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: North-east



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) Although the professional front does not look too bright on account of the failures that you may face this week, do not be disheartened. A friend will turn up at the right moment and help you with your work. The domestic front will remain calm and provide you with adequate support. Deal with elders tactfully, they may prove very demanding. Romance will progress.
Good dates: 26, 27 and 28
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (21 June—20 July) You will need a lot of courage and determination to overcome problems this week. However, you will be amply compensated by a happy romance and a very peaceful domestic front. This is not a particularly favourable week for politicians, there are indications of a major setback. On the professional front competition may cause anxiety. A friend may try to deceive you.
Good dates: 26, 28 and 30
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South-east



LEO (21 July—20 August) An excellent week for women and children. Most of the problems facing you are likely to be solved this week. Seek the help of friends, their advice may come in handy. A week of opportunities for businessmen, new and lucrative deals may be made with a little bit of judgment. The domestic front may not be very peaceful.
Good dates: 27, 29 and 1
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) Provided you watch your words and moves closely, this may turn out to be a fairly successful week for you. A word of advice exercise the utmost caution in dealing with your employer and colleagues. Chances are that your own mistakes will lead to complications. The domestic front may not be altogether calm, you may have differences of opinion with your spouse.
Good dates: 29, 30 and 1
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 6
Favourable direction: East



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) Watch out this week, your enemies will be very active. However, do not worry too much for they are not in a position to harm you. A very good week for romance, courtship and marriage. Do not leave matrimonial correspondence pending. On the professional front, there is likely to be a change. You will be in a position to exercise your influence and make rapid progress.
Good dates: 25, 26 and 30
Lucky numbers: 4, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: South-west



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) A fairly successful week for professionals, provided you are willing to take a reasonable amount of risk. This, however, is not a very good week for businessmen. You will have to overcome the problems facing you with sheer hard work and determination. Do not hesitate to seek the advice of an astrologer. Look forward to a journey towards the end of the week.
Good dates: 26, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 2, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-east



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) The domestic front will turn out to be a source of happiness this week. Even if you are not able to solve your problems, they will, nevertheless, cease to worry you for the moment. Friends and relatives will make this a busy week, and you may have to play host to them around the weekend. Those in service should not challenge superiors.
Good dates: 27, 28 and 29
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) All those in love can cheer up. This is an excellent week for romance, courtship and marriage. But do not take a hasty decision, consult your friends and seek the advice of elders before taking a plunge. Unfortunately, the professional front does not look particularly bright. Do not despair as the hard times will be over soon. A letter will bring good news.
Good dates. 26, 27 and 30
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 8
Favourable direction: East



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) This should be a fairly pleasant week provided you do not let a member of the opposite sex interfere with your professional life. Do not worry unduly if the domestic front does not turn out to be very calm. Deal with your family members tactfully, and matters will not get out of hand. This is not a very good time for drastic changes. A word of advice do not be extravagant. Watch your health.
Good dates: 25, 29 and 1
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 5
Favourable direction: South



PISCES (21 February—20 March) An excellent week for those looking for work. job opportunities will come your way. You may be faced with innumerable problems both on the professional and domestic fronts. Do not lose heart. concentrate on your work and the difficult phase will pass. Let your intuition be your guide and persevere with your plans. Be on your guard as a friend is out to deceive you. Watch your health.
Good dates: 26, 30 and 1
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: West

Star Partners: Pisces-Leo

The ever-changing moods of the Pisces man will confuse, frustrate and hurt the Leo woman. Though at times, she does brood under stress, she never experiences the depressions that her partner is prone to. They must try to be more patient with each other.

Chickening out

God save the soul of the hapless chickens. When Margaret Alva, Union minister for sports and youth affairs, decided to visit Chitradurga, in Karnataka, local Congress (I) stalwarts went overboard to accord a grand reception to the lady. After all Mrs Alva was an emissary from the Centre.

Accordingly, a grand lunch was organised in which hundreds of guests were invited. The feast could not but please even the fussiest palate. A thousand chickens were killed to add to the



delectable cusine. And when all arrangements were complete, the word came through that the minister had cancelled her visit!

While no reason was given for Margaret Alva's hasty decision, the entire government machinery was thrown out of gear. The thousands of rural women who had been brought to the venue in buses and trucks to add colour to the occasion were promptly 'delivered' back home, never mind the huge costs incurred.

As for the chickens, an enterprising *zilla parishad* member hastily sold them to hotels at throwaway prices. And the minister? She did not bat an eyelid and went back to the capital without a care in the world.

Not so juicy

'Fresh and juicy, got to be Frooti'. But how fresh and how fruity? This is precisely



what has provided enough juice to a Calcutta consumer organisation to launch court action against the favourite tetrapak fruit drink. Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) has filed a petition against Parle Beverages, the manufacturers of Frooti, for not conforming to standards prescribed by consumer protection laws. Frooti, reportedly, does not contain the requisite fruit content to be called a fruit drink.

Appy, also manufactured by the same company, too, is facing flack on similar grounds. Parle has been accused of frauding the consumers by selling nothing but "artificially coloured and flavoured sweetened water with a minuscule content of fruit pulp or concentrate"

CUTS also alleges that Parle's ad campaign is misleading, in that it promotes Frooti as fresh mango juice. Diluted juice once packed cannot remain fresh for the life period of the package, it is pointed out.

So, as an upshot, will Frooti and Appy became 'fresher and juicier' in content and in their ad line?

Beach-less

The shimmering reflection of an azure sky on the blue waters of the sea, and miles of sand offering repose to the weary tourist. Bombay's beaches were all that and more.

But times have changed, and the beaches of Bombay are now no more than dumping grounds for garbage and effluents. The famous Juhu beach at Santa Cruz, once reputed to be among the best in the world, is today known more for its stench and filth than its blue waters and yellow sands. With the large number of hawkers and picnickers regularly littering the beach with leftovers and garbage, Juhu beach is now more of a dumping ground.

The Seven Bungalows beach, too, has met the same fate, aggravated perhaps by the fact that it is an open toilet for the nearby hutment dwellers. The Versova beach is rapidly losing its pristine beauty, what with the fisherfolk using it as a cremation ground!

If immediate action is not taken, Bombay will become beach-less in the not too distant future.

Much in a name

The Ladies Wing of the Indian Merchants Chamber, Bombay, is facing a piquant situation. One Kailash Chand who has been carrying on a 30-year-long battle for a matriarchal lineage, has written to Mrs Vaijyanti Pandit, secretary of the Ladies Wing, requesting her to arrange a meeting with the members to discuss the need for women to have the right to give their surname to their offspring. Chand was reacting to views expressed by Mrs Pandit in a magazine where she talked of the need for government's policies to be more sympathetic to the needs of women entrepreneurs.



Chand feels that no matter how economically independent a woman is, unless there is matrilineal succession a woman could not be a complete human being. One of the major benefits of a matrilineal society would be that women would not have to suffer the stigma of bearing illegitimate offspring or go in for abortions.

Libbers may take heart from Chand's argument, but the issue, unfortunately, did not come under the purview of the rules and regulations of the Ladies Wing, as Mrs Pandit has pointed out. She told SUNDAY that there were already so many controversies that she would not like to add another one. Kailash Chand, it seems, will have to knock on some other door now.

THIS INDIA

- BELGAUM: A youth who snatched a girl's chain, ended up marrying her. According to reports, the youth was nabbed by villagers and produced before the *panchayat*. As a punishment, the culprit was made to marry the girl. The parents of both parties were summoned and the marriage registered–*Indian Express* (V.V. Kadam, Bangalore)
- IMPHAL. "Lord Jagannath" and 15 of his "devotees" were arrested and remanded in police custody. According to the police, on the return journey of Lord Jagannath, the youths dressed in white dragged out a chariot with another youth dressed as "Lord Jagannath" reading a newspaper and eating fruits. The police are investigating the case–*The Telegraph* (Taher Ahmad, Cuttack)
- TEKKALI: Although some seats in the Naupada Junior College are allocated to students on the basis of merit, the principal of the college openly sells the remaining seats for a price ranging between Rs 100 and Rs 300–*Newstime* (G.V. Rajkumar, Kothapeta)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

Illustrations: Debashis Deb

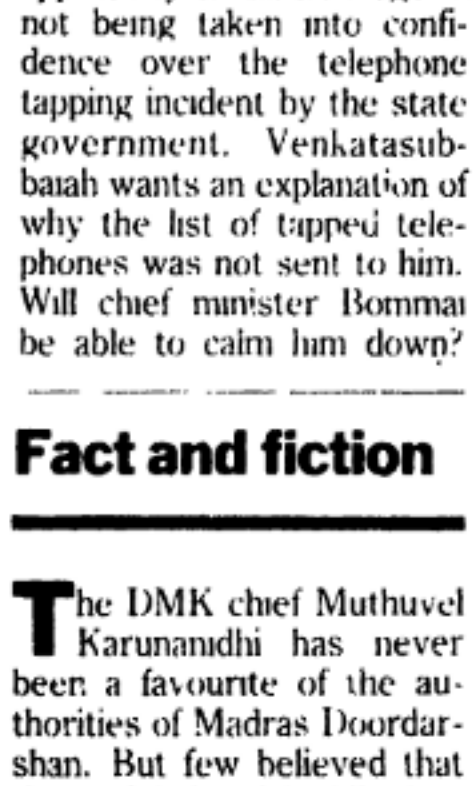
What's up, Guv?

There's trouble brewing in the Raj Bhavan in Bangalore, if Karnataka Governor P. Venkatasubbaiah's recent actions are anything to go by. First, the Governor surprised the state legislature by returning the names of three persons nominated to the Legislative Council—namely, trade union leader Michael Fernandes, senior Janata leader Vidhyadhar Guruji and actor Anant Nag. Now, the Governor has apparently taken umbrage at not being taken into confidence over the telephone tapping incident by the state government. Venkatasubbaiah wants an explanation of why the list of tapped telephones was not sent to him. Will chief minister Bommai be able to calm him down?

Fact and fiction

The DMK chief Muthuvel Karunanidhi has never been a favourite of the authorities of Madras Doordarshan. But few believed that the pooh bahs of the idiot box would sink to such petty depths. Recently, Madras DD refused to air an advertisement of the Tamil weekly

Karunanidhi: off the air



D V Jayner



P. Venkatasubbaiah: not in the know of things

Kungumam, which is brought out by the DMK's Murasoli Maran, who is a nephew of Karunanidhi. The magazine wanted to announce a new fictionalised story written by Karunanidhi that it was going to serialise. The DMK chief was supposed to introduce his own story in the ad clip.

Initially, Doordarshan stalled for time by asking for a copy of what Karunanidhi would read out for the ad. When that was provided, they asked for a gist of the story that *Kungumam* was to serialise. It didn't stop there. After a few days, they asked the magazine's editors to provide the entire text of the story. The magazine replied by saying that this wasn't possible as Karunanidhi had written only a few instalments. It seems that this was just what the authorities wanted to hear. Result: a refusal to air the ad.

Song and dance

Another recent victim of Madras Doordarshan's arbitrary ways was Sivaji Ganesan—the former Congressman, who now hates the party with unrestrained passion. A dance sequence from his recent film *Entamil En Makkal* was dropped from being aired at the last minute from the *Oliyum Oliyum* programme (the Madrasi's *Chitrahaar*) of 9 September. Apparently, the only reason for scrapping the sequence was that the film contains scenes which are uncomplimentary to the Congress(I).

South Bombay blues

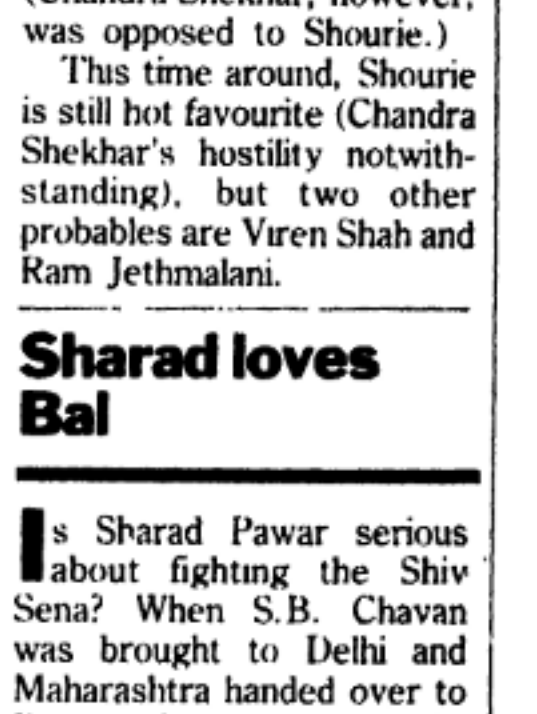
Who will be the Opposition candidate for the Lok Sabha seat of South Bombay? Last time around, the BJP wanted Jaywantiben Mehta to be the consensus candidate. Janata's Ratan Sinh Rajda, the sitting MP, held out for a renomination and both he and Jaywantiben ended up taking votes from each other and letting the Congress(I) man in. The BJP blames this on Chandra Shekhar and says that had he not insisted on Rajda, Jaywantiben would have withdrawn and they would have agreed to Arun Shourie as a consensus candidate. (Chandra Shekhar, however, was opposed to Shourie.)

This time around, Shourie is still hot favourite (Chandra Shekhar's hostility notwithstanding), but two other probables are Viren Shah and Ram Jethmalani.

Sharad loves Bal

Is Sharad Pawar serious about fighting the Shiv Sena? When S.B. Chavan was brought to Delhi and Maharashtra handed over to Pawar, there was speculation that the change had to do with Pawar's ability to keep the Sena down.

Since then, however, nobody is very sure what's up. Initially both Pawar and the Sena's self-styled 'Senapati' Bal Thackeray talked tough,



Pawar: befriending the 'Senapati'

but in recent weeks tempers have cooled.

Political observers attribute this change of stance to a dinner meeting between Pawar and Thackeray at the residence of Shiv Sena tough-guy, Manohar Joshi. Nobody knows what transpired at the meeting, but Pawar and Thackeray seem to have made up.

This has caused much heart-burning in Delhi where S.B. Chavan is telling all and sundry how he would have checked the rise of the Sena had he been allowed to finish the job he started in Bombay.■

DELHI DIARY

D E. NIZAMUDDIN

Revenge of the Pink Panther

Is the Express Group finally ready to take on the Hindujas? Followers of the Bofors saga will note that Sethi and his associates have relentlessly pursued every other lead except this one (It would, of course, be entirely unfair to suggest that the fact that the old boy is buddy-buddy with the Sindhi billionaires has diluted the *Express*' oft repeated commitment to investigative journalism.)

But in recent weeks, signed pieces by Arun Shourie and S. Gurumurthy have clubbed the Hindujas with such men as Ajitabh Bachchan and Lalit Suri, suggesting that the portly wheeler-dealers have been added to the *Express*' hit-list. Moreover, Ram Jethmalani, the group's answer to Inspector Clouseau, has ceased to blather on about how wonderful his Sindhi buddies are, suggesting a change of stance.

Now, R.V. Pandit, a close personal friend of Goenka and Nusli Wadia, has viciously attacked the Hindujas in his *Imprint*. Pandit's well-argued thesis is that all the Bofors agents (AE, Svenska and Pitco) are Hinduja fronts and that the brothers are ace-racketeers.

Does this indicate that the mercurial Ramnath Goenka is finally following up on the most obvious Bofors lead or are Pandit, Gurumurthy and company acting on their own? And, in that case, what about the Pink Panther? Will Jethmalani finally stop making irresponsible allegations about everybody else and investigate his friends?

Toilet talk

Follow the predecessor, seems to be the motto of Union minister of state for power, Kalpnath Rai, in his private as well as official life. Soon after he took over, he summoned senior officials of the ministry to his room and marched them to the previous incumbent Sushila Rohatgi's office. As the puzzled officials looked on, he flung open the door of Mrs Rohatgi's bathroom and declared, "There, this is what I mean." It took some time for the bureaucrats to comprehend that he was referring to the size and fittings of his predecessor's bathroom (apparently, Mrs Rohatgi had had a bed installed there) and wanted a similar one.



Rai: imitating his predecessor

Not content with this, Rai also told the officials to move all the furniture from Mrs Rohatgi's home to his residence at the ministry's expense. The job was entrusted to two junior officers. When they arrived with the furniture-laden truck at Rai's house, they found that the Congressman was not at home. The young IAS officers hung around till the minister returned late at night when the furniture could be moved in.

Though Rai has very definite opinions about interior decoration, he is silent about matters concerning the ministry. Asked about his views on a particular proposal or about the policies of the government, he turns to the official concerned and asks, rather helplessly, "What you say?" Maybe he should ask his predecessor.

Mock turtles

Dissidence in the Congress(I) has always taken extremely innovative forms. But perhaps the prize should go to a dissident from Madhya Pradesh who recently came to Delhi to convince other Congressmen that Arjun Singh was not doing a great job in the state. To protest against the chief minister's style of functioning, the dissident distributed sandalwood cases, each with a turtle inside.

What is the connection,

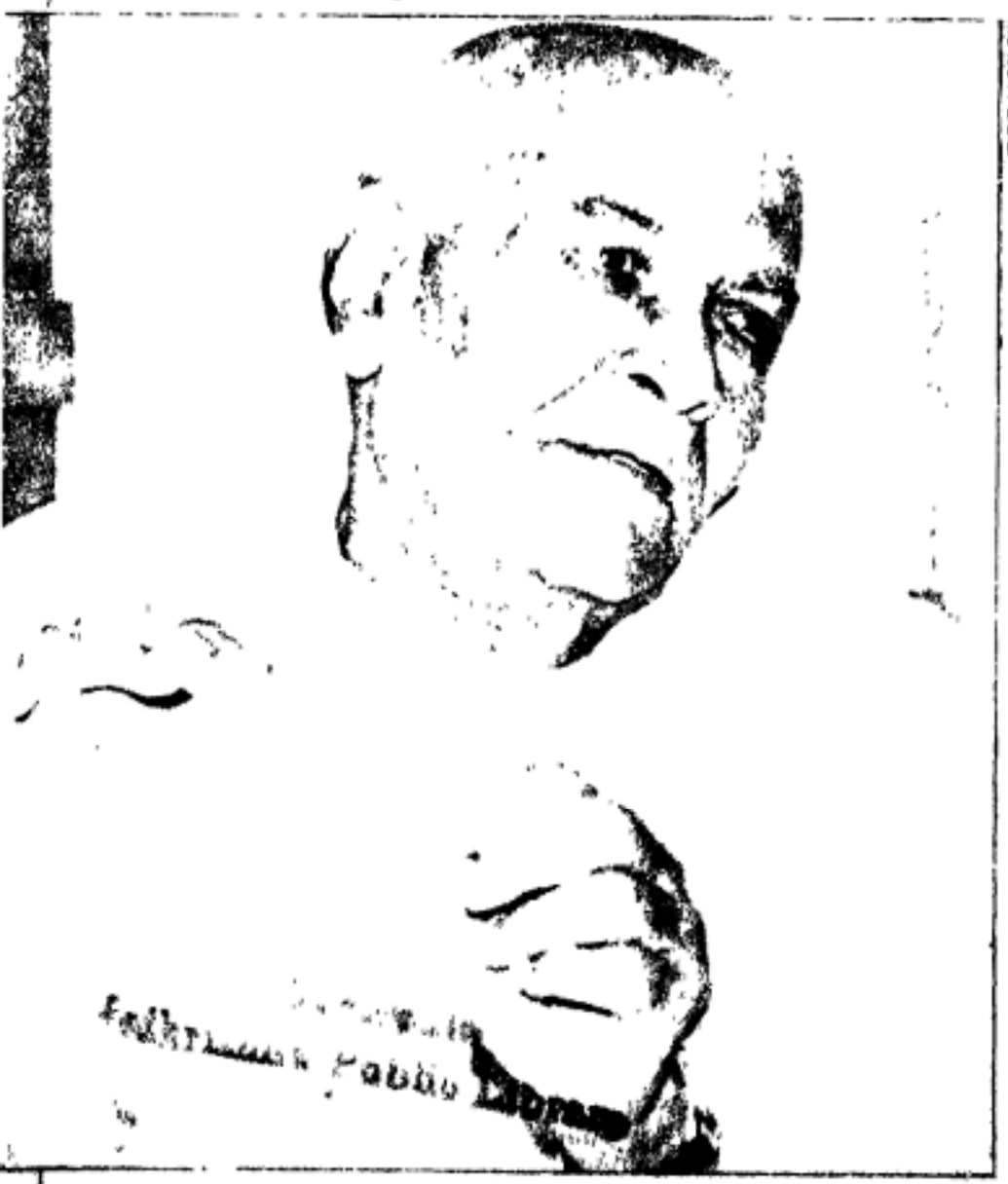


Arjun Singh: growing dissidence

you may well ask. The gentleman explains that the beautifully made, walnut-shaped container represents the Congress(I). And does the turtle symbolise Arjun Singh? No, says the protester. Singh is akin to a lowlier form of animal life—a "worm". Then why the turtle? It's aesthetically more pleasing, says the Congressman equally.

And what about the expenses involved in making these boxes? A minor consideration, feels the gent, in the light of his grand *sangharsh* against Arjun Singh.

Ramnath Goenka: change of stance?



Mukesh Parpiani

The new ONIDA.
Nothing can touch it...except the glance of envy.

When admiration takes on the colour of envy and hands tighten around objects that can be hurled, may be once again there's a new ONIDA on the horizon

Yes, the new ONIDA is here with the bewitching 'Cube' look! Magic of technology captured within a fully moulded, exquisite cabinet, and an exotic black tube Devilish good looks, with features slightly beyond the reach of the times Yes, it has everything poised at your fingertips waiting for action.

But before you unleash it all, don't forget, Envy waits at the wings So, heed this old word of wisdom Love thy neighbour, but guard thy ONIDA

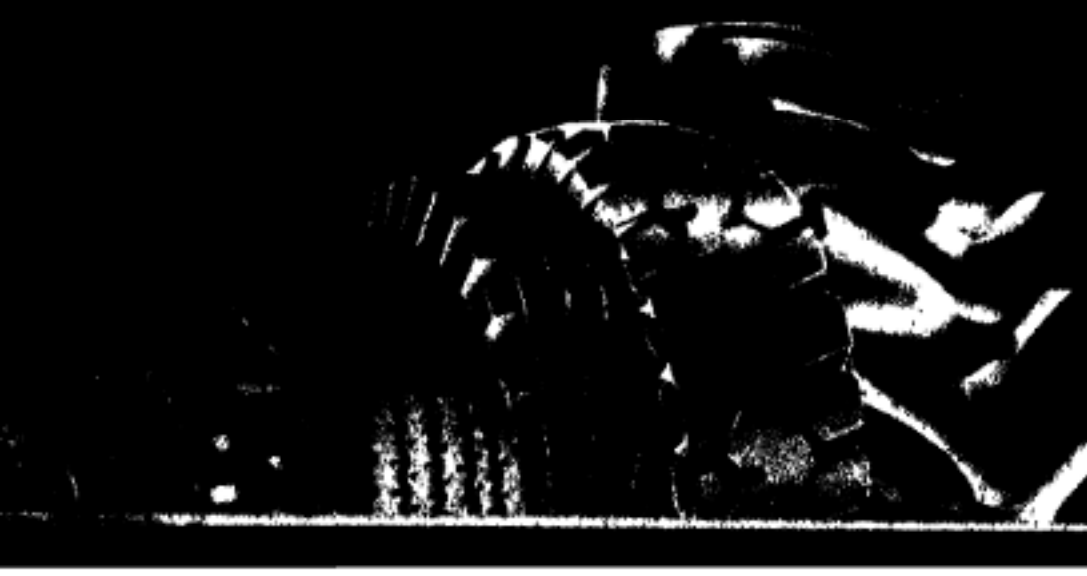
ONIDA. Neighbour's envy. Owner's pride.





APOLLO TYRES

THE ROAD TO HIGH PERFORMANCE BEGINS HERE. . .



Continuous stress on quality at Apollo Tyres.
That's what assures
high performance products.
Blending latest international technology
and indigenous skills,
Apollo make tyres
that are winners all the way –
whether it's a Passenger Car Tyre,
Truck Tyre, LCV Tyre or Tractor Tyre.
Product innovation with an accent on quality
is an on going exercise
dovetailed to user needs.

APOLLO TYRES

LEADERSHIP THROUGH QUALITY

2— 8 October 1988 An Ananda Bazar Publication Rs 6 00

WHY THE DEFAMATION BILL WAS DROPPED

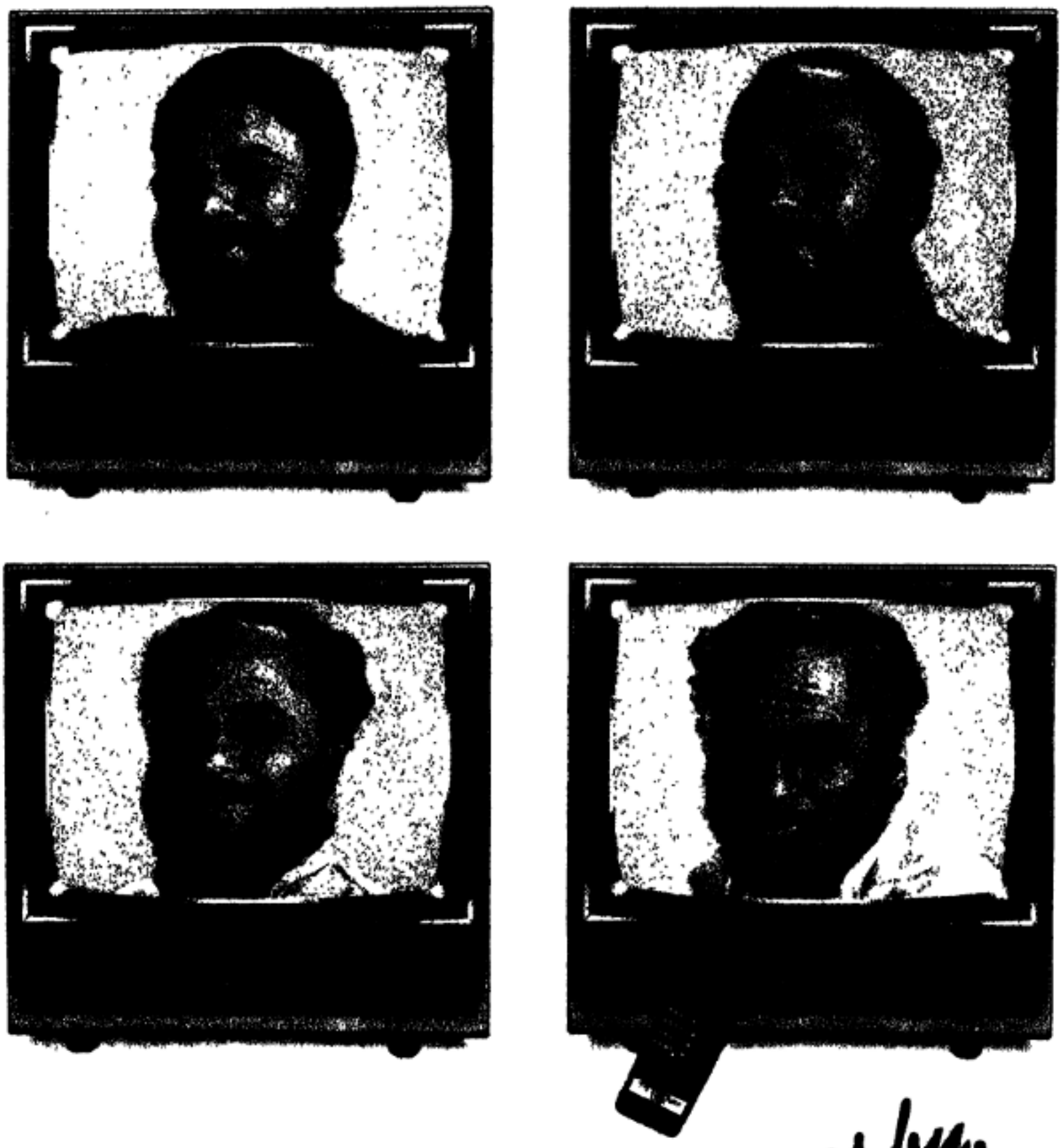
SUNDAY

The Business-Politics Nexus



How poli... and indust... make each ot...

EC Colour TV



Real value... as time goes by.

ECTV

Electronics Corporation of India Limited (A Government of India Enterprise), Hyderabad 500 762.

CONTENTS

VOLUME 15 ☐ ISSUE 45 ☐ RS 6.00 **SUNDAY** AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

2—8 OCTOBER 1988

Serampore Public Library

COVER STORY **23**

THE BUSINESS-POLITICS NEXUS

SUNDAY takes a look at how politicians help businessmen to make fortunes and then share in the booty.

INDEPTH **10**

GETTING HIS ACT TOGETHER

Rajiv Gandhi gives himself a year and launches an election-oriented programme. But is it too late?

NEWSBEAT **14**

JYOTI BASU AND THE LEAKED LETTER



Infighting within the ruling Left Front government in West Bengal has taken an ugly turn with the PWD minister Jatin Chakraborty accusing chief minister Jyoti Basu of promoting the business interests of a firm with which his son was associated.

POLITICS **30**

SOUTHERN COMFORT

The seven-party Opposition cocktail coalesces to form a spirited front at Madras. A report.

SPECIAL REPORT **34**

WHY THE DEFAMATION BILL WAS DROPPED

What forced the government to allow the controversial Bill to lapse? A report on the behind-the-scenes moves.



Page 10



Page 30

COMMENT

Opinion 4
Byline M.J. Akbar 6
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 8
Sight and Sound 9
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 18
Business Diary 62

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Random Notes 81
Delhi Diary 82

Cover photograph: Priyaranjan Rakshit
Cover artwork: Sandip Bhattacharya

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bijit Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001 Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura 20 paise North-Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh: Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup, Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts of Assam 30 paise

DESIGN **44**

CHIC-ER THAN THOU

The tall collection of Bombay's Ensemble goes on display.

CORPORATEWATCH **55**

DISQUIET IN THE LEVER FOLD

The Unilever style of functioning is being gradually imposed on the newly-acquired Brooke Bond, Lipton and Pond's. A report.

FOOD **67**

AN INDIAN SPREAD

With the successful marketing of packaged Indian meals, it looks as though Indian food is there to stay in Britain.

BOOK EXTRACT **70**

FIGHT FOR YOUR TREES



Women have come to the forefront of the Chipko movement. In this extract from his book, *Hugging the Trees*, Thomas Weber provides a glimpse into the beginning of a long struggle to protect nature's bounty.

PROFILE **76**

DESPERATELY SEEKING ANTULAY

After being in the political wilderness for nearly a decade, A.R. Antulay has been readmitted into the Congress(I).

Khaas Baat 63
Spotlight 64
Sundayweek 79



A black Bill

Your cover story (*The bill of wrongs* 11—17 September) was informative and thought provoking The Defamation Bill which was passed by the Lok Sabha despite the walkout by the entire Opposition exposes Rajiv Gandhi's netarious intentions You have rightly said that it casts serious aspersions on the integrity of the Congress government

The draconian law must be opposed tooth and nail Let our democracy prevail over the unjust political intentions of the Rajiv Gandhi government We should not experience the darkness of the Emergency days ever again

Shahzad Hussain, New Delhi

■ There is no gainsaying the fact that yellow journalism should be checked at all costs But the Bill is no solution to the problem It only gives the rulers a chance to govern the people with an iron hand Existing laws are more than adequate to handle errant journalists

Ganesh Pradhan, Siliguri (West Bengal)

■ Rajiv Gandhi's prolonged honeymoon with the media seems to have come to an end The Bill does not protect the interests of the common man, nor does it protect the interests of famous personalities Instead it is aimed at covering up the misdeeds of politicians

The fourth estate seems to have taught Rajiv Gandhi a lesson by launching a countrywide agitation against the Bill However, amendments in the Bill should be brought to curb the press from biased reporting

B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur (Bihar)

■ The introduction of the Defamation Bill in the Lok Sabha is another ploy being used by our PM to keep the press in the dark about his underhand deals However, this kind of draconian law is hardly going to stop the press from highlighting his regime's corrupt deals If Mr Clean is indeed clean why did he have to take recourse to such a hurried step? Whatever be the outcome of the Bill, one thing has been brought to light—the solidarity of the press

Shashank Shekhar, Meerut (Uttar Pradesh)

■ Rajiv Gandhi seems to have misunderstood Pandit Nehru's slogan 'Freedom is in peril, defend it with all your might" By passing the Bill the PM is taking away the freedom of the press Since the press elevated him to the high post, it has the right to criticise his misdeeds The PM has passed the Bill only to check the press from making further revelations of kickbacks received by his own men Alas, democracy is sought to be buried once and for all

Arjun Parthasarathy, Madras (Tamil Nadu)



Vijender Negi

A copy of the Defamation Bill being burnt in Delhi

Let the cops work

As rightly pointed out (*A vindication for Kiran Bedi* 28 August—3 September) IPS officers work with in the framework of well established norms Putting political pressure on them will only affect their efficiency They must have the freedom and discretion guaranteed by their service rules

N.P. Kalyanam, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

Tall talk

Janata president Ajit Singh says, Why shouldn't people remember the good things we did? We restored democracy , (*Sight and Sound* 24—30 July) I would like to point out to Mr Singh that it was not the Janata Party *per se* that restored democracy it was the people who voted it to power The Janata was merely a tool elected by the votes of the people

It was a short lived rule but good says Singh and I agree But what about the damage done by leaders like Charan Singh?

Ranjit Singh, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

A tirade

The tirade by M J Akbar directed towards *Indian Express* editor Arun Shourie made amusing reading (*Byline*, 11—17 September) The columnist has accused Shourie of yellow journalism Is his verbose against the *Express* editor not an instance of yellow journalism?

Why is Akbar hitting out at Shourie? Is it because the latter has exposed Rajiv Gandhi? If the PM was innocent, what was the need of the Defamation Bill? Sadly, *Byline* has been reduced to nothing but a pamphlet for the Congress(I)

K.N. Sreedharan, NOIDA, (Uttar Pradesh)



Gautam Patole

Arun Shourie only allegations

■ The columnist is more biased than any other journalist in India The fact that he openly supports Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress(I) is ample proof of this Arun Shourie has had no reservations about exposing the PM's misdeeds as well as that of the Opposition Has M J Akbar ever commented about the corruption in the ruling party? Is it because he does not want to be out of favour with the party at the Centre?

M.S. Kaushal, Ranchi (Bihar)

■ I must take this opportunity to congratulate the columnist for speaking out However by doing so, Akbar would perhaps fall out with Arun Shourie Kudos to Akbar for calling a spade a spade

R.K. Gulati, Siliguri (West Bengal)

■ The column states in no uncertain terms that the Defamation Bill is Rajiv Gandhi's answer to Arun Shourie What is M J Akbar trying to prove? I fail to understand how he has the right to cast aspersions or pass judgments on others Admittedly he has the right to settle his personal and professional scores, but why through a column that expects him to comment on national issues? My request to you is to restrict such writing or else change the name of the column to 'Myline'

K.R. Vaishampayan, Nagpur (Maharashtra)

■ I wonder how a magazine of your repute could publish such half-truths and the biased views of the journalist I think it is only because Akbar is envious of Shourie who undoubtedly is a more successful journalist By supporting corrupt politicians, Akbar has done great harm to our nation

M. Ramalingam, Neyveli (Tamil Nadu)

■ While Arun Shourie relies on allegation journalism, Akbar relies on investigative journalism This is evident in the editorial of the Calcutta daily, *The Telegraph*, which is edited by the columnist himself Irresponsible readers wrongly condemn Akbar as being pro Rajiv Gandhi

However M J Akbar has proved himself to be a crusader and a responsible journalist True, Akbar is not liked by many but this is only normal The columnist has the right to speak his mind and express his own views After all, he can't go around pleasing all and sundry!

Samir Majumdar, Anandganj (West Bengal)

Waiting for fun times

Your article was timely (*No fun in fun city*, 21–27 August) Kudos to M K Saran for taking up the responsibility of creating a fun city in India However, it is disheartening to know that no one is coming forward to help him Ram Naik must keep his criticisms aside and help Saran to turn his plans into reality

Debjani Choudhury, Guwahati (Assam)

Divided Front

The forthright, unbiased and sensible analysis of Opposition unity made good reading (*Byline*, 28 August—3 September) 'If wishes were horses, beggars would ride'—such is the present political scenario in the Opposition Even though 40 years have passed since India became independent the country has been unable to produce an alternative to the Congress(I) The goals and objectives of the so called united Opposition are baseless and will collapse at the slightest provocation

Whatever may be the outcome of the forthcoming elections as an Indian I can only hope that our political bureaucrats work towards preserving democracy

Md Sufyan Sadiq, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)



Rajesh Kumar

(From left) NTR, Bahuguna, Ajit Singh Unnikrishnan V P Singh and P Upendra

An able CM

Your correspondent has correctly assessed the political situation in Karnataka after S R Bommai took over as chief minister (*Profile*, 28 August—3 September) From the day Bommai assumed office, infighting within the ruling party has lessened

With past experience in administration and politics, Bommai could well prove to be better than his predecessor Even though Hegde had the cooperation of the press as well as the people, he failed to work effectively for his state What the ex chief minister should realise is that mere charisma and value based politics without ideology and commitment cannot solve the basic problems of the state and its people

If Bommai can keep himself away from the Hegde camp and yet win the confidence of Deve Gowda, he will be able to complete his term more successfully

S.B. Anil Kumar, Bangalore (Karnataka)

The CBI's ways

The murder of a sportsman is being politicised for political gains (*The politics of murder*, 4–10 September) It is rather premature to say whether Sanjay Singh is guilty of the crime or not The manner in which the CBI is handling the case makes one feel that the affair is politically motivated The entire phenomenon makes one recall the CBI's fiasco while investigating the *Indian Express* controversy

Anil Kumar Dwivedi, Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh)

What similarity?

A reader has claimed that there is an astonishing similarity between Bhagwan Rajneesh and Romi Chopra (*Opinion*, 7–13 August) However, there is no similarity between the two neither physical nor spiritual All bald men don't look alike



Romi Chopra (left) and Rajneesh

As far as the spiritual dimension is concerned, they are poles apart Politics and religion don't meet

Swami Chaitanya Keerti, Pune (Maharashtra)

Of tremors

The government's assessment of damage to immovable property is far from real (*Forty seconds that shook Bihar* 4–10 September) Those who have lost their homes will not be able to afford to reconstruct them Positive efforts should be made to help them

Nanda Dulal Roy Chowdhury, Kharagpur (West Bengal)

Corrigendum

This is to clarify that the Soviet Consul General (Calcuttta) Valentin Passentchouk, did not participate in the ISKCON *rathayatra* held on 15 July The *rathayatra* was attended by the consul general's wife, Mrs Irina Passentchouk, and by Soviet vice-consul Alexander Vaulin The error is regretted– *Editor*

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free.
Address your order to,

The Circulation Manager(U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta 700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta.

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

Saving JP's legacy

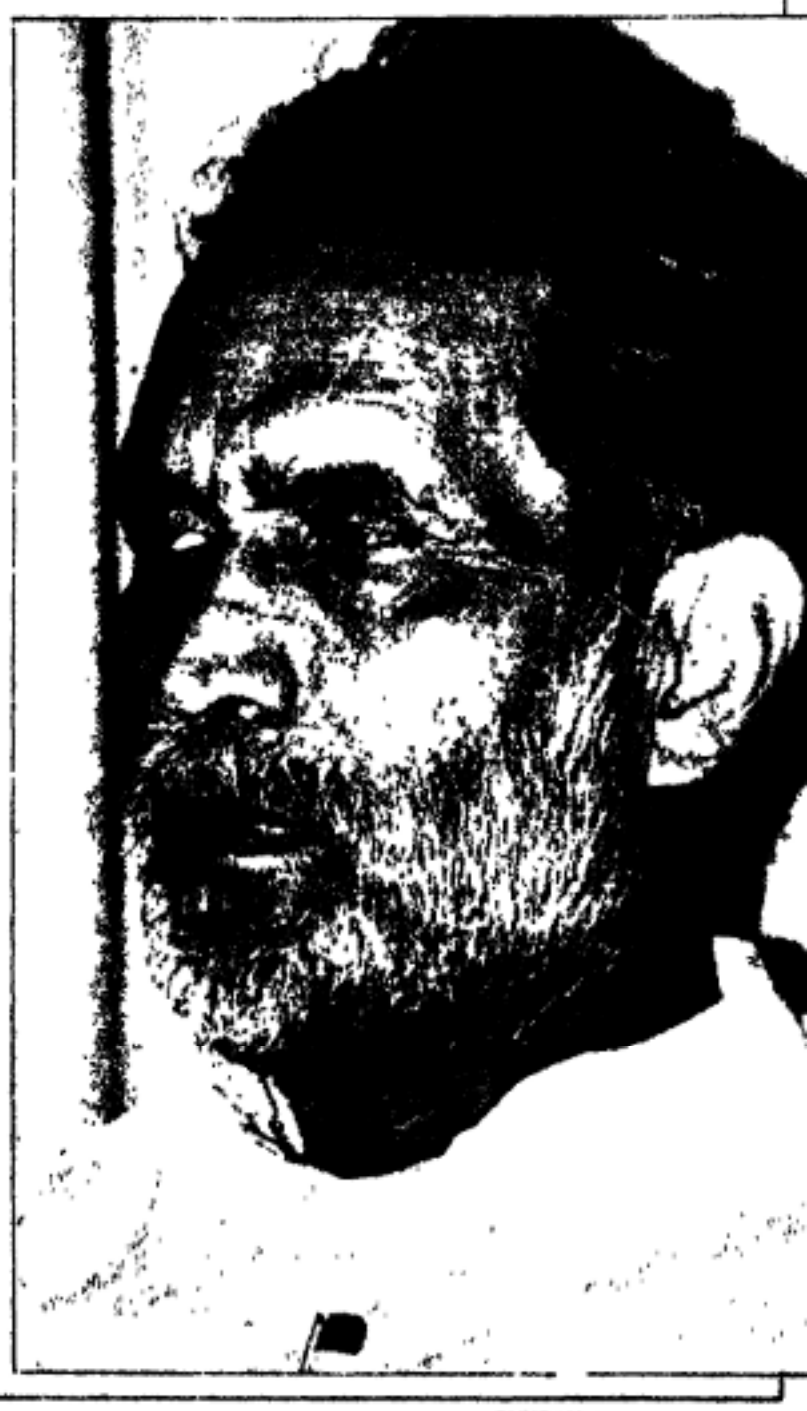
This has been a week of good news. First we learnt that Rajiv Gandhi had withdrawn the Defamation Bill (even *Pravda* thought this Bill was wrong — what better comment can there be!). But close on its heels came news which, to me at least, was far more reassuring. I refer to the patch-up between Chandra Shekhar and Ramakrishna Hegde through which a split was prevented in the Janata Party. The tragic manner in which the truly legitimate Opposition party of the country has been sought to be destroyed by just about everyone concerned has been one of the saddest stories of recent times. The Janata is a great name born out of the last great popular movement in our history. It represents the legacy of one of the greatest Indians of this century, Jayaprakash Narayan. It was forged in the crucible of great political tumult, of prison and sacrifice: and it was the only time when each of the current crop of Opposition leaders dignified themselves with heroism (it is another matter that so many of them have become pygmies). Two of the most outstanding careers to emerge out of this phase of politics were those of Hegde and Chandra Shekhar. Many of the others, like Biju Patnaik and George Fernandes, were big names much before the Emergency, but the real impact of Hegde and Chandra Shekhar at a decisive level in national politics came after 1975. Before 1975, the two were parts of their different crowds; after 1977 the two came into their own.

But it is not just a question of personalities. Far, far more important is what they stand for, what they represent. Chandra Shekhar comes from the great socialist tradition that flowered in Uttar Pradesh thanks to leaders like Acharya Narendra Dev and JP, and till this day he is the same man. It is in the interest of certain vested interests to isolate him at the moment, to paint him as a schemer and wrecker; little could be further than the truth. The man is a bit of a loner, which is both unusual and counterproductive in politics, but that is also a part of his

R.K. Hegde and (right) Chandra Shekhar: worthy leaders



The tragic manner in which the truly legitimate Opposition party of the country has been sought to be destroyed by just about everyone concerned has been one of the saddest stories of recent times. The Janata is a great name born out of the last great popular movement in our history. It represents the legacy of one of the greatest Indians of this century, Jayaprakash Narayan





Devi Lal (left) and V.P. Singh: charlatans

strength. He has the courage to stand alone when artificial storms, kicked up by frauds and charlatans, tend to sweep away politicians of less character. And he has the conviction to speak his mind even when in disagreement with conventional wisdom—as for instance when he was criticising Rajiv Gandhi while the rest of the world was singing hymns. Hegde, on the other hand, came of more conventional Congress stock, remaining with the Congress(O) after Mrs Indira Gandhi split the party in 1969. It is hardly a secret that Mrs Gandhi wanted Hegde to join her, but he stayed with Nijalingappa. Power came in 1977, and dribbled away in 1979 — but his hour came in 1983 when he led the first Janata government in Karnataka. His end was unsavoury, but for more than five years he proved that the 1977-79 experiment need not be the only Opposition syndrome, that there could be stability in a Janata government too.

But what Hegde and Chandra Shekhar have represented more than anything else is a commitment to secularism and people-oriented policies. This must not be taken for granted. The Opposition is crowded with all kinds of unsavoury elements, most particularly communalists in different guises. At one level are the open fascists like the Shiv Sena. Witness the tape that has emerged in Bombay just recently. It is a shocking, even stunning, tape of a speech by a Shiv Sena activist, Diwakar Raote. Let me quote this murderous fascist: "In order to save the lives of your people in Bhiwandi, I have slaughtered Muslims taking a sword in my hand. Even so, you don't know who Diwakar Raote is?... In one riot we slaughtered 300 Muslims and you businessmen had witnessed that with your own eyes..." There is more, much more. With only a little more tact, the RSS-BJP lobby sends the same anti-minority signal. This is the Opposition that you are supposed to unite with! And yet there are strong Opposition leaders, including the 'Prime Minister-designate' V.P. Singh who wants an alliance with such monsters. We have seen how his current favourites like A.P. Venkateswaran have begun their political campaign for Hindu India from the platforms of the RSS and the BJP. The Opposition is full of either communalists of the most dangerous kind or those eager to compromise with them.

The new party, SJD, was almost formed by the Devi Lal-V. P. Singh combination, excluding Bahuguna and Chandra Shekhar and of course including Hegde. But at the very last minute Hegde and Chandra Shekhar did the sensible thing of talking to each other face to face. These are the two who should be in the forefront of the Opposition, not charlatans like Devi Lal, or amoral, feudal elements like V.P. Singh

It is in this context that the role of the Chandra Shekhars and the Hegdes becomes crucial. They are among the few top leaders who can be trusted to keep such elements at bay, as they have both shown, one as chief minister and the other as party chief. Together they formed a vitally important alliance, an alternative which could emerge without surrender to the RSS-BJP. No wonder, some elements in Delhi started working overtime a few months ago to break the Hegde-Chandra Shekhar alliance.

The original idea was to isolate Shekhar and other secular Opposition leaders like H. N. Bahuguna by condemning them as Congress agents, and then destroy them politically. This would have been almost impossible if Hegde had stayed with the latter. It nearly worked. The new party, Samajwadi Janata Dal (SJD), was almost formed by the Devi Lal-V. P. Singh combination, excluding Bahuguna and Chandra Shekhar and of course including Hegde. But at the very last minute Hegde and Chandra Shekhar did the sensible thing of talking to each other face to face, without scheming intermediaries. These are the two who should be in the forefront of the Opposition, not charlatans like Devi Lal (if only enough newsmen cared to expose what his sons are up to in Haryana!), or amoral, rightwing feudal elements like V. P. Singh—or, worse of all, the RSS-Shiv Sena brigade.

11 October is JP's birthday. It would be a true pity if JP's socialist and secular legacy were hijacked by *kulaks*, feudals and communalists. ■

KHUSHWANT SINGH

What India owes to Abdullah



Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's sixth death anniversary took me to Srinagar in the first week of September. Time of mists and mellowed fruitfulness so unlike the winter of 1940 when I had first passed through the city on my way to Gulmarg to ski. We were just three Indians among 100 British and American officers. There was no mixing between blacks and whites; the Kashmiri was beneath reckoning as a human. The humiliation to which Kashmiri servants were subjected appalled me. Would they ever forgive us when they came into their own?

Came the summer of 1947. Communal strife reached proportions of a civil war. In northern India there was no choice: if you were Muslim you went to Pakistan; if not, you went to India. Kashmir was largely Muslim and could choose between India and Pakistan. It chose India because of the man, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Pakistanis denounced him as a traitor to Islam and mounted an invasion of Kashmir. They almost succeeded in overrunning the valley. The Maharajah and his militia fled the country. The Indian Army backed by local Kashmiris beat back the invaders. Most of the state was saved for India in the nick of time. This is largely due to one man, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

He had every right to demand special status for Kashmir. The demand was gracefully conceded by Pandit Nehru. Abdullah wanted to wipe out the feudal legacy of the Dogras and give his people rights to land they tilled. He did not want unscrupulous speculators to swamp the state, buy up properties and forests. He had every right to say what an Urdu poet had said:

Farishtay bhee aayein to ijaazat say aayein
Yeh mera vatan hai, koee jannat nheen hai
(Even if angels wish to come they must seek permission,
This is my homeland, not just some kind of paradise.)

If the average Kashmiri Muslim can hold his head high today and no one dare address him as *hatto*, it is due to one man, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

We have had our misunderstandings. We suspect the loyalties of Kashmiri Muslims and their sneaking sympathies with Pakistan. Some of them hoist Pakistani flags, shout Pakistani *zindabads*, cheer Pakistan's victories over us in cricket and hockey. They called us "You Indians" as if they were not one of us. We jailed Sheikh Abdullah for eleven long years on suspicion of harbouring pro-Pak sympathies. We could prove nothing and had to release him. He had good reason to be embittered with us. He was not. He knew that there would be no Kashmir without India. We knew that there could be no India without Kashmir. He was able to overcome his bitterness because he was a big man.

Sheikh Abdullah was a devout Muslim. We Indians tend to regard devout Muslims with a suspicion we don't extend to devout Hindus or Sikhs. But Sheikh Abdullah, despite his commitment to Islam, was above communal prejudice. When he came out of jail, instead of accepting government hospitality extended to him, he decided to stay in a Sikh *gurdwara*. Some of his closest friends and staunchest supporters were non-Muslims, the most prominent being Mridula Sarabhai who was jailed for her dogged support to the Sheikh.

Allama Iqbal spelt out the requirement of a leader in a memorable couplet:

Nigah buland, sukhan dil nawaaz, jaan pur soze
Yehee hain rakht-e-safar meer-i-caravan kay liye
(Lofty vision, sweetness of tongue, all-embracing warmth
These are all the baggage needed by the leader of a caravan.)

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had all these qualities in good measure. They called him *Sher-i-Kashmir*—the lion of Kashmir. A more appropriate title would have been *Gandhi-e-Kashmir*, for he, like the Mahatma and Abdul Ghaffar Khan, was a man of peace and goodwill towards all mankind.



Sheikh Abdullah: a secular Muslim

Sheikh Abdullah was a devout Muslim. We Indians tend to regard devout Muslims with a suspicion we don't extend to devout Hindus or Sikhs. But Sheikh Abdullah, despite his commitment to Islam, was above communal prejudice

NEW MOTTO

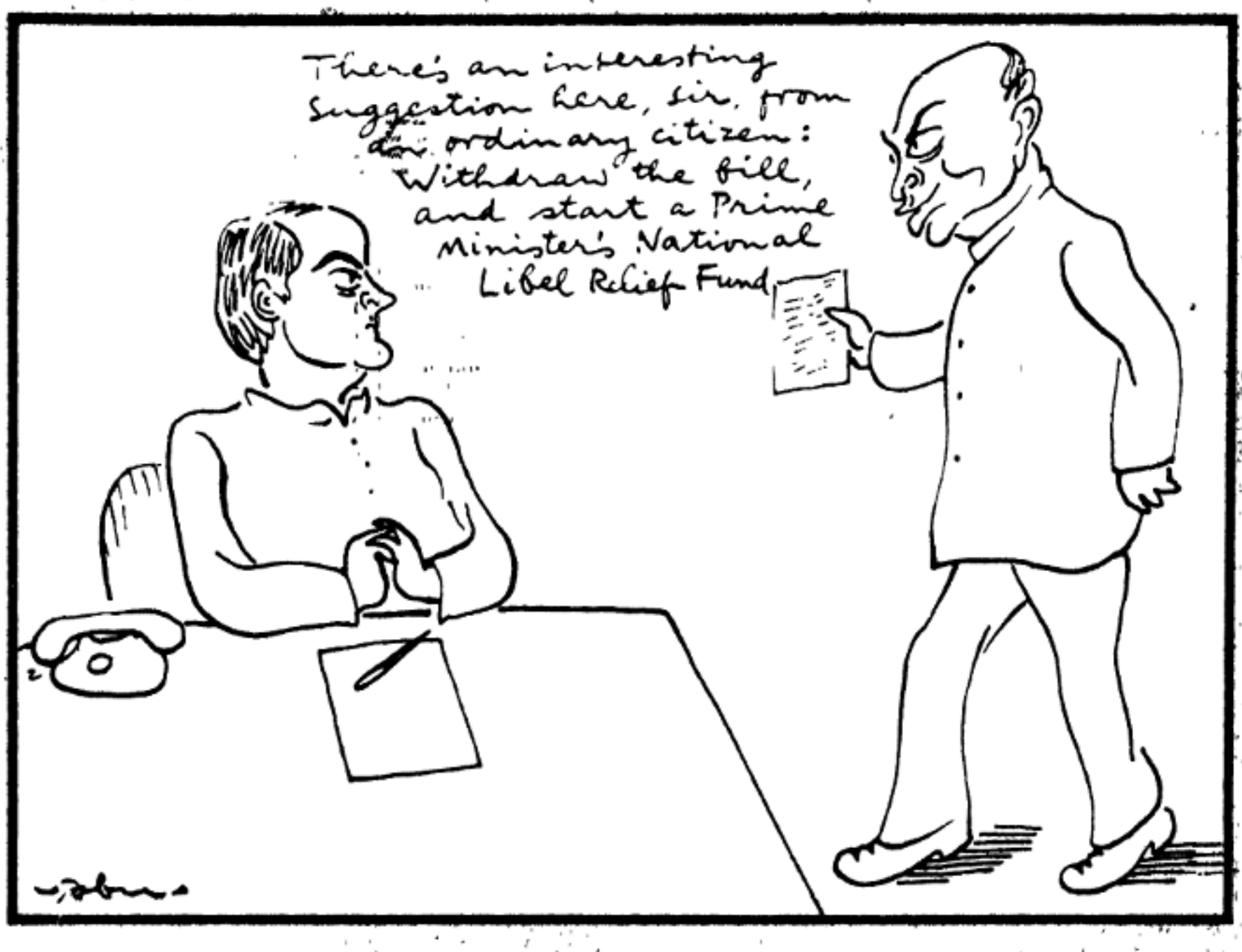
In Swiss banks
We'll get our cuts
In cannons and tanks
We'll empower
Our Jack and Jill
There'll be no *buk buk*
Because of the Defamation Bill.

(Reeten Ganguly, Agartala)

BUFFALO SENSE

A Sardarji farmer had saved up a lot of money to buy a car. But when he had the required sum, instead of buying a car he bought a buffalo. "Sardarji, you were always saying you wanted a car to drive to the *mandi*. And now you have gone and bought another buffalo. Won't you look ridiculous riding a buffalo to the market?"

Quite unabashed, the Sardarji replied. "Wouldn't I look more ridiculous trying to milk a Maruti?"



"

Without a free press there can be no democracy. The imperishable values of our freedom struggle have gone into the making of the press in India. We uphold this legacy.

RAJIV GANDHI, *while withdrawing the Defamation Bill*

I will not stoop to the level of Jatinbabu.

JYOTI BASU, *West Bengal chief minister, refusing to comment on the disclosures leaked from the office of Jatin Chakraborty, state PWD minister*

I am surprised how it (the file) was leaked to the press. All my confidential files are kept under lock and key.

JATIN CHAKRABORTY, *West Bengal PWD minister, on a secret note being leaked out*

The caravan has started and others will join it as it moves.

DEVI LAL, *on the launching of the Samgrwadi Janata Dal*

You can't go on suppressing a popular movement by just shooting down people.

MRS AUNG SAN SUU KYI, *Burmese Opposition leader*

The people of Punjab have been acting like true soldiers to protect the unity and integrity of India under the threat from the terrorists.

RAJIV GANDHI *at Jalandhar, during his recent Punjab visit*

Maybe I agree with Mr Gandhi that there has to be a caucus, but it should not exert too much influence.

MARK TULLY, *BBC India chief*

When one has power one wallows in its luxury and when one has no power, one thirsts for it.

MAUNG MAUNG, *deposed President of Burma*

Writers have power because they tell the truth. Politicians get power by departing from the truth.

SALMAN RUSHDIE, *author*

An inscrutable decree of providence has driven me from the Elysian fields of cinematic art to the thorny path of politics. I shall have to fulfil the destiny ordained by a power that transcends the limited powers of human intelligence.

N.T. RAMA RAO, *Andhra CM, calling for an end to Congress(I) misrule*

I think Christ was a loser... He had come down to save the world and he did a pretty miserable job. Very few people believed him, the majority was against him.

VICTOR BANERJEE, *actor, who played Jesus Christ on the British stage*

Rajiv, don't force us back to the jungle.

Wall writings in Aizawl after imposition of President's Rule in Mizoram

"

Getting his act together

Rajiv Gandhi gives himself a year and launches an election-oriented programme—but is it too late?

Democracies have a way of rejecting precepts thrust upon them by presumptuous rulers Rajiv Gandhi has discovered this a little belatedly By his own standards, he might have done well, but those standards, he now realises, are not necessarily shared by the electorate Now, faced with a decision on whether to go to the polls this winter, Gandhi has decided to play for time

His ministers, cronies and trusted partymen have been told that they have another year before their next gamble at the ballots Before that the government's action have to change to match the electorate's perceived needs The Congress(I) leviathan has to be motivated for the battle at the hustings

For the moment, however, everything is in disarray Intelligence agencies, opinion pollsters and senior partymen all speak of anti Congress(I) sentiments rippling across the country The political initiative today is entirely with the Opposition Despite its squabbles, merely by agreeing on seat adjustments, it is in a position to humble the Congress(I)

These developments are not so much the outcome of gross blunders or acts of commission of the government, as the Opposition makes out, as of governmental precepts not matching mass expectations Rajiv Gandhi had presumed that he swept the 1984 polls on the 'unity and integrity' issue, that the country had voted for youthful leadership and a fresh approach to lingering problems, having wearied of well worn socialist slogans and sham concern for the poor

So Gandhi attempted a revolution on his own terms He made a fetish of modernisation, concentrated on the middle class and revived sections of the economy with doses of liberalisation To an extent it worked Economic growth crept up from 3 5 per cent a year to about 5 per cent, industry seemed more competitive and agriculture exhibited a resilience never seen before

Politically, too, Rajiv had several achievements A series of accords decreased tensions in Assam, Mizoram, Darjeeling and Tripura If the Punjab problem lingered, it was not for want of effort. And here, too, during his first and highly-publicised political journey to Punjab on 21 September, he hinted at new initiatives.



But to millions of voters spread across the dusty plains of the subcontinent Rajiv Gandhi's conception of govern-

Telling feedback

The party speaks its mind

If the Congress(I) high command wanted feedback from the party, it got enough at the 4-7 September, 1988 seminar-cum-workshop held at New Delhi's Talkatora Stadium. And it was anything but reassuring. Congressman after Congressman stood up to lament the state of the party, poor implementation of rural development programmes and dismal electoral prospects.

This exercise in glasnost resulted in the identification of key problem areas: electoral reforms, Panchayati Raj, economic programmes and party organisation. SUNDAY obtained details of the recommendations.

Panchayati Raj

- The implementation of the 20-point programme and of the various poverty-alleviation schemes has been extremely poor. In one state, the Reserve Bank of India found that 80 per cent of the funds sanctioned had been pocketed by bureaucrats and politicians.
- Mahatma Gandhi's dream of "power to the people" is nowhere near realisation. Immediate revamping of Panchayati Raj institutions and holding *panchayat* elections is necessary. Only then could all participate in the democratic process
- *Panchayat* elections should be mandatory. The supercession of *zilla parishads* (district councils) should, like the declaration of President's Rule, require the sanction of the state Assembly.
- Districts should be allocated funds on the advice of state finance commissions. To effectively decentralise political and economic power, state governments should not have any say in the utilisations of funds by the *zilla parishads*.

Economic programmes

- After Bank Nationalisation, the 20-point programme has proved to be the most popular. The new thrust areas should be the removal of unemployment, housing projects, universal mid-day meal schemes,



Rajiv Gandhi addressing a public meeting: gearing up for the polls

ment appeared increasingly alien, misconceived and wholly inadequate. The rural Indian expected better administration, more public programmes, development assets, higher wages and more work. Rajiv, instead, started off by soft-pedalling his mother's 20-point programme, underplaying poverty alleviation and talking of technology and farm inputs. The electorate wanted a ruling party purged of self-seeking politicians. He responded by forming a coterie of personal advisers and throwing out or marginalising most party leaders who had been loyal to his mother.

Very little really changed. The Prime Minister's coterie became an oligarchy, the bureaucracy grew more arrogant and Congressmen either impotent or uninterested. Meanwhile, the new economic deal resulted in many prosperous businessmen, a range of mind-boggling consumer products, but the masses got few of these goodies.

Rajiv Gandhi's sins of omission had been compounded by the Bofors episode and, more recently, the Defamation Bill. And when electoral pundits began telling him just how bad things were, Gandhi decided to take a break.

Having taken a year's reprieve Gandhi is now preparing, to seize the initiative. He has drawn up an agenda, a year long crash programme, to combat the Opposition. The strategy is essentially defensive: to choose about 350 key Lok Sabha constituencies and nurture them. This entails activating district-level planning, strengthening *panchayati* institutions, revamping the lower-level bureaucracy and motivating Congress(I) MPs, MLAs and lower-level party workers. Leadersfeels that if the party, with a few structural changes and in conjunction with the bureaucracy, produces concrete results at the constituency-level during the next year, then in the elections, the image of the ruling party



Gandhi attempted a revolution on his own terms. He made a fetish of modernisation, concentrated on the middle class and revived sections of the economy with doses of liberalisation. To an extent it worked

notwithstanding, individual party candidates will be able to pull through on the strength of their own work.

The strategy was disclosed to Congressmen at a four-day seminar-cum-workshop held at New Delhi's Talkatora Stadium on 4-7 September. During the first two days 1,200 Congress(I) functionaries voiced their opinion on party, government and election prospects. The party leadership in turn proposed four subjects—electoral reforms, Panchayati Raj, economic programmes and party organisation—for further discussion. On the last two days, the number of participants was pared down to 110 and the discussions narrowed down to specifics. Attending this second session were Congress(I) Working Committee members, central Cabinet ministers, Pradesh Congress(I) committee presidents, chief ministers, Congress(I) legislature party chiefs of Opposition-ruled states, office bearers of the parliamentary party and heads of frontal organisations. It was decided that these issues would be discussed at the grassroots level and feedback obtained.

"The whole exercise is targeted to the next elections," admits former union minister Vithal N. Gadgil, who has

provision of safe drinking water, mobile medical units for every village, a ration shop for every 2,000 persons in the rural areas, road connections to every village and rural electrification.

- For appointment in government service, preference should be given to candidates from families below the poverty line.
- Female education should be made free and universal.
- Tribals displaced by development projects should be given cash compensation as also alternative housing sites.
- Local MPs and MLAs should have a say in identifying beneficiaries of government programmes.

Party organisation

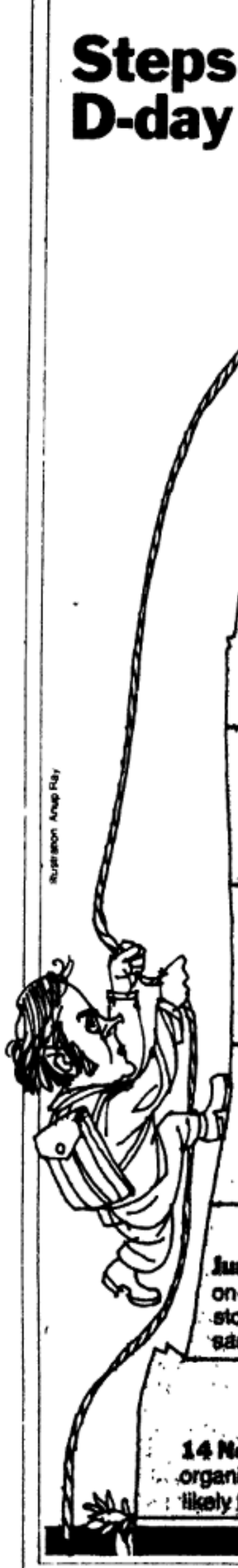
- The 'loyalists' who were with the party during its darkest days should be given due prominence. Newly-inducted members should not be given party tickets or important positions.
- Rules for inducting new members should be tightened. Also, they should be taken in throughout the year. If the recruitment drive is delinked from organisational elections, it will minimise bogus membership.
- Organisational elections should not be held before the next Lok Sabha polls.
- The party organisation as a whole has to be revitalised.

Electoral reforms

- The Election Commission should be reconstituted and the chief election commissioner's functions shared by a group of election commissioners.
- Every state should have a chief electoral officer appointed from outside the state.
- Steps should be taken to prevent manipulation of electoral rolls.
- Voters should be issued identity cards to counter impersonation and multiple voting.
- Election campaigns should be funded by the state. Money should be given by the government to each candidate to cover the cost of fuel, publicity material and postage. Assuming that there are three candidates for every Lok Sabha constituency for 542 constituencies, the government will have to provide a total of Rs 92 crores to candidates.

Could any feedback be more telling?

Steps to D-day



4-7 September, 1988: Talkatora meet. Congressmen from all over the country discuss four election-related issues: electoral reforms, Panchayati Raj, economic programmes and party organisation.

26 September, 1988: Congress(I) state units submit their views on electoral reforms so that the Union government can initiate debate and take steps to make the necessary constitutional amendments.

30 September, 1988: Rajiv Gandhi addresses five lakh 'loyal' Congress(I) workers in New Delhi.

November 1988: AICC(I) to hold session on 'electoral reforms'.

January 1989: All India Youth Congress(I) to unveil masterplan on the removal of unemployment.

February 1989: AICC(I) to hold session on 'Panchayati Raj institutions' and adopt resolutions for its implementation in the states.

Union Budget to sanction at least Rs 2,000 crores directly to District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) committees all over the country. Several pro-poor, redistributive schemes to be announced.

June 1989: AICC(I) to hold session on 'economic programmes' and take stock of the implementation of schemes and programmes sanctioned during the last couple of years.

14 November, 1989: Special AICC(I) session on 'party organisation' to be held at Allahabad. Announcement on [illegible] likely to be made.

Illustration Anup Ray

recently been appointed general secretary of the All India Congress (I) Committee in charge of party policy and programmes. "January 1990 is the last date for elections and the exercise started now is going to be completed by next year, November," he explains. Rajiv Gandhi personally oversaw the Talkatora jamboree, spending as many as

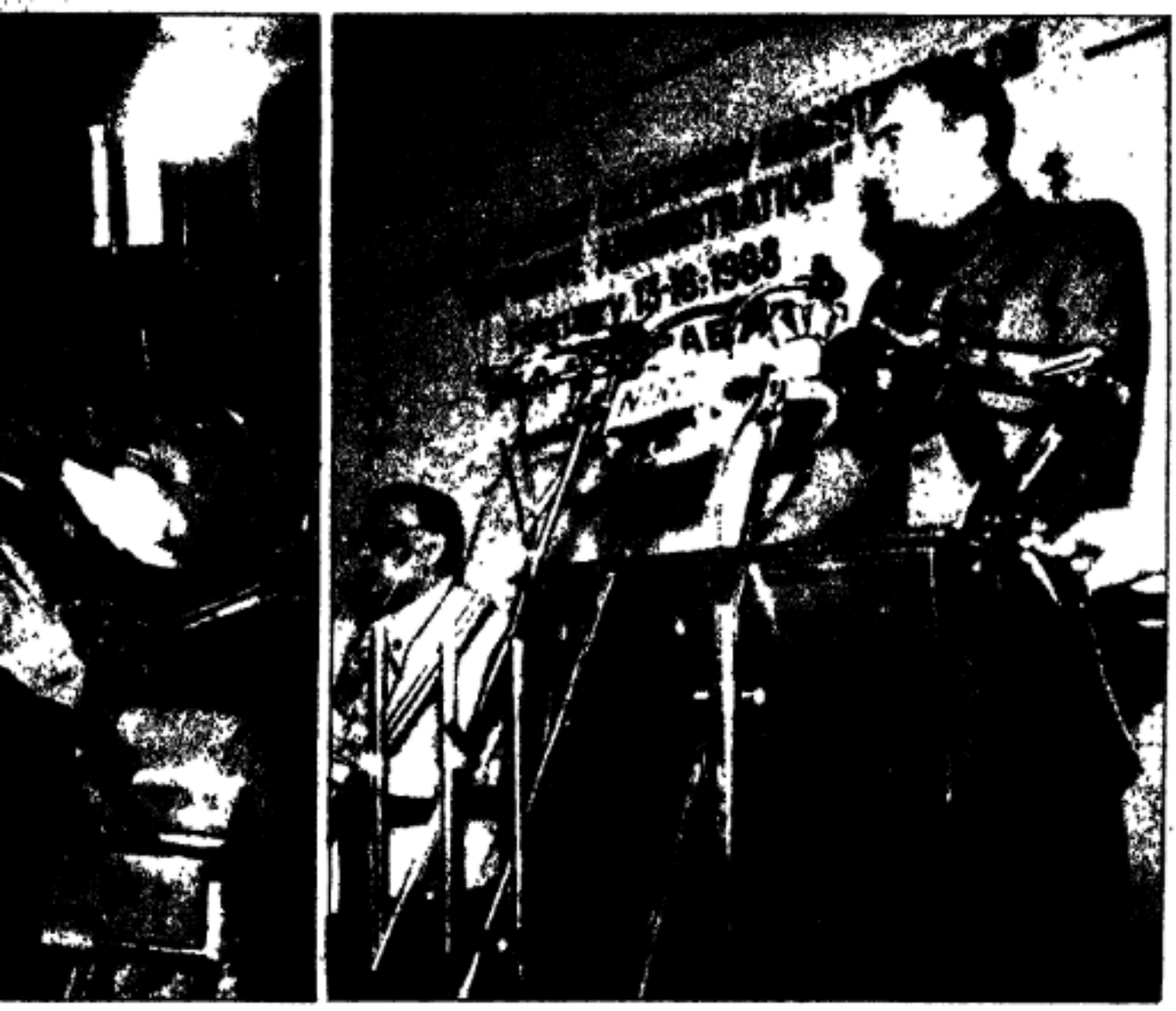


seven hours a day, on an average, at the discussions. "The Prime Minister, through his actions, tried to make it clear that now is the time for partymen all over the country to start doing something for the next elections," says Gadgil. "Delhi is not going to say what should be done, now the party must tell the government what is to be done, the party must give a mandate to the government."

The government, in other words, wants the party to articulate constituency-level needs so that they can be fulfilled during the next year. Rajiv himself, has been working at ways of overhauling the administrative machinery.

The crusade to revamp the bureaucracy had begun at Bhopal on 10 December, 1987. Speaking to a gathering of IAS, IPS and other officials, Rajiv pointed out: "While a lot of attention has been paid at the higher level to reforms and other changes, the lower level, where the delivery takes place, has generally been neglected or ignored."

Next, at Hyderabad on 13 February, 1988, he told bureaucrats: "We have acquiesced in long and frequent spells of non-representative local government. We want you to further develop and flesh out the connections between representative local government and responsive administration... You must consider the ticklish issue of the relationship between the political authority at the lower levels and the district administration."



The Prime Minister addresses civil servants: overhauling the bureaucracy

After discussions with district-level administrators, Gandhi realised that development problems at the lowest level were not just a matter of ensuring that the bureaucracy delivered the goods sanctioned at higher levels of government. "With the decay of the Panchayati Raj institutions, the administration has got isolated from the people thus dulling its sensitivity to the needs of the people," the Prime Minister concluded at his last conference with district magistrates held at Coimbatore on 18 June, this year. The questions that remained were how fast should the planning and development machineries at the district level be democratised, what would be the role of the *zilla parishads* (district councils) *vis a vis* the district magistrates and how other elected representatives like MPs and MLAs could be associated with the process.

The outcome of the Prime Minister's confabulations was a paper on *The Panchayati Raj and District Planning* brought out by the ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions. It spelt out the government's resolve, recommending "appropriate constitutional provisions for ensuring timely and regular elections to local bodies", appropriate changes in the Constitution to detail subjects to be dealt with at the district level and the restructuring of personnel policies (for hiring bureaucrats). Having discovered a major reason for the party's lack of impact in rural areas, Rajiv called the Talkatora meet and laid the issues before his partymen.



The meet also underscored the need to get the party back on its feet. This time Gandhi is going to address not the generation of gee-whiz Congressmen but the old faithfuls, the so-called 'loyalists'. On 30 September this year the Prime Minister plans to address five lakh 'loyal' Congress(I) workers and laud their perseverence and work during the darkest days of the party. The reinstatement of former Maharashtra chief minister A.R. Antulay, and the reassurances held out to Pranab Mukherjee and A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury are part of the new pattern.

To help MPs, MLAs and local party workers gain access to developmental work, the Union government has decided to earmark at least Rs 2,000 crores for the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) committees in the districts during the 1989-90 financial year. This move will give party workers direct access to developmental funds, which would otherwise have been controlled by the state bureaucracies. The leadership also plans to arm workers with new slogans like 'Power to the People,' 'Food for All', and assurances to the weak, poor and oppressed.

The Youth Congress(I) (YC-I) has been given the most ambitious job: that of mobilising the support of the young, unemployed voter. The Congress(I) high command has estimated that 30 per cent of the electorate today comprises the youth and that the majority of them are disenchanted with the party. "The Youth Congress(I) will complete all the scheduled block, district and state rallies by the first week of October and then, by January next year, is going to present a masterplan for the removal of unemployment," says YC(I) president, Mukul Wasnik. Young Congress(I) workers are also expected to help counter Opposition propaganda against the Prime Minister and "expose the hollowness of the Opposition's claims", explains Wasnik. Later, Congressmen will be ordered to harp on the Opposition's ambivalence on economic, ethnic and communal issues.

Creating a new promise after the first has been exploded can never be easy. For Rajiv Gandhi it is going to be doubly difficult. First, he has to correctly reinterpret his mandate, ensure that his partymen are inspired for the uphill task ahead, and finally convince the country's electorate that he is indeed the trustee and the true inheritor of the Congress(I) dynasty.

Indrani Banerjie / *New Delhi*

The CM and the leaked letter

Infighting within the ruling Left Front in West Bengal has taken an ugly turn with PWD minister Jatin Chakraborty accusing chief minister Jyoti Basu of promoting the business interests of a firm with which his son was associated

Can one trust a 78-year-old man to recall an incident that took place ten years back? Jatin Chakraborty, the diminutive, cigar-puffing minister in charge of the public works department (PWD), West Bengal, insists that the event is still fresh in his mind. Sometime in 1978, wrote the minister in his file, "when Shri Chandan Basu was working in Bengal Lamp Works Ltd, he brought Shri Tapan Roy, managing director of the company, to see me. The latter requested that the state government should purchase all lamps from his company. I accordingly discussed this matter with the chief minister, who was pleased to state—if my memory serves me right—that to the maximum extent possible we should purchase our lamps from that company, *but nothing to this effect should be recorded in any file*." (italics ours) And with this controversial noting in his personal file, Chakraborty kicked up a political row and precipitated a crisis within the ruling Left Front government in West Bengal.

Jatin Chakraborty's confidential note, which was scooped by the *Anandabazar Patrika* and flashed prominently on its front page, greatly embarrassed the Communist Party of India Marxist (CPM), which alone commands an absolute majority in the state Assembly. And quite understandably. For, the revered Marxist leader, Jyoti Basu, who has so far enjoyed an unsullied image despite being in power for nearly a decade, has been indirectly charged with promoting the business interests of a firm with which his entrepreneur son, Chandan Basu, was associated. What is more damaging, the allegation was hurled at the chief minister by none other than a senior member of his own Cabinet—Jatin Chakraborty of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), a constituent of the ruling Left Front.



Jyoti Basu: under attack

Sanjoy Sharma

The controversy has its genesis in a circular prepared by the Left Front government soon after it came to power in 1978. The memo dated 28 October, 1978, signed by the then secretary of the commerce and industry department, Rama Mazumdar, stated that the government would continue to honour the 1972 directive and purchase 33 per cent of its requirements from the small and medium-scale industries of the state. What is more, the order made a specific reference to Bengal Lamp saying that the government would buy 33 per cent of their lamps and tubelights provided these products were manufactured in West Bengal.

Soon after the circular was passed, alleges Jatin Chakraborty, who has clung on to the PWD portfolio for the past ten years, Tapan Roy, managing director of Bengal Lamp, met him along with the chief minister's son, Chandan Basu, at his chamber in Writer's Building with a request: the government should purchase all lamps required by it from his company. Jatin Chakraborty is believed to have discussed the matter with Jyoti Basu, who "was pleased to state that to the maximum possible extent we should purchase our lamps from that company". Accordingly, since then, the PWD department has been buying a large number of lamps from Bengal Lamp, much to the displeasure of other manufacturers.

The practice continued for ten long years till the other manufacturers of bulbs and tubelights in the state began to feel the pinch of the government's absurd policy. They got together under

the aegis of the Bengal Lamp Manufacturing Association and petitioned the chief minister early this year regarding the "unfair treatment" meted out to them.

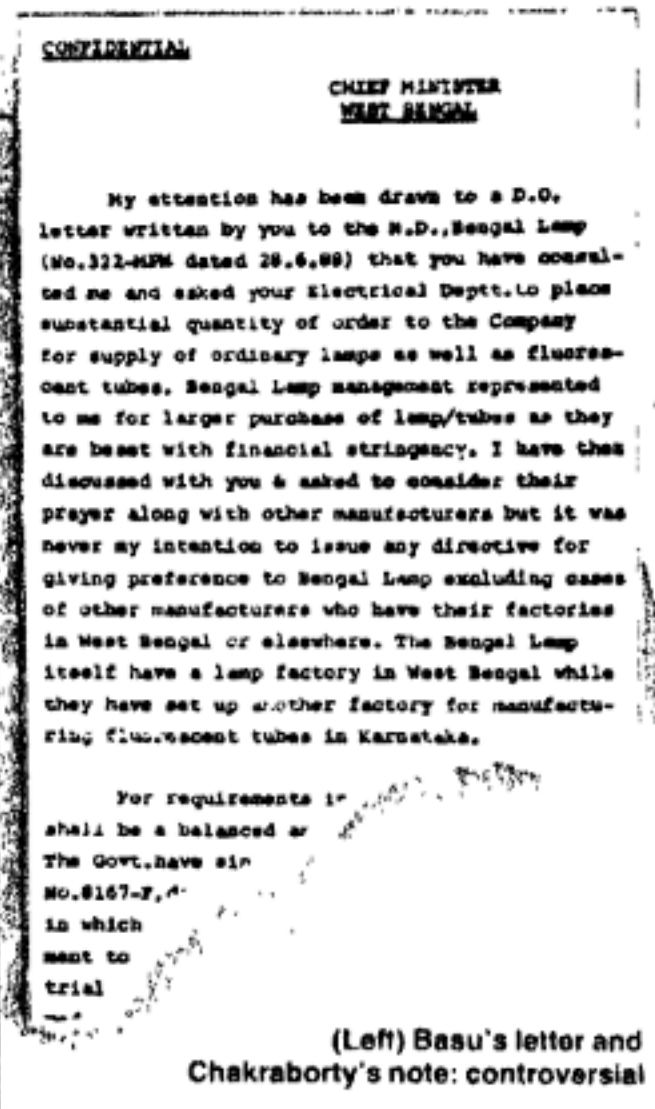
In between, on 20 June 1988, Tapan Roy wrote a letter to Jatin Chakraborty. The letter said: "I hope you are aware that the Karnataka government has recently ordered that all the bulbs required by it should be purchased from the Mysore Lamp Works Ltd. Hence in the overall interest of the lamp industry in the state, I would request you to place all the orders of the government with our concern particularly since the Bengal Lamp unit in Calcutta is incurring losses for the past few years."

On 28 June, the PWD minister wrote back to Tapan Roy: "I have discussed the matter with the chief minister and have advised the electricity department of the PWD to place orders with your concern. In the current year I have ordered the chief engineer to purchase at least 53 per cent of our required bulbs from Bengal Lamp."

This exchange between the PWD minister and Tapan Roy came to the notice of the chief minister in the first week of August. On 19 August, Jyoti Basu sent a stern note to his minister: "My attention has been drawn to your letter to the managing director of Bengal Lamp. You have said that you consulted me and asked your electrical department to place substantial quantity of order to the company for the supply of ordinary bulbs as well as fluorescent tubes. Bengal Lamp management represented to me for larger purchase of lamps/tubes as they are beset with financial stringency. I have then discussed with you and asked to consider their prayer along with other manufacturers but it was never my intention to issue any directive for giving preference to Bengal Lamp excluding cases of other manufacturers who have their factories in West Bengal or elsewhere For requirements in state sector, there shall be a balanced and fair policy of purchase."

The matter did not end there. Jatin Chakraborty went ahead and noted in his file that his department was favouring Bengal Lamp with bulk orders since 1978 on specific instructions from the chief minister who even advised him not to record the matter in any file. And to make things worse, this confidential exchange was leaked to the press.

The incident added to embarrass-

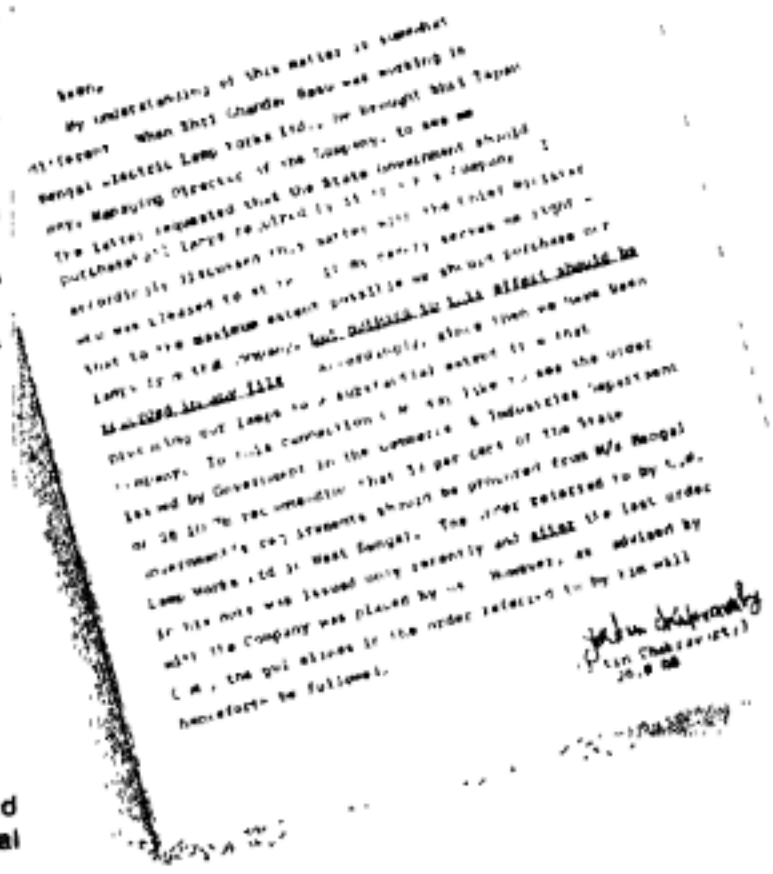


CONFIDENTIAL

CHIEF MINISTER
WEST BENGAL

My attention has been drawn to a D.O. letter written by you to the M.D., Bengal Lamp (No.322-MPM dated 28.6.88) that you have consulted me and asked your Electrical Deptt. to place substantial quantity of order to the Company for supply of ordinary lamps as well as fluorescent tubes. Bengal Lamp management represented to me for larger purchase of lamp/tubes as they are beset with financial stringency. I have then discussed with you & asked to consider their prayer along with other manufacturers but it was never my intention to issue any directive for giving preference to Bengal Lamp excluding cases of other manufacturers who have their factories in West Bengal or elsewhere. The Bengal Lamp itself have a lamp factory in West Bengal while they have set up another factory for manufacturing fluorescent tubes in Karnataka.

For requirements in
shall be a balanced ar
The Govt. have sin
No.8167-F,
in which
ment to
trial



been
my understanding of this matter is somewhat
different. When Shri Jyoti Basu was working in
Bengal Electric Lamp Works Ltd., he brought this Tapan
Roy, Managing Director of the Company, to see me
The latter requested that the State Government should
purchase Bengal Lamp products as it is a Company
which was closed to sick
that to the maximum extent possible we should purchase our
Lamps from the Bengal Lamp Undertaking but difficult should be
avoided in such like
Diverting our Lamps to a substantial extent is not
ment. To make comparison, we may like to see the order
issued by Government in the Commerce & Industries Department
on 28.10.76 wherein that 51 per cent of the State
Government's requirements should be procured from M/s Bengal
Lamp Works Ltd. in West Bengal. The order referred to by C.M.
in this note was issued only recently and after the last order
why the Company was placed by us. However, as advised by
C.M., the qui aliunde in the order referred to by him will
hereafter be followed.

Jatin Chakraborty
20.8.88

(Left) Basu's letter and Chakraborty's note: controversial

ment of the chief minister not only because his son was a former employee of Bengal Lamp but also because the company in question is owned and managed by people who make no secret of their Left leanings. It is significant that though perpetually in the red Bengal Lamp has not hit by a problem that is plaguing most other industries in the state: labour trouble. Even the CPI(M) union, CITU, which has traditionally opposed most managements in the private sector because of its philosophy, has been strangely cooperating with the owners of Bengal Lamp—the brothers Roy, Tapas and Tapan. Said D P. Chatterjee, president of the Bengal Lamp Sramik Panchayat, which was previously affiliated to the INTUC but is now a non-party registered union: "The CITU is cooperating with the management because they have an excellent rapport with the ruling party."

Moreover, there is no denying the fact that the government has been unusually partial towards Bengal Lamp. In the last three years, for instance, out of the 12,59,000 bulbs purchased by the PWD department, Bengal Lamp alone supplied more than four lakhs. And as for



Jatin Chakraborty' pressure tactics

as tubelights are concerned, Bengal Lamp has virtually monopolised government supplies. Even before that, when Chandan Basu was an employee of the company, Bengal Lamp's orders from the government far outnumbered those of all the manufacturers taken together. It is also true that the administration has always displayed a patronising attitude towards Bengal Lamp. On 26 August, 1988, for example, the labour secretary, D K Ghosh, went out of his way and wrote a letter to the chief manager of the Bank of Baroda requesting him to "extend all possible help so that Bengal Lamp can continue to be in production". But the crucial question is: did the chief minister insist that the government favour Bengal Lamp with bulk orders ignoring the demands of other manufacturers, and more important, did he



Chandan Basu with his father

Marxist CM's capitalist son

Father proposes, son disposes. When Subhabrata Basu (Chandan to his friends) passed the higher secondary examination in 1969, his father Jyoti Basu, the West Bengal chief minister, wanted him to step in to his grandfather's shoes and practise medicine. But Chandan, an average student, failed to get a seat in any of the state's medical colleges and enrolled himself in the B.Com course at St. Xavier's College, his father's *alma mater*.

In 1971, however, at the request of Siddhartha Shankar Ray, the then Union education minister, Farooq Abdullah helped Chandan get a seat in the pre-medical course in the J and K State Medical College. But Chandan was destined not to become a doctor: he quit the course halfway and returned to Calcutta in 1974.

Again he knocked on the doors of St. Xavier's and got himself admitted in the B. Com course. But it was only for a brief period. Before long he found a job with Bengal Lamp Works Ltd. as a management trainee. Later, he rose to become an executive of the company. His salary: Rs 950 a month.

In 1977, Chandan Basu fell in love and married Snigdha Wahi (Dolly to his friends). It was after his marriage that the CM's son started to feel the want of a little more than what his salary was giving him. Chandan began thinking in terms of business. But since he had little experience in business matters, he began looking for a partner. Coincidentally, around the same time, his brother-in-law, Shishir Wahi, left his job at India Steamship with the intention of launching a business firm. It was then that their prying eyes fell on an advertisement in the newspapers inviting applications for the distribution rights of Britannia biscuits in West Bengal's Murshidabad district. Together, Chandan and Wahi floated Omkar Trading Company and secured the distribution rights. Thus began Chandan's long association with biscuits. It also marked the beginning of a controversial phase in his career: his critics alleged that Britannia had offered Chandan and Wahi the distribution rights just to keep the chief minister in good humour.

Chandan Basu soon found out that biscuits were big business and that there was a ready market for it in the eastern region. The two were clearly not content with just marketing the products of a firm: they wanted to manufacture them.

Chandan Basu and Wahi made their first move in that direction in September 1979 when they had the Eastern Biscuit Company registered in Calcutta. They secured a plot of land in Durgapur for setting up a biscuit manufacturing unit but it was not until March 1980 that their loan application was cleared by the West Bengal Financial Corporation. With technical assistance from Britannia Industries, the plant began to take shape by the end of that year.

Soon, however, Chandan Basu fell

instruct the PWD minister to keep the matter a secret?

Predictably, the issue raised a storm within the ruling Front. Saroj Mukherjee, the state secretary of the CPI(M) and the chairman of the Left Front, accused Jatin Chakraborty of lying and making false entries in his file: "I do not believe that Jyoti Basu can do such a thing. If the Left Front partners continue to behave in this manner, I see no reason why the Left Front should continue at all." Even a diehard Congressman and a bitter critic of the chief minister, Subrata Mukherjee, found it hard to swallow Jatin Chakraborty's accusation and though Priya Ranjan Das Munshi,the West Bengal PCC president, asked Jyoti Basu to step down for "misusing authority", it was only a half-hearted demand. As for Chandan Basu, he flatly denied that he had ever met the PWD minister along with Tapan Roy. The top rung of the CPM leadership unanimously charged the minister from the RSP with trying to denigrate the chief minister and his party, thus bringing into the open the bitter rivalry between the two Front partners and more specifically between Jyoti Basu and Jatin Chakraborty

Relations between the CPM and the RSP first soured in 1982 following a squabble over portfolios, when the RSP ministers in the Cabinet, along with those of the Forward Bloc, submitted their resignations as a mark of protest against the "irrational allocation of portfolios". Though the crisis blew over, the incident sowed the seeds of mutual distrust between the CPM and the other Front partners. Matters came to a head once again when the then chairman of the Left Front, the late Promode Dasgupta, suggested that he had received complaints regarding the functioning of the West Bengal housing board and even hinted that the housing directorate might be separated from the PWD portfolio held by Jatin Chakraborty. The CPM, however, did not follow up the matter after the death of Promode Dasgupta

The CPM leadership made no attempt to conceal its displeasure over the doings of Jatin Chakraborty which greatly embarrassed the government and the chief minister. The PWD minister's crusade against pop singer Usha Uthup and his frequent statements criticising the government for its poor performance only alienated the RSP further from the CPM. But, Jatin Chakraborty continued in the Cabinet mainly because of his excellent rapport with Jyoti Basu

However, personal relations between Jatin Chakraborty and Jyoti Basu soured after a confidential letter written by the former to the chief minister criticising the finance department was leaked to the press. Basu was annoyed and blamed the PWD minister for the leak. It was the *panchayat* polls in March this year, however, that brought the Jyoti Basu-Jatin Chakraborty confrontation to the centrestage. The Left Front partners were not happy with the distribution of seats and they felt that the CPI(M) was expanding its influence at their cost. And, during the poll campaign, they used the loud mouthed Jatin Chakraborty to hit out against the CPM and the chief minister. Since then their relations never improved and even as recently as August this year, Jatin Chakraborty publicly denounced Jyoti Basu at a massive rally in Calcutta.

This is precisely why many have viewed the present episode as yet another chapter in the cold war between the two leaders Only this time around the confrontation has taken a serious turn The RSP leadership has advised its minister not to bow down from his stand. The Forward Bloc has decided to support the RSP and has even declared that their ministers in the Cabinet would quit if the CPM demands the resignation of Jatin Chakraborty on the issue. The CPM too, is in no mood to forgive and forget

The episode has taken yet another interesting turn with reports that Jyoti Basu has spoken to the Governor, Nurul Hasan, on the issue. Jatin Chakraborty too, has contacted the Governor and what is more, the PWD minister has alleged that his telephone is being tapped after his confidential and controversial note appeared in the newspapers. In a dramatic development, the PWD secretary, S.M. Murshed, ordered an enquiry into the phone-tapping allegation but resigned from his post after the employees of the secretariat's PBX refused to cooperate with the investigating officer.

Meanwhile, Subrata Mukherjee, the fiery Congress(I) legislator of the state and chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, has called for the files of Bengal Lamp from the PWD department for scrutiny. Will it reveal the truth?

Rajiv Bagchi/*Calcutta*



The Bengal Lamps factory in Calcutta: favoured?

out with his business partner and they decided to split. Moreover, Britannia, which had verbally assured Chandan that it would lift his entire production and market it, backed out. Chandan would not sell his buscuits. His problems were compounded by nagging labour trouble that dogged the unit right from its inception. Only last year, the management declared a lockout to cope with the mounting labour problems. Though the lockout was lifted after a few months, the storm has not really blown over.

As the only son of a Marxist chief minister, Chandan Basu's entrepreneurial activities have been criticised by Jyoti Basu's political rivals. The Congress(I) has even accused the chief minister of favouring Eastern Biscuit Company with land, loans and orders but such allegations have not cut much ice with the masses. What has raised eyebrows is Chandan Basu's association with business magnate Jit Paul, brother of Swraj Paul. Many have questioned the logic behind Jit Paul appointing Chandan Basu, who holds no professional degree, as a consultant for his confectionary unit in Calcutta. It is commonly believed that Jit Paul favoured Chandan with a job only to be on the right side of Jyoti Basu, and by proxy, the CPI(M).

Chandan Basu (35), who has so far steered clear of politics, remains unfazed in the face of such criticism. "Had I used my father's contacts, I would have been a bigger businessman today," he says. Perhaps, there might be some truth in his words.



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

A united fourth estate

Unlike the passive reaction of the press to censorship imposed during the Emergency, its stand against the Defamation Bill is reassuring. This time the resistance was unanimous and countrywide and the government failed to really divide the flock.

However, the initial response during the Emergency was not so shameful. I recall that the whispered message about a protest meeting to be held at the Press Club of India, New Delhi, on 29 June, 1975, brought together nearly 150 journalists, including some editors. The resolution moved by me to condemn press censorship and demand its immediate withdrawal was passed with one voice. And though I offered to forward the resolution to the President, the Prime Minister and the information and broadcasting minister under my signature so that the government's wrath would not visit the others, all insisted on signing the resolution.

I forwarded the resolution under my signature, but left a copy at the Press Club counter for the signatures of those who would like to sign it. I have preserved the paper, and, believe it or not, there were nearly 200 signatures.

My disappointment is that when I came out of jail at the end of August 1975 and tried to pick up the thread from where I had left it, there was no response. Journalists, particularly editors, were too scared, some because they feared they would be jailed, others because they feared they would lose their jobs.

The role of V.C. Shukla, then information and broadcasting minister, was most dismal. He had twisted the arms of newspaper proprietors, editors and journalists to such an extent that only a handful of them were willing to defy the government. With two or three exceptions, no one in Delhi was willing either to sign a memorandum to the Prime Minister asking her to withdraw the censorship or even meet and pass a resolution to that effect.

Shukla had assured the late Sanjay Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi's brother, that he would "fix" the journalists, unlike his predecessor, I.K. Gujral, who had failed to do so. He called Delhi-based editors to a meeting and told them bluntly that the government would not tolerate "any nonsense". It was there to stay and rule.

Shukla told me that any blank space left in an editorial, article or anywhere (a common form of protest against censorship by Indian newspapers, under the British) would be taken as defiance ; he threatened to arrest editors who would not obey him. Most of them were horrified but none protested. Even more horrifying was the fact that there were a few among them who supported censorship and spoke in praise of the government in such glowing terms that anyone other than Shukla would have felt embarrassed.

There was to be no carrot for the press, only the whip. And to see that it would be applied well, Shukla brought in K.N. Prasad, an IPS officer, as joint secretary to his ministry to serve as his right-hand man, or rather his whiphand. Prasad started the method of giving orders on the phone to the censors, who in turn rang up newspapers to tell them what they should do and not do. It was like a police *raj*, literally. And that may be the reason why the press caved in.

I feared that a prolonged struggle against the Bill would weaken the ranks of the fourth estate and give an opportunity to pro-establishment journalists to divide the fraternity. A concerted effort was made to do so but it failed. I am referring to the attempt made to link the wage board recommendations for journalists and non-journalists to the struggle against the Defamation Bill. Both categories, although greatly interested in the recommendations, rebuffed the government-inspired move to raise the issue of wages to divert them from the main cause of press freedom. It takes a lot of courage to take such a stand. Seeing their determination, I had no doubt that the struggle, even though long and arduous, would be successful. The government had no option but to withdraw the Bill which it did.

I feared that a prolonged struggle against the Bill would weaken the ranks of the fourth estate and give an opportunity to pro-establishment journalists to divide the fraternity. A concerted effort was made to do so but it failed... The government had no option but to withdraw the Bill

Much disinformation on the Bill has been disseminated. For example, one report said that H.K.L. Bhagat, information and broadcasting minister, had submitted his resignation. This is not true. Even when, at a cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister pulled him up for not letting him know the hostile reaction the Bill would evoke, Bhagat did not offer to resign.

However, one cabinet minister says that if he had been in Bhagat's place he would have taken upon himself the blame and resigned. He says that the Prime Minister's image is much more important than that of Bhagat. But the latter, according to him, is spreading such stories as would show that it was the Prime Minister who was the villain of the piece, not any minister.

At the same cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister also upbraided another minister—P. Shiv Shankar. This was because at one stage, Shiv Shankar was associated with the preparation of the Bill, although he had warned of a possible hostile reaction by the press at the cabinet meeting held to consider the Bill.

Perhaps it was the Prime Minister's criticism that prompted Bhagat to try so hard to initiate a dialogue between the former and the press. He wrote to many senior journalists, individually inviting them to talks and also asked Gopi Arora, information secretary, to follow them up. But both failed to break the pressmen's resolve not to have any talks till the Bill was withdrawn unconditionally and unequivocally.

A few journalists, who eat out of the government's hands, did meet Bhagat and other ministers, disobeying the call for having no truck with the government till it withdrew the Bill. But then, these journalists do not count.

It is a pity that the Prime Minister, influenced by some persons like Satish Sharma, M.L. Fotedar and Jagannath Pahadia, did not earlier announce the withdrawal of the Bill, inspite of a majority of Congressmen wanting him to do so. Only a few partymen realised how dangerous the fallout would be for them in the next elections. My feeling—though the Bill has been withdrawn—is that the fear that Rajiv Gandhi or, for that matter, the Congress party, might bring forward some such measure, will influence voters in the next poll. ■

IVs

Radios

2 m Rs

Calculators

Projectors

Digital Watch

KELTRON

Feel yourself

Reliytronics

It means electronics with an added virtue: guaranteed reliability

For us, reliability is not just a word. It means the experience and expertise gathered over the last two decades in the manufacture of a wide range of industrial and consumer electronic items.

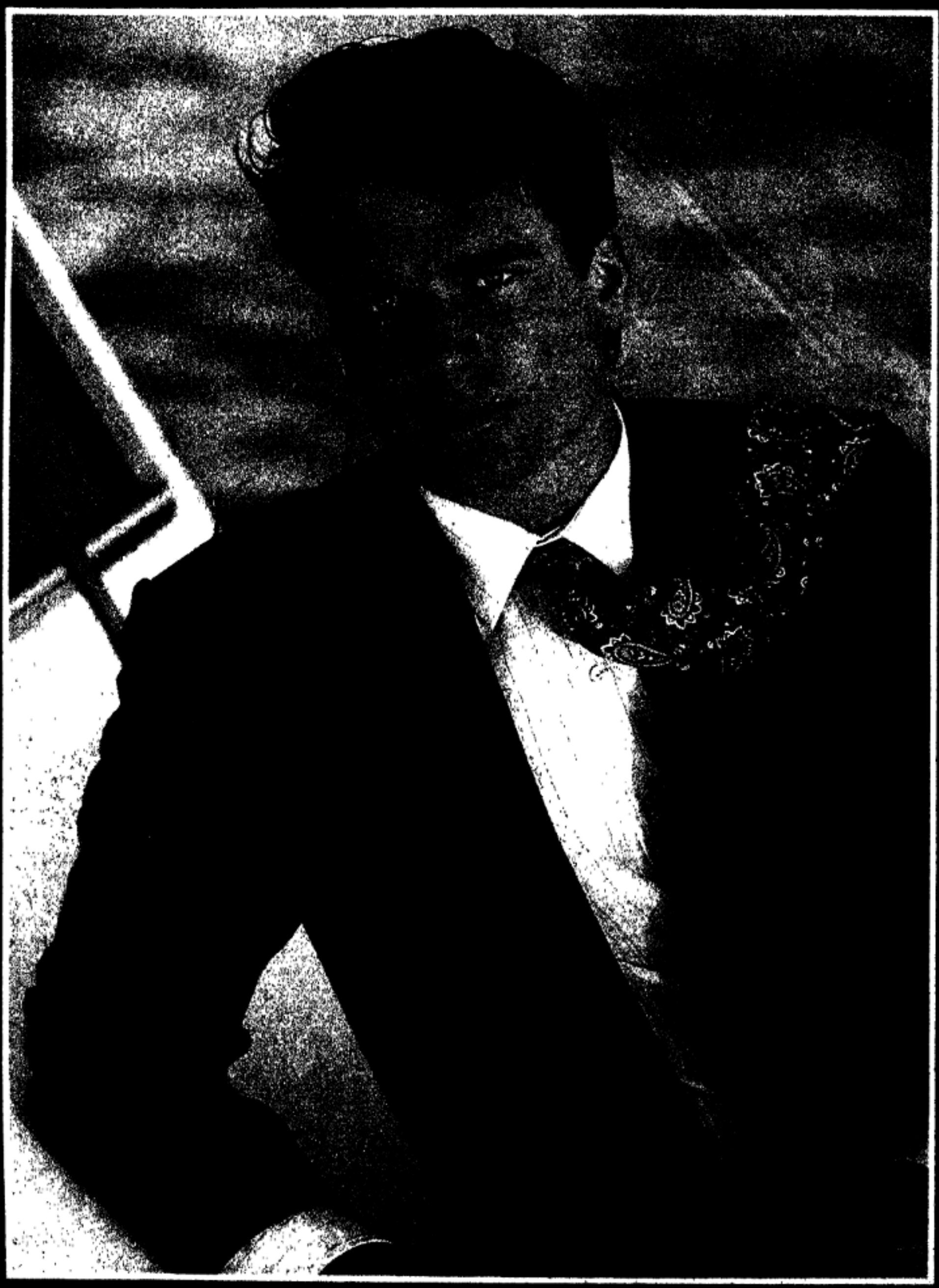
These include IVs, radios, 2 m Rs, calculators, computer systems, control and instrumentation systems and even electronic systems for communications, defence and space applications. Not to speak of all the components that go into them like capacitors, diodes, resistors, quartz crystals, etc.

So it is hardly surprising that our components are bought by other developing companies to make their products.

Keltron Reliytronics. It's the last word about reliability in electronics.



SUITINGS FROM THE



BOMBAY DYEING

Cezari

COLLECTION



BOMBAY DYEING

Only Nature could be more fresh and appealing.



Coticura Lavender Mist



Lavender Mist

A Talc Classique.
Created for the way you are.

OBT/MP 1 M/169 87

Crony capitalism

Or how politicians and businessmen help each other make money

• Lalit Suri has always been known as the capital's most canny influence peddler. But recently, it appeared that most people had underestimated the measure of his influence in New Delhi's political corridors. To the intense embarrassment of the government, it became known last month, that Suri had received Rs 6.5 crores as commission for a deal between Japan's Sumitomo Corporation and the government-owned Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC). What kind of "consultancy service" could the hotelier-cum-car dealer-cum-builder have rendered Sumitomo in its bid to sell Rs 100 crores worth of steel pipes to the ONGC? Or for that matter, what expertise could the recently-constituted firm that received the commission, Jyotsna Holdings—owned by Suri's wife and mother-in-law—have provided the Japanese corporation? And why was a middleman appointed in contravention of the government's ruling and, apparently, without its knowledge?

In the end, it appeared as if Lalit Suri was appointed Sumitomo's consultant only because he is close to another power broker—Satish Sharma. Some believe the links go further. Sharma, after all, is the Prime Minister's aide and his good buddy. And Rajiv's detractors lost no time in making out that the Sumitomo-ONGC deal was just one more instance of how the Suri family's prodigious growth—from ownership of a small printing press to assets worth about Rs 250 crores—is linked with their long-standing friendship with the ruling dynasty.

• The rivalry between India's best-known textile tycoons—Reliance's Dhirubhai Ambani and Bombay Dyeing's Nusli Wadia—is a decade old. But it assumed a venomous character after Rajiv came to power three years ago. Prior to this, Ambani always had the run of Wadia—procuring licenses with lightning speed and influencing government policy in favour of his products. All this changed with V.P. Singh in the finance ministry and Wadia suddenly found he had a ear in government. When Ambani discovered Wadia's hand in enlisting the



Prvankan Rakshit

American detective agency Fairfax—hired by the government to investigate Reliance's business dealings the rivalry turned even more bitter. With concessions no longer forthcoming and Reliance's bottomline badly squeezed, Ambani hit back. Largely, by deceiving Rajiv Gandhi into believing that Wadia was part of a conspiracy (along with V.P. Singh, a few bureaucrats and a section of the press) aimed at unseating him. This led to Singh being dropped from the finance ministry and Ambani finding favour again. But there is no doubting that the rivalry between the two industrialists—which drew politicians, industrialists and the press into taking sides—very nearly toppled the government.

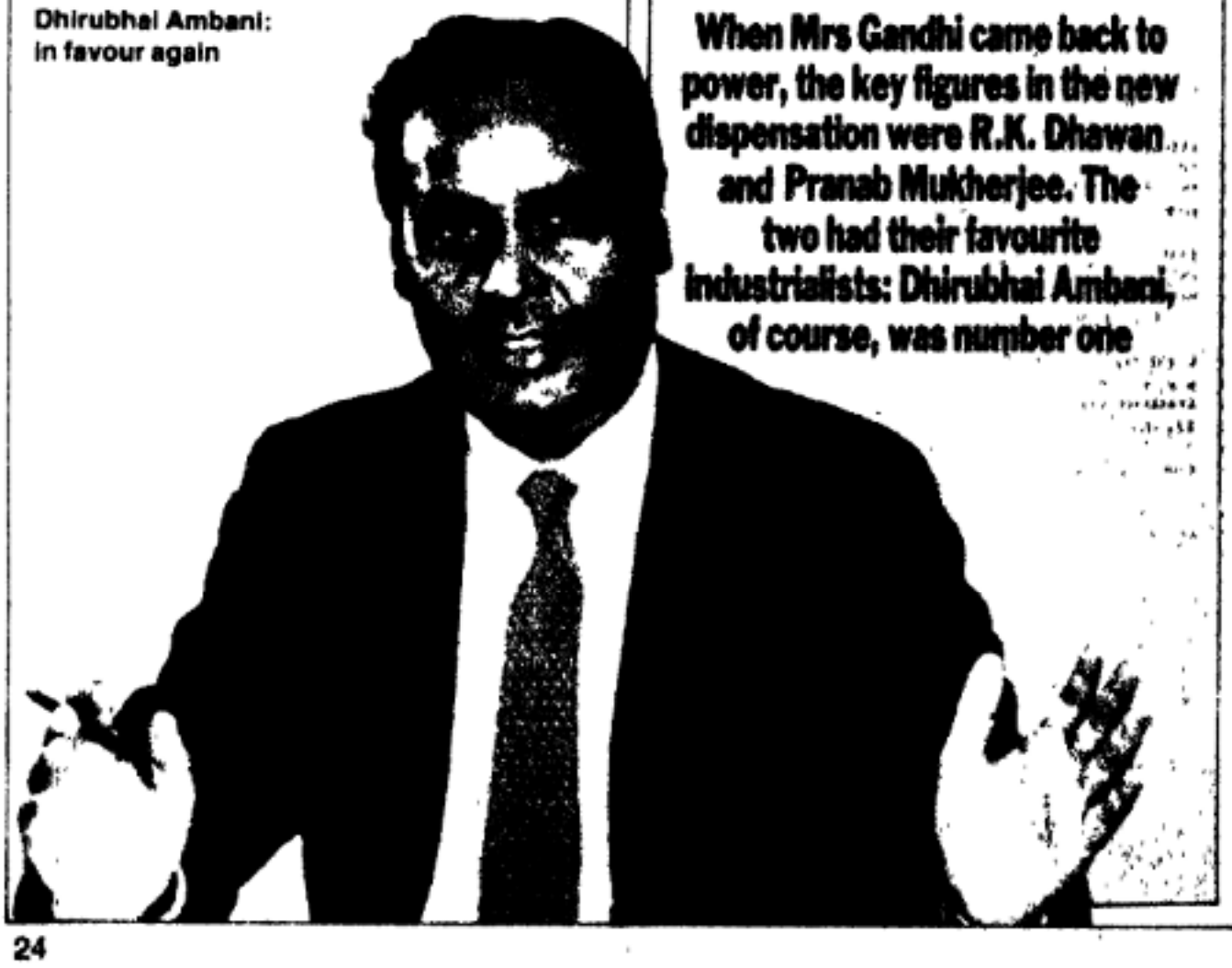
• Most aspects of the Bofors scandal may remain murky but *The Hindu's* disclosures have established one thing beyond reasonable doubt: that the Hinduja brothers were recipients of the payoffs. Documents published by the newspaper revealed that the expatriate Sindhi billionaire family are behind Moineao S.A., one of the three firms that received money from the Swedish arms manufacturer. Yet, the government has been very reluctant to investigate their role in the Rs 1,700 crores deal. Stranger, perhaps, is the fact that their ambitious drive to make investments in India is being allowed to go unchecked. Late last year, the Hindujas acquired a majority stake in the Madras-based truck manufacturing giant, Ashok Leyland. Since then, they have been making bids to buy up other companies and are now strong contenders for at least two new projects, in the petrochemicals and telecommunications sectors.



Rajiv Gandhi at the AICC(I) centenary session: expensive bash



When Mrs Gandhi came back to power, the key figures in the new dispensation were R.K. Dhawan and Pranab Mukherjee. The two had their favourite industrialists: Dhirubhai Ambani, of course, was number one

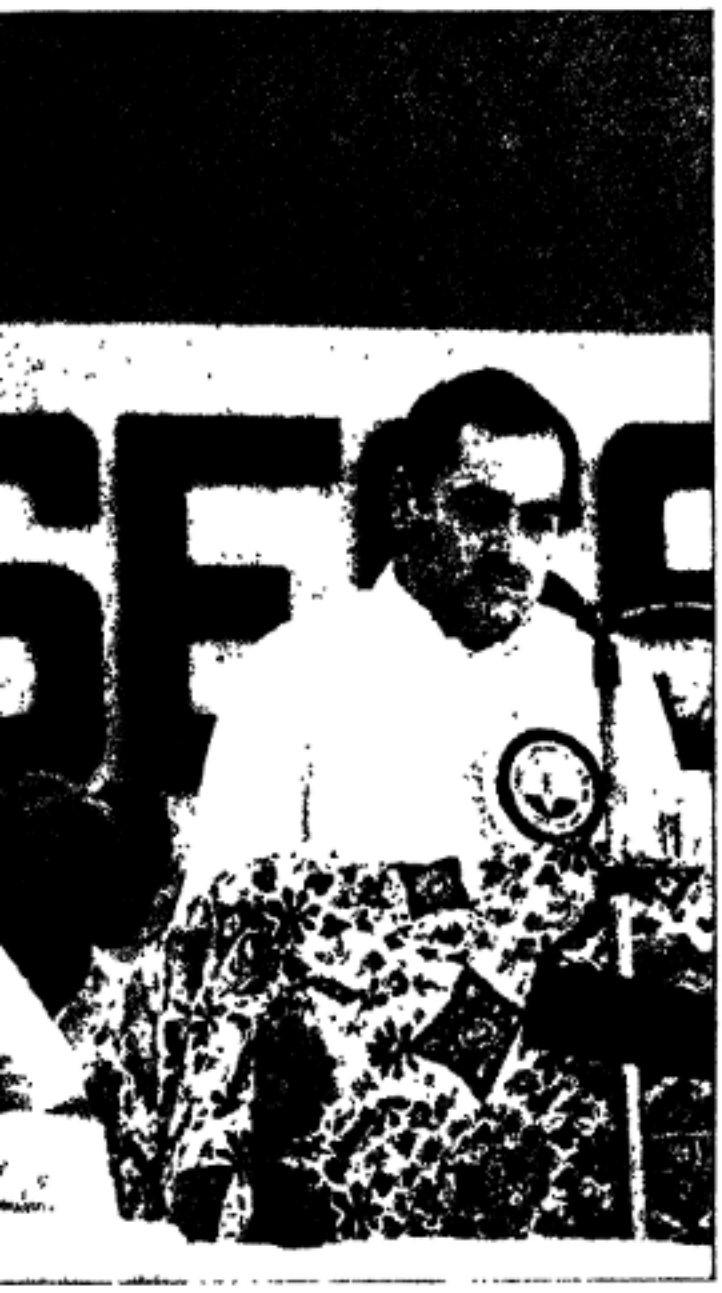


Dhirubhai Ambani: in favour again

Politics and business have never been strange bedfellows. But their relationship over the years has been growing more and more intimate. Neither, it seems, is getting enough of the other. And neither appears to be able to do without the other. In India today, the nexus is fast, secure, cemented.

It is a relationship founded on mutual need. And, in its most elemental form, the nexus operates this way. Businessmen find that they cannot grow without government help. Given the license-permit-quota raj, doing business in India takes more than initiative, vision and the willingness to risk. Increasingly, business is becoming less about entrepreneurship and more about public relations. Everything could depend on how many (or which) politicians you know and how well you cultivate them. Getting an industrial license for instance. Being awarded a government contract for another. Or for having the customs duty on an item that is imported reduced just that little bit.

In turn, politicians are beginning to need businessmen more and more. In large measure, this is a consequence of the growing costs of financing elections. In the absence of audited party accounts, it is impossible to say how



much is being spent on elections. All there exists are estimates and these are invariably far too divergent to be of any prognostic value. For instance, estimates of how much the ruling party spent on the last general election vary from as little as Rs 300 crores to Rs 1,500 crores and more. One thing is clear, though: the Congress could not have raised even the lower figure from its candidates and voluntary contributions. Apart from electioneering, political parties need money to stage public meetings and rallies, maintain cadre and for day-to-day running. Businessmen are often only too willing to meet this need in the hope of receiving (or out of consideration of having received) a favour .

The symbiotic relationship has led to a flourishing sub-culture. Businessmen employ lobbyists and influence peddlers who stealthily work on politicians and bureaucrats to advance company interests. Every major business house in the country has an office in New Delhi which is devoted to this kind of liaison work. Some of this is relatively unimportant, routine stuff, such as paying a small bribe to a clerk to have a file expedited. The important tasks are such things like bagging a contract or influencing government policy in favour of the company. It is here that the politician, who acts as a middleman between business and those at the helm of political power, steps in. (The notorious Rajni Patel and L.N. Mishra are two examples of this middleman-type politician.) He is a fixer and willing to troubleshoot for a price. And while businessmen use him to advance their interests, politicians use him as a fund collector.

Politics and business have always gone hand in hand in India. In the pre-Independence days, the Indian industrialist was closely associated with the nationalist movement. Not everyone, of course, was as passionately involved as Jamnalal Bajaj, who spent a year in jail in 1924 leading a march to unfurl the national flag in defiance of a ban. Bajaj was the treasurer of the Indian National Congress Working Committee for 22 years. There were other, if somewhat lesser-known, industrialists, who also held official positions in the Congress—Vadilal Lallubhai Mehta, Samuel Aaron and Lala Shankar.

In Ghanshyamdas (G.D.) Birla the Congress had a mediator between itself, Mahatma Gandhi and the British. G.D. Birla was also the Congress' most generous financier, the extent of his contributions becoming a source of conflict with his brothers. Most of the other big industrialists were involved in their own way—Sriram, Tata, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, Walchand Hirachand and Ambalal Sarabhai.

Says Bombay-based industrialist Viren Shah: "These were men of character and vision. The nexus between politics and business was quite healthy then." True, but the industrialists' support of the freedom movement also stemmed from the recognition that their future was brighter under the nationalists. In retrospect, a correct perception, since most of the already-established business houses in pre-Independence India went on to grow much faster in the Fifties. Predictably, when the license-permit-quota raj took hold a few years after Independence, those who already had links with the Congress stood to prosper most. Most noticeably, the Birlas, who grew and expanded with astonishing rapidity right through the Fifties and the Sixties.





Documents reveal that the Hindujas are behind Moineao S.A., one of the three firms that received money from Bofors. Yet, the government has been very reluctant to investigate their role in the Rs 1,700 crores deal

The Hinduja brothers: back from Bofors

When it all began in the Fifties, a mere half-a-dozen business houses sat at the top of the corporate pile. They had a cosy—but undeniably cleaner relationship with the government. Competition was not intense and the big houses got pretty much what they wanted. Each one used the advantages of licensing to build up comfortable monopolies. And since there was not too much diversification, each one staked out their territory in key industries. For instance, the Tatas grabbed a large share of the steel industry while the Birlas had the run of the automobile industry, sharing it only with the Walchand group.

If the licensing system was exploited in the Fifties and Sixties, it was mainly through lobbying to retain monopoly status. A perfect example of this is the automobile industry where the Birlas fought hard and successfully to prevent



new entrants. This, despite producing a car (the Ambassador) with a very poor reputation in the market and the use of blatantly outdated technology. It was only the arrival of the Maruti which diluted the stranglehold of the Birlas and Walchand. And recently, the Tatas have had a crack at the industry by producing a pick-up, which looks suspiciously like a car, but comes described as a truck.

The lack of competition in business was not the only reason for the nexus being relatively weak in the Fifties and the Sixties. In Nehru's time, the Congress had little need of money. Elections were relatively inexpensive and free from the kind of gimmicky shows of strength (the use of large fleets of vehicles, hired crowds for election rallies, etc.), prevalent today. Moreover, the party hardly ever indulged in costly extravaganzas like the infamous AICC(I) session in Bombay a couple of years ago. Then, the Congress was a cadre-based party and volunteers were willing to work for free.

Most important, perhaps, was the fact that party power was not as centralised as it is today. State bosses exercised considerable control over the party and if funds were required, they could be raised at the local level. Among the fund collectors were S.K. Patil in Maharashtra, Atulya Ghosh in Bengal, Morarji Desai in Gujarat and Kamaraj in Madras. Finally, money did not make much electoral capital in those days. For example, the Swatantra party had the support of private industry and of the princes; yet it never made much headway. Recalls a Bombay-based industrialist: "I was told by a Union minister after the 1967 election that all that came from theCentral kitty was Rs 10,000 for each candidate."

All of this changed with the 1969 Congress split. With the powerful state bosses staying on with the Congress(O) and retaining, also, a sizeable section of the party rank and file, Mrs Gandhi had only her charisma going for her Congress(R). Bereft of cadres, she needed money desperately.

At around the same time, the government took another decision that changed the face of the politician-businessman nexus. In a bid ostensibly to advance socialistic policy, Mrs Gandhi passed a new electoral reform law which banned corporate contributions to party coffers. On the face of it, the law was aimed at keeping politics and business apart. But what it did was, further criminalise the relation. Suddenly, parties and politi-

Sanjay Gandhi, Mrs Gandhi: institutionalised crony capitalism

cians realised that it was far better to have unaccounted funds that could be put to any number of uses or even be siphoned off. The marketplace for funds became a free-for-all.

It was a situation tailor-made for political middlemen. And it was at this stage that the likes of Rajni Patel and Lalit Narain Mishra came to the fore. Rajni Patel became one of the Congress' biggest fund raisers. One of Bombay's most successful criminal barristers, he knew Mrs Gandhi from her days at Sommerville, Oxford. (Patel was at Kings, Cambridge.) Recruited to head the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, he fitted admirably into the Tammany Hall-style boss tradition created by S.K. Patil.

With Mrs Gandhi's obvious approval, Patel set about granting industrial licenses and government contracts to businessmen. This kind of thing had gone on before but with Patel it reached new dimensions. In the past, such favours were granted usually only to a few select industrialists, but Patel spread his net much wider. He entertained requests from all kinds of businessmen and was rarely known to refuse anyone. Frequently, he didn't have to negotiate to issue a license; a word to a minister was all that it required.

Patel was close to the pharmaceutical lobby and is widely regarded as being instrumental in having the Hathi Committee report, which recommended, among other things, the nationalisation of sections of the drug industry, shelved. He is also believed to have set Dhirubhai Ambani on his unfaltering growth track by lobbying for a scheme which allowed him to import polyester yarn against the export of nylon fabric. The scheme allowed Ambani to sell nylon fabric abroad for a small loss; which was more than compensated by the massive profits he made on the sale of imported polyester yarn. It is well known that Reliance was able to go public largely because of the profits made from this scheme.

Patel operated mainly through two Bombay businessmen—Narendra 'Mama' Kapadia, a former sheriff of the city and Vinay Shah, the son of former Governor K.K. Shah. If Patel looked after Maharashtra, then L.N. Mishra handled the north and the east. Mishra's style was cruder but it achieved the same results. Recalls a Bombay industrialist: "Rajni used charm and persuasion but Mishra used a big stick."

The duo worked well till about 1974 when Sanjay Gandhi began reconsidering the nature of fund collecting. Sanjay was particularly irked by Patel's success in raising money and, apparently, believed that he was hanging on to some of the money. He then appeared to have reasoned that if fund raising was as easy as Patel made it seem, it was better undertaken by himself or his cronies.

Sanjay's break with Patel and Mishra led to a new pattern in fund collection and with it a new phase in crony capitalism. For one, all favours to businessmen were granted on a quid pro quo basis. Industrialists in Bombay recall that Patel rarely asked for money on every deal he arranged for them. Says one: "Patel was more than a fund collector. He was also a politician interested in a power base. He was willing to attend to problems without demanding anything in return immediately. But with the advent of Sanjay, you had to pay for every deal that he or his friends pushed through."

Sanjay's time witnessed the advent of a new breed of capitalist aggressive and willing to get rich quick. Men like Raunaq Singh, Charanjit Singh (of Pure Drinks) and Lalit and Sagar Suri began to move on the fast track. Other Sanjay cronies were Tiger Kapadia (no relation of 'Mama's') of National Rayon and of course Kamal Nath, a small-time Calcutta businessman, who suddenly hit big time. According to most observers, the business-politics interface went berserk around this time because Sanjay's friends went about enriching themselves, flouted every regulation and upped the ante.



G.D. Birla with Mahatma Gandhi: mixing business with patriotism

In Nehru's time, the Congress had little need of money. Elections were relatively inexpensive and free from the kind of gimmicky shows of strength prevalent today. The party did not indulge in extravaganzas like the AICC(I) centenary session

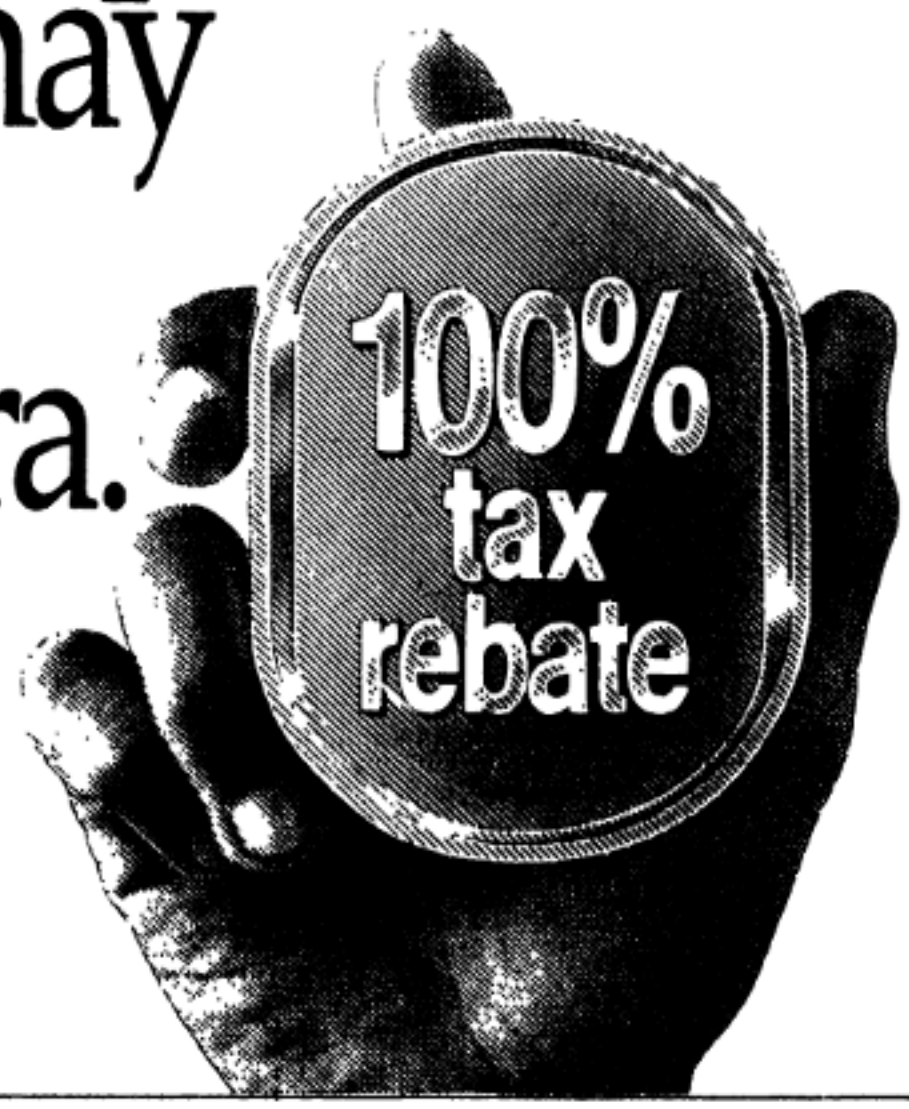


The Janata period appears to have marked a temporary reversal in crony capitalism, though the government was not in power long enough to make a proper assessment. However, the Janata did come down hard on many of Mrs Gandhi's old supporters, such as the Pauls of Apeejay, K.K. Birla and R.P. Goenka. It also targetted Sanjay's buddies such as Charanjit Singh (Coca Cola was shown the door) and Raunaq Singh (one of his units was taken over).

When Mrs Gandhi came back to replace the Janata, the key figures in the new dispensation were R.K. Dhawan, her special assistant and the finance

Now!

80 CCA Benefit extended to LIC's pension plans... Jeevan Akshay and Jeevan Dhara.



Both schemes now come to you with the 80 CCA Benefit... 100% tax rebate on premiums up to Rs. 30,000 paid in 1988-89.

Get a lifelong pension. Provide security for your family. And save on income tax. With Jeevan Akshay and Jeevan Dhara. Contact your nearest LIC office or agent. Today.

Life Insurance Corporation of India

R K SWAMY/LIC/2706 E

minister Pranab Mukherjee. The two had their favourite industrialists; Dhirubhai Ambani, of course, being number one. R.P. Goenka was another who always got his way. As for fund raising in the states, Antulay in Maharashtra was the most successful, before his blatant approach snarled him in the cement allotment scandal.

The advent of Rajiv Gandhi promised a change in the old order. He came with a promise of clean government and one of his first steps was to rid the party of some of the corrupt old guard. R.K. Dhawan went too. Fund raising seems to have come to an end too—at least in the manner in which it was conducted in the past. In fact the only two people whom businessmen name as old-style fund collectors are Murli Deora, the MP from Bombay (who is reportedly close to Reliance, the Hindujas and the Chhabrias) and the PM's aide Satish Sharma. Yet, Rajiv's government has been dogged by business-related scandals. One view—and an uncharitable one—is that he has given up the old and well-tried fund raising techniques for another. That all the money he and his party needs comes from large government deals. Bofors and the Sumitomo-ONGC scandal are advanced as examples and Rajiv's reluctance to initiate action against the Hindujas and Suri is cited as evidence of his complicity. Some proponents of this view go further, claiming that Rajiv had no choice but to turn to such deals for money. The argument runs that under the liberalised climate that he ushered in, licenses can no longer be hawked or auctioned to contending businessmen. Others counter—and, apparently, correctly—that the delicensing proposals do not cover a wide variety of industries; in fact, all projects which involve foreign collaboration are still licensed ones.

Whatever the truth, it is becoming increasingly clear to industrialists that the real profits do not lie in procuring or buying licensesbut in influencing government policy. There is far more money to be had in lobbying for a reduction in customs duty on an item imported or in excise duty on a product manufactured. Nothing illustrates this better than the following example.

Before this year's budget, manufacturers of synthetic fibre and yarn had conducted a long and aggressive campaign arguing that the industry was badly hit by the unchecked smuggling of polyester fabric. The campaign succeeded and the budget extended concessions worth an astonishing 520 crores by



Rajni Patel. Congress' biggest fund raiser

cutting back on excise duties on polyester filament yarn (PFY) and polyester staple fibre (PSF). The extent of the relief given to the industry was more or less the same as the additional levies raised in the budget! The benefit to Reliance Industries, the largest manufacturer of yarn and fibre, amounted to Rs 210 crores. Far far more than it could ever hope to make in many years by playing the license game. Reliance, of course, is one company that has been forging ahead under Rajiv's dispensation—that is, ever since Ambani found his way back to favour after discrediting Wadia. Over the past year, Reliance has received a number of duty concessions. For example, import duties on MEG (a raw material in the manufacture of yarn and fibre), PTA and LAB have all been reduced. The only beneficiary of the last two decisions was Reliance. Even better, perhaps, from Ambani's point of view, is the government's decision early this year to hike the import duty on paraxylene, a raw material that Wadia's Bombay Dyeing crucially depends on. If the decisions have restored Reliance to financial health, they have also raised serious doubts about the government's integrity.

The nexus between politics and business still remains, though under Rajiv Gandhi it may have assumed a different form. Lobbyists for industrialists in New Delhi continue to play the same game in bureaucratic and political corridors every day—bidding for contracts, blocking



R.K. Dhawan with Mrs Gandhi: secretary-cum-power broker

One view is that Rajiv Gandhi has given up one old and well-tried fund raising technique for another. That all the money he and his party needs comes from large government deals. Bofors and the Sumitomo-ONGC scandals are advanced as examples



rivals, winning licenses and trying to bend fiscal policy. There are those who believe that the only way to break the nexus is to introduce state funding for elections. As long as politicians require large amounts of money for elections, they will continue to find ways of making business finance them, the argument goes. As far as businessmen go, some of them will always be willing to play the politicians' game as long as there is something in it for them. And as long as business and politics remain as intimate as they are, both of them will continue to rub off on each other. Doing business will involve playing politics. And playing politics will involve doing business.

Olga Tellis and Mukund Padmanabhan/*Bombay* with Paran Balakrishnan and Patralekha Chatterjee/*New Delhi*

Southern comfort

The seven-party Opposition cocktail coalesces to form a spirited Front at Madras

Marina Beach, Madras. Date: 17 September, 1988. Muthuvel Karunanidhi's spirits soared as the crowd cheered his speech hailing the launch of the National Front. He was now part of a nationwide movement to oust the corrupt and inefficient Congress(I) regime at the Centre. In the city, posters and banners proclaimed the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and its supreme leader Kalaignar Karunanidhi, the prime mover behind the launching of the National Front. The DMK, for long dubbed a regional outfit, was to participate in the *jehad* against Rajiv, being conducted by the national Opposition, whose leaders, such as Vishwanath Pratap Singh, have become familiar names even in the rural south, after Bofors and HDW submarines.

The midnight meeting by the Bay of Bengal gave Karunanidhi an opportunity to project a national image, in association with such stalwarts. This was his chance to erase all memories of the corruption charges levelled against his government in the Seventies. M.G. Ramachandran had convinced Tamils that Karunanidhi was incapable of clean politics or of providing a corruption-free administration. This kept him out of power for a decade. But on the 17th, as thousands of his followers assembled to witness the spectacle of the National Front launch, Karunanidhi sought to remove the stain cast upon his reputation by the Sarkaria Commission, which had held his government guilty of corrupt practices. The Marina meeting, then, also launched Karunanidhi as a clean politician. The DMK president was sharing the platform with V.P. Singh. What better proof to convince Tamils of his national credentials and his commitment to the 71-point programme?

Declared Karunanidhi in his speech: "A new political history is now being written and its first chapter has begun from the south. The people are convinced about our programmes and goals



A massive rally was held at Mount Road, with all Front leaders assembled on a specially-built stage. The crowds made their way in procession, led by DMK securitymen. To the onlookers, they seemed well-disciplined troops, trained for battle

The National Front leaders: bridging the traditional north-south divide



and that is why we were able to organise such a massive rally even without the help of television and the radio which they (the Congress-I) have." His followers cheered. Commended V.P. Singh: "You (Karunanidhi) have sat through the meeting with great patience and proved that your mood has not changed even though the date has (to 18 September). In a little while, the sun will rise as if to indicate that when the elections are held in Tamil Nadu, your sun shall rise." The northern Raja was alluding to the DMK symbol, the rising sun.

Front chairman and Andhra Pradesh chief minister N.T. Rama Rao began in Telugu and then switched over to Tamil. Their goal, he made clear, was to oust



Madras city: banners welcome the National Front delegates

An uneasy truce

The Janata Party tides over its crisis but Opposition unity remains as distant as ever

The Janata crisis seems to have blown over, but not the one facing the Opposition. The patch-up formula finalised at the parliamentary board meeting of the party on 22 September can, at best, result in a temporary cease-fire. Until the leadership issue is decided Opposition unity and the defeat of Rajiv Gandhi will remain impossible tasks.

The only positive development, from the Opposition's point of view, is that even Chandra Shekhar has accepted Vishwanath Pratap Singh as leader of the proposed party, expected to come into being on 11 October, with a foundation conference in Bangalore. The national executive meeting of 23 September and national council convention of 30 September have been cancelled to avert a split.

Despite three rounds of talks among Chandra Shekhar, Hegde, Biju Patnaik, Chimanbhai Patel, S.R. Bommai and Ajit Singh the contentious issue of allocating party posts remained unresolved. Ajit Singh felt that V.P. Singh should decide on the office bearers' afresh. Lok Dal general secretary Sharad Yadav maintained that Devi Lal's allocation of party posts on 6 August—V.P. Singh as chairman of the new party, Ajit Singh as general secretary, Hegde as vice-president and Devi Lal as chairman of the parliamentary board—should stand. The Jan Morcha leader should only allot the vacant posts.

How V.P. Singh will deal with Devi Lal's insistence on being sole distributor of party tickets remains to be seen. Also what slot would Hegde, obviously angling for bigger role, fill?

On 11 October, some of those who had taken a pledge in the presence of Jayaprakash Narayan at Rajghat in March 1977 to keep the party united, will assemble once again on his birth anniversary. But, will they keep their word this time?

Kuldeep Kumar/*New Delhi*

the Congress(I) in Delhi. The first proof of their power and popularity would be the restoration of Karunanidhi to power. Hence the Madras launch. "I assure him the full support of the Front in the coming electoral battle," said NTR, to the crowd's applause. Devi Lal, Arun Nehru, Ram Dhan, S.R. Bommai, P.K. Mahanta— all tore into Rajiv Gandhi and his government in a bid to project the DMK chief as worthy of reconsideration by the Tamil voter.



N.T. Rama Rao's fans from Nellore had put up a giant multi-coloured cut-out of him in his famous Krishnavatar pose, blowing his conch, as if to herald the birth of the Front. The message above it said NTR was the nation's future hope

Earlier in the evening, a massive rally was held at Mount Road, with all Front leaders assembled on a specially-built stage. The crowds made their way in procession, led by DMK securitymen (in uniform) who carried flags on long aluminium poles. To the hundreds of onlookers gathered along the road, the marchers looked like well-disciplined troops, trained for battle.

The visitors from the north were visibly impressed. Despite the three-hour stint on the dais, they waved repeatedly at the crowd, which included the DMK youth wing led by Karunanidhi's son M.K. Stalin. Contingents of partymen from the districts were also there, having come in hired buses and lorries, despite traffic restrictions and the threat of violence by members of Vanniar Sangham, a caste organisation opposed to the DMK.

The leaders had arrived the day preceding the launch. The Telugu Desam chief, N.T. Rama Rao, brought along 20,000 of his cadre—men and women in bright yellow. NTR fans of Nellore had put up a giant multi-coloured

cut-out of him in his famous Krishnavatar pose, blowing his conch, as if to herald the birth of the Front. The lights above the cut out revealed a message: NTR is the hope for India's future.

This was indication enough of the Andhra leader's national ambitions. Some said that he had made a generous gift of money to Karunanidhi to ensure his support when the Front chose its Prime Minister, assuming that the Congress(I) lost the elections. The local Tamil daily, *Ponnanam*, owned by ex-AIADMK minister S. Thirunavukarasu (of late, a Congress supporter), ran a story on NTR gifting Rs 50 lakhs to the DMK president.



N.T. Rama Rao the famous Krishnavatar pose

Commented journalist and political satirist Cho Ramaswamy: "N.T. Rama Rao may think it is better to woo Karunanidhi now so that the latter would support him for prime ministership later. ..The DMK president, too, may prefer that dispensation to having a V.P. Singh or a Hegde, who are rather too sophisticated for him."

Political circles in Madras are agog with rumours that Rajiv Gandhi has decided to hold parliamentary elections in January, next year, along with the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls. That would prevent Front leaders from campaigning vigorously for Karunanidhi. Also, cash donations to the DMK would decrease, or so ran the argument.

Be that as it may, NTR had (said reports) made Karunanidhi promise him, in return for his monetary and other help, around ten Assembly seats, when the elections were held. That would provide him a political base outside Andhra Pradesh, an advantage when the Front leadership was decided. NTR could also, possibly, get a few seats from Bommai (Karnataka) and Biju Patnaik (Orissa). "That would make NTR more of a national leader than, say Devi Lal who has only Haryana to speak of, or an Ajit Singh who can, at best, boast of a couple of UP constituencies," mused Cho Ramaswamy. Should NTR get about 30 seats in the Lok Sabha and Karunanidhi secure 20 out of the 39 to be contested in Tamil Nadu, they could together form an influential slot within the Front, and Rama Rao knows this.

Front foot forward

The Opposition takes a step towards evolving a national alternative

With the launching of the seven-party National Front on 17 September in Madras, the Opposition has gone a step towards evolving an alternative to Rajiv Gandhi. As most Opposition parties have a limited base, the significance of the unity effort between national parties like the Janata and Lok Dal(B) and regional parties like the DMK and the Telugu Desam cannot be overestimated. Most parties, while wary of an outright merger, have no aversion to coming together in an umbrella-type organisation. The Samajwadi Janata Dal's (SJD) failure to take off indicates this attitude. But the Front's success depends largely upon the formation of a bigger party which can act as its "nucleus."

The coming together of leaders such as Devi Lal, N.T. Rama Rao, M. Karunanidhi, V.P. Singh, Ram Dhan and K.P. Unnikrishnan, shows of the gradual disappearance of the traditional north-south divide. The Front faced initial problems (Janata members led by Era Sezhiyan stayed away from the 17 September rally, for instance) but is now showing signs of stabilising.

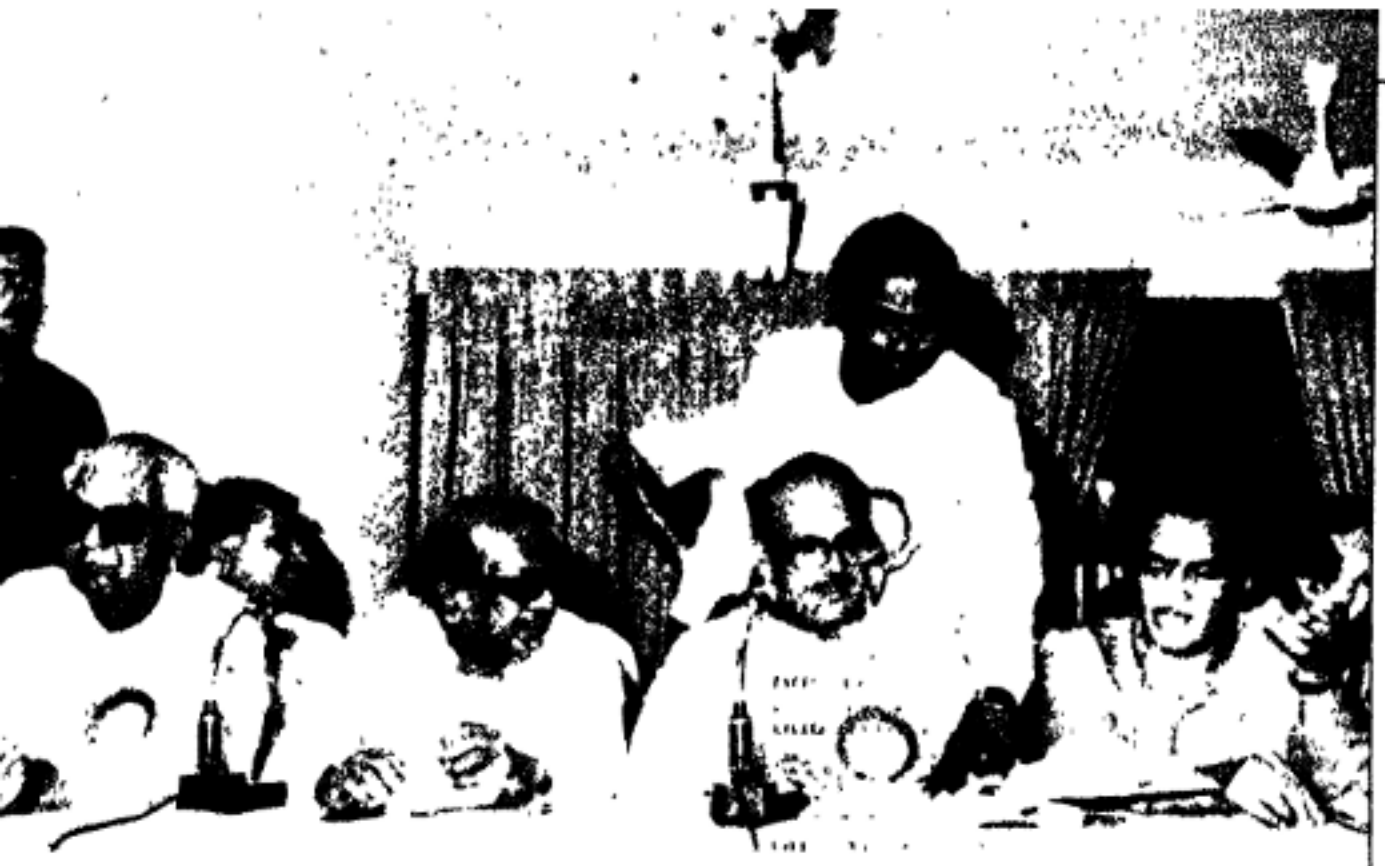
Its formation was announced on 6 August by Andhra Pradesh chief minister N.T. Rama Rao at a press conference held in New Delhi. Leaders of the seven constituents—Janata Party, Lok Dal, Congress(S), Jan Morcha, Telugu Desam, Asom Gana Parishad and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam—were present. The process, though, had begun as early as 26 November, 1987, with the formation of a four-party front comprising the Janata Party, Congress(S), Lok Dal(A) and the Jan Morcha. In March 1988, the Lok Dal(A) and the Rashtriya Sanjay Manch of Menaka Gandhi merged with the Janata. The byelections to seven Lok Sabha seats on 16 June provided a further boost to the unity efforts, the Congress(I) performing badly. The success of the idea was evident. Chandra Shekhar and H.N. Bahuguna, till then refusing to participate in the unity talks, joined the deliberations. On 7 August, NTR and V.P. Singh were unanimously chosen chairman and convenor respectively. The next day was finalised a 71-point programme, the basis of all future action.

But will the Front be able to reach a workable arrangement with the Left and the BJP? The idea behind its formation was to ensure a straight contest between the Congress(I) and the united Opposition. But as E.M.S. Namboodiripad, CPI(M) general secretary, has made clear, the Left parties and the BJP would fight each other, irrespective of the Front's arrangements.

Despite Namboodiripad, the position of the Left is far from clear. While CPI leader Indrajit Gupta has welcomed the Front's formation and CPI(M) Politburo member and West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu hopes that a broader unity with it is achieved, to initiate joint action on mass issues, Namboodiripad, has raised questions about its ideological orientation and pleaded for the BJP's exclusion.

Commended V.P. Singh: "You (Karunanidhi) have sat through the meeting with great patience and proved that your mood has not changed"





The Front leaders at a press conference, presenting their case

Divisions within the Janata are also posing problems for the National Front. If the party does split, it will dampen the spirits of those trying to forge unity among centrist parties, and the Front will face the problem of accommodating rival factions of the Janata. The absence of many top Janata leaders at the Madras rally, it was felt, was an indication of things to come.

It is not clear, also, whether leaders such as H.N. Bahuguna and Chandra Shekhar will accept V.P. Singh as the supreme commander of the Opposition army during the next general elections. R.K. Hegde's national ambition is yet another thorny issue. The megalomania of NTR and Devi Lal is another unpredictable factor, the latter visualising himself the sole distributor of tickets in the next elections. Despite these odds, however, the National Front stands a fair chance to survive and succeed.

Kuldeep Kumar/New Delhi

Whatever the Telugu Desam leader's future, the Front's launch at Madras has certainly refurbished Karunanidhi's image. It was also a morale booster for his cadre, who showed tremendous grit during MGR's rule. In MGR's absence, though, the Tamil voters might prefer (as their national leader) the DMK chief to theCongress(I)'s G.K. Moopanar, whose stay in Delhi far excceds the time he spends in his home state. "MGR had been winning, more because of an anti-Karunanidhi feeling among the people here, than due to his own popularity. If hostility towards him has since diluted, then people would vote for him because a majority of the unattached electorate usually votesfor the winning candidate and in MGR's absence, the DMK boss could well appear that," opined a political analyst.

Moopanar himself, appears unperturbed about the launch. The Front constituents are unimportant as far as Tamil Nadu politics is concerned, he says and Karunanidhi will not gain from their association. His partymen do not share his confidence, though. "The 17 September affair has given the DMK cadre a big boost, besides improving Karunanidhi's own image with the Tamils. We must work that much harder now to neutralise this effect. The Prime Minister will be coming next month," said a senior party functionary.

Running scared, the Congress(I) has begun wooing the casteist Vanniar Sangham and the Melmaruvathur Adhi Parashakti (a religious sect) to gain more rural votes. If Moopanar manages to rope in the AIADMK factions, led by Janaki Ramachandran and Jayalalitha, he might still be able to make things tough for the DMK. The third AIADMK faction, led by V.R. Nedunchezhiyan and Panrutti S. Ramachandran and S. Thirunavukarasu—all Congress(I) supporters—is trying to garner support among MGR followers, for the Congress(I)-led alliance.

Karunanidhi, by teaming up with the Front leaders, laid himself open to the charge of compromising Tamil interests The DMK had been founded on anti-Hindi, anti-Centre, and anti-northerner sentiments and critics found fault with his keeping company with *Hindiwallahs*. Also, it was said, DMK's support for the Tamil Tigers and the party's language policy differed from that of the other Front constituents. Long-time political rival Panrutti Ramachandran chided Karunanidhi for giving up his Tamil ideals and consorting with northerners for political gain.

Touched to the quick, Karunanidhi responded in his column in the DMK party organ *Murasoli*: "When we complained of the Centre holding onto too many powers and sought an equal share for the states, the DMK was branded anti-national and secessionist. Now by participating in the National Front, when we seek a complete review of the very same Centre-state relations and are trying to form a real federal set-up to run the government, our critics are terming us slaves of the northerners. Such is the conspiracy of these Congressmen."

Karunanidhi is also worried about the Front's impact on his partymen. Fed incessantly with anti-north propaganda by their Dravidian leaders, the change of



The midnight meeting by the Bay of Bengal gave Karunanidhi an opportunity to project a national image. This was his chance to erase all memories of the corruption charges once levelled against his government

line could confuse them. To remove their doubts, Karunanidhi ensured that none of the Front leaders spoke in Hindi at the Marina meeting. Even Devi Lal—who had, only a few hours earlier, told a press conference that English, just as Hindi, should not be imposed on anyone—was compelled by the DMK chief to address the meet in English. His speech was then translated into Tamil by the Rajya Sabha member V. Gopalaswamy. The Front made these concessions for, in their opinion, Karunanidhi deserved all help in thwarting the Congressmen attempting to capture power in Tamil Nadu. The state is going to be the test-ground for the new outfit.

R. Bhagwan Singh/Madras

How the Bill was killed

In the face of unprecedented opposition to the Defamation Bill, Rajiv Gandhi does the decent thing

It was as though the gang that couldn't shoot straight had finally hit the bull's eye. After the fiasco of its botched introduction, nothing became the Defamation Bill as much as its withdrawal. Disregarding the hawks among his friends and advisers, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi announced on 22 September that his government had "decided not to make the Defamation Bill, 1988 into law".

The announcement was contained in a surprisingly cogent, well-written statement issued by Rajiv and distributed to journalists by Ram Mohan Rao, the government's principal information officer at 3.30 pm. "Without a free press there can be no democracy," declared Rajiv. "We draw inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi (*sic*) who always responded to democratic expression of opinion." And while he had earlier always accompanied each announcement of a concession with some gratuitous abuse of journalists, this time all he said was, "It is our earnest hope that concerned citizens, jurists and the media will participate in the national debate on the issue of defamation."

One of Rajiv Gandhi's political failings has been his frequent inability to understand the value of gestures in a democracy; but here at last was a gesture worthy of the Prime Minister of India. In unilaterally withdrawing the Bill, he abandoned all hope of finding a face-saving formula or of making out that he was doing the press a favour. Instead, his statement suggested that faced with the uproar over the Bill, he had heeded the voices of dissent and not stood on prestige.

The press responded with equal grace. C.R. Irani, the chairman of the Press Freedom Committee of the Indian Newspaper Society (INS), complimented Rajiv and the government "on the courage they have shown", adding that "now that the decks have been cleared and the Bill is no longer on the table", the press would respond to any reasonable changes in the defamation law. Editorialised *The Times of India*: "The Prime Minister's decision to drop the Defamation Bill will be widely welcomed in the country." In a front page editorial, H.K. Dua, the editor of *The Hindustan Times* described Rajiv Gandhi's statement about his commitment to freedom of the press as a welcome assurance. Editorialised Bombay's *The Indian Post:* "It is commendable that the government has realised the wisdom of not forcing a debate under the shadow of a patently authoritarian measure. The media should have little objection to a dialogue now." And the National Coordination Committee of the Press against the Defamation Bill welcomed "the Prime Minister's unequivocal and unconditional withdrawal of the Bill". Only the *Indian Express* referred to Rajiv Gandhi's "falsehoods", suggested he was a "tyrant", and in a front page editorial, that read like a send-up of editor Arun Shourie's prose style, quoted Gandhiji, compared the campaign against the Bill to the freedom movement and suggested, modestly, that journalists were "the true representatives of the people".



But Shourie's was a voice in the wilderness. Pleased by the welcoming noises made by the press, Doordarshan reacted with remarkable speed and put editors from all over the country on its evening news bulletin. By carrying Rajiv's statement and then cutting to conciliatory comments from such former hardliners as C.R. Irani and H.K. Dua, the TV network managed, at last, to stem the tide of unfavourable publicity that had all but engulfed the government since the Bill was rushed through the Lok Sabha. After weeks of bungling, the government finally had a public relations triumph.

In fact, it was a close run thing. While on one level, the unilateral withdrawal of the Bill was evidence of Rajiv Gandhi's flexibility, on another level, it also signalled that, at long last, the doves among the Prime Minister's advisers had triumphed over the hawks in the Cabinet and the sock-it-to-them brigade among Rajiv Gandhi's inner circle.

The Defamation Bill had been adopted by the Lok Sabha on 29 August, but its history went further back. It was originally conceived in early 1987 when two of Rajiv's ministers, P. Shiv Shankar and P.V. Narasimha Rao spoke to him about the need to overhaul the defamation laws. The provocation for their request was the bad publicity afforded to the Prime Minister and his family over the Fairfax and Bofors scandals. The ministers used lawyer-politician Ram Jethmalani's notorious ten-questions-a-day routine as an example of the kind of slander from which the existing law

could not adequately protect individuals.

Rajiv acceded, partly, to their request and set up a ministerial group consisting of Shiv Shankar and Narasimha Rao along with H.K.L. Bhagat, H.R. Bhardwaj, Buta Singh and P. Chidambaram. They approved the outlines of the new legislation and these were sent to the law ministry for codification into a Bill.

The government first planned to introduce the Bill during the monsoon session of Parliament in 1987 but abandoned this plan after there was strong opposition within the Prime Minister's office (PMO). During the next budget session, Rajiv Gandhi himself seems to have had second thoughts and instructed the parliamentary affairs minister not to present it.

Then, in the summer of 1988, P. Chidambaram and Shiv Shankar managed to persuade Rajiv of the need to introduce the Bill without further delay. The press, they argued, had been given over a year to rein in its more extreme elements and had, clearly, failed at the task. Now, there was no reason to hold back.

The reasoning, obviously, impressed Rajiv, as did Chidambaram's assurance that he would pilot it so skilfully and swiftly through Parliament that it would be law even before the press had time to react. In keeping with this strategy, information about the Bill was disseminated on a strict 'need to know' basis. Nobody in the PMO was taken into confidence, not G. Parthasarathy, Rajiv's information adviser and not even Sheila Dixit, the minister of state attached to PMO. Similarly, the government's information apparatus at Shastri Bhawan was also kept in the dark.

Arguing that to turn back now would be disastrous—if the Bill was introduced any later, it would be too close to the next election—Chidambaram sped it through the Lok Sabha in a single day on 29 August. His was an accomplished performance: he played down the Bill's many mala fide provisions, avoided insulting the press and took care to specially praise *The Hindu* whose support was crucial to his own ambitions in Tamil Nadu politics.

The kindest explanation for the Prime Minister's attitude to the Bill is that he never quite understood how damaging its provisions were and was taken in by Chidambaram's smooth advocacy and by the pleadings of Narasimha Rao, whom he regards as sober and sensible, and Shiv Shankar whom he, mysteriously, believes is a legal wizard.

Certainly, he was totally unprepared for the uproar that greeted the Bill's introduction. Not one newspaper of any consequence supported the legislation and even the *National Herald*, with its historical links to the Congress, called for its withdrawal. The press declared that it would go on strike on 6 September and announced a demonstration and a rally the day before.

More worrying from Rajiv's immediate perspective was the opposition from within. Not one member of his information apparatus supported the Bill and within PMO there was widespread dismay. Congress MPs began calling on him singly and in groups and counselled against persisting with the legislation. Even Kamlapati Tripathi, the party's octogenarian letter-writer dashed off one of his famous missives to the Prime Minister urging withdrawal

In normal circumstances, such an uproar would have been enough to sink the Bill. But it had strong defenders Chidambaram, having originally assured Rajiv that he could rush it through without a squeak, now took the line that the furore would die down: it was only a matter of time. Narasimha Rao argued that as the press was going to be affected by the Bill, it would, obviously, complain. But, he maintained, on this issue, it was just another interest group not an objective critic. This argument was further amplified by some of Rajiv's political advisers who said that if Jawa-



harlal Nehru had listened to the screams of the *zamindars*, he would never have abolished *zamindari*. Or, that if Indira Gandhi had heeded the complaints of the *maharajas*, she couldn't have withdrawn the privy purses. Similarly, Rajiv should not be unduly swayed by the press criticism. For his part, Shiv Shankar took the line that it was now a question of political will. If Rajiv backed down, he would be seen as buckling under. Added to this chorus from the hawks was the indignation felt by many of Rajiv's friends who thought themselves needlessly victimised and unable to obtain adequate legal redress. This last category had come to see the press as an enemy, now was the chance to sock it to their critics.

By Saturday, 2 September, Rajiv had received so many conflicting reports about the reaction to the Bill that he, clearly, spent much of the flight time to Bombay (where he had gone to participate in the golden jubilee celebrations of the Maharashtra legislature) considering what to do next. When he flew back to Delhi late that night, he summoned an urgent meeting of key Cabinet ministers and civil servants, to plan the next move.

The meeting split along civil servant-politician lines. Virtually all the politicians, including, of course, those who had pushed for the Bill plus Buta Singh who now emerged as a very vocal hawk, insisted that there could be no going back. The press, they argued, had not even bothered to read the Bill. Journalists were simply objecting to *any* attempt to make them write more responsibly. The civil servants, unwilling to accuse the politicians of mala fide, chose a safer approach, regardless of the actual provisions of the Bill, they said, the *timing* was all wrong. To introduce this Bill on the heels of the Bofors controversy suggested that the government had something to hide. The parliamentary session had been quiet till now; was there any need to arouse so much media hostility now?

The meeting broke up at 3 am with the civil servants winning a partial victory. Rajiv conceded that perhaps the timing needed adjusting and agreed that the government must not be seen as rushing the Bill through without a proper debate simply to silence an inquisitive press. He decided, therefore, that the Bill would not be placed before the Rajya Sabha (where a Congress majority made it certain that it would be passed) on Monday, but would be deferred to permit a debate.

The following day he called on President R. Venkataraman who also suggested that he was less than delighted by the provisions of the Bill ("You know my views on Emergency and freedom of the press," the President is reported to have told the Prime Minister) and this strengthened his resolve to defer the Bill. Accordingly, while addressing a Congress(I) seminar at the Talkatora Stadium, he announced that the Bill would not be presented to the Rajya Sabha the next day but followed this up by retailing the Chidambaram-Shiv Shankar line that the legislation had considerable merit and that its critics hadn't read it.



Journalists in procession: agitating against the Bill

Shiv Shankar assured Rajiv that the press did not accurately reflect the sentiments of the people. In fact, he said, there was a groundswell of support for the Bill throughout the country and the rural masses, in particular, thought it a wonderful piece of legislation

Shiv Shankar



In retrospect, this was Rajiv Gandhi's worst mistake. By agreeing to defer the legislation he had, in effect, conceded the thrust of the press' charge that the Bill's provisions needed to be reconsidered and that the manner of its introduction was improper. Having conceded this much, he would have been well advised to have gone the whole hog, made a grand gesture and said that he was withdrawing it unilaterally. But, he could have added, because the right of the individual not to be defamed by the might of the media was an important one, he hoped that the Indian press would formulate its own code of conduct. Such a gesture would have made



him seem statesman-like and would perhaps have actually *increased* his stature because he would have announced withdrawal *before* the press began to pressure him.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister spoilt what little advantage he could have got from the deferment by his abuse of the press. The net result was that having sensed weakness, the hawks in the media swooped in for the kill. As no self-respecting journalist could help opposing Rajiv Gandhi on this issue, it became a convenient weapon for those who wished to destroy him. Finally, all Rajiv seemed to have managed was to deliver even the moderates of the media world into the clutches of the Bhindranwales.

The Prime Minister's position was worsened by the fact that all his advisers scurried off to make their private peace with the press. Shiv Shankar denied informally to journalists that he was the moving spirit behind the Bill. The sphinx-like Narasimha Rao clambered on to his pedestal of high-mindedness, dismissing suggestions that he could ever have been party to an attempt to shackle the press. Chidambaram tried to get out of interviews in which he would be forced to defend the Bill and managed to suggest—without actually saying it in so many words—that he was no more than a mere soldier fighting a battle that he had no part in starting. No minister of any consequence bothered to aggressively defend the Bill and many chief ministers (including Maharashtra's Sharad Pawar) feigned ignorance of its provisions.

To his face, however, they told a different story. Shiv Shankar assured Rajiv that the press did not accurately reflect the sentiments of the masses. In fact, he said, there was a groundswell of support for the Bill throughout the country and the rural masses, in particular, thought it was a wonderful piece of legislation. The problem, he explained, was that journalists were not correctly conveying the many merits of the Bill. But no matter. It was possible to appeal to the country over the head of the media. He would prepare a document describing the Bill's advantages and this could be given to block-level workers of the Congress who would then educate the people.

It is not known what Rajiv thought of this bizarre scheme or whether he even questioned Shiv Shankar's capacity to correctly assess the views and aspirations of the rural masses but he was certainly moved by the Buta Singh-Narasimha Rao argument that he was now locked in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with the media. If he blinked again (the first time was the deferment), then it would be an admission of weakness and the country would perceive him as a namby-pamby who withdrew a Bill he could easily have passed, only because a few journalists called him names.

Sensing that the hawks were winning the day, Rajiv's media advisers grew increasingly desperate. They were dispatched to find that the Prime Minister's offer of a dialogue with the press was rejected by most editors and dismayed when the newsmen's rally turned anti-Rajiv (*"Galli galli mein shor hai, Rajiv Gandhi chor hai."* was a slogan raised by a section of the crowd). Convinced that the Prime Minister would only reconsider if the journalists he respected told him why they regarded the Bill as obnoxious, they set up meetings for him with a few powerful editors. Yet, such was the mood in the press that even those who called on Rajiv were reluctant to admit this to their colleagues.

By then the hawks had been joined by a new kind of supporter. This category consisted of those who regarded the Bill as a bad idea but were appalled by what they saw as the arrogance of the press in refusing to conduct a dialogue with the Prime Minister. The Shiv Shankar line that the press had been given a chance to have its say but had ignored it was finding new adherents.

All of this led Rajiv's media advisers to work out a compromise formula. The Bill, they conceded, had to be withdrawn. But the hawks would not let Rajiv do it unilaterally. So, if a semblance of a dialogue was kept up, then the Prime Minister could be said to have acceded to a request from the press. The problem was that except for the Vishwa Bandhu Gupta kind of journalist, no editor would enter into any dialogue unless the Bill was first withdrawn. The compromise then suggested was that a delegation of editors would visit Rajiv to request that the Bill be withdrawn. He would not engage them in a dialogue but would at once agree. The editors would be assured of this (informally, of course) before they went to see him.

Through a great deal of effort, the mandarins of Shastri Bhawan and South Block managed to persuade at least six heavyweights to join such a delegation.

But the idea never got off the ground. Partly, it was that Rajiv wavered over accepting this formula, and partly, it was because the editors were annoyed by what they saw as a needlessly combative statement in Guwahati. (In fact, say PMO sources, Rajiv was quoted out of context.)

The anti-Bill forces rallied around information minister H.K.L. Bhagat, who emerged as the legislation's strongest critic. At one Cabinet meeting, Bhagat even got into a slanging match with Shiv Shankar, who was doing his voice-of-the-masses routine

H.K.L. Bhagat



Finally though, none of this was necessary. Just over two weeks after the press strike, Rajiv Gandhi declared a cease-fire. What had made the difference?

Some of it, obviously, had to do with the attitude of the editors he met informally, on a one-to-one basis. Most were not otherwise hostile to him but



Devi Lal (left) and Hegde taking a pledge at Rajghat to defend the freedom of the press

made it clear that he was being misled by his political colleagues. It also mattered that *all* his media advisers thought the Bill (or, at the very least, its timing) was disastrous. Rajiv must have been swayed by the fact that Gopi Arora, Suman Dubey, G. Parthasarthy and Mani Shankar Aiyar all felt that the Bill should not have been introduced.

Mostly though, it was the political reaction that shook Rajiv. When it became clear that the Chidambaram-Shiv Shankar lobby had badly underestimated the extent of the opposition to the Bill, he turned to his other colleagues. They were all against the legislation. Law minister B. Shankaranand had not been consulted about the Bill before it was introduced. Asked about it now, he was critical. So were Jitendra Prasad, M.L. Fotedar, Sheila Dixit, Ghulam Nabi Azad and even Sitaram Kesri.

The anti-Bill forces rallied around information minister H.K.L. Bhagat, who emerged as the legislation's strongest critic. Bhagat met the Prime Minister nearly every day and urged him to withdraw it. At one Cabinet meeting, he even got into a slanging match with Shiv Shankar who was doing his voice-of-the-masses routine.

During the 15 days that Rajiv took to make up his mind, around 200 MPs and MLAs called on him and criticised the Bill. Many state chief ministers, including U.P.'s N.D. Tiwari, also tried to persuade him to withdraw the legislation. Moreover, the Prime Minister received hundreds of letters from Congress workers throughout the country requesting him to drop the Bill. Letters also came from such eminent persons as P.N. Haksar, former principal secretary to Indira Gandhi, who urged that the legislation be scrapped.

By then, Rajiv was convinced that the Opposition to the Bill was far more widespread than he had been led to believe. He even began to wonder about the provisions that Chidambaram and Shiv Shankar had assured him were quite innocuous. His intention had merely been to strengthen the defamation law, he told aides, but what had he gotten himself into? It did not help that Congressmen began accusing him of resurrecting a dead Opposition by providing a ready-made issue, or that the newly-formed National Front planned to launch a movement against the Bill.

If one is to pinpoint a date on which Rajiv finally decided that he was definitely going to withdraw the Bill, then 19 September seems the best bet. On that day, he told his aides that it would be dropped but that he needed a face-saver. If they could persuade a few journalists to appear before the ministerial committee on the Bill, then he would announce its withdrawal. A frantic exercise to round up such journalists was then undertaken but the best they could manage was the aforementioned Vishwa Bandhu Gupta and Harbhajan Singh, editor of the *Film Mirror*. What about the old plan whereby he met a delegation of editors to whom he announced the withdrawal? Rajiv was not sure.

Said Rajiv in a surprisingly cogent statement withdrawing the Bill: "We draw inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi *(sic)* who always responded to democratic expression of opinion"

On 21 September, it became clear that no face-savers were available. It was the day of Rajiv's Punjab visit which followed announcements that the Pepsi project had been cleared and that some Jodhpur detenus would be released. Struck by the fact that after a year and a half of inaction, the government seemed to be on the move again, the doves suggested that this was the time for a gesture to win over the press.

One view is that Rajiv had decided to withdraw the Bill before he left for Punjab. At any rate, he was sure about his intentions by the time he returned that night. An urgent meeting was called at the Prime Minister's house at 7, Race Course Road and the deliberations went on till 4 am. Chidambaram, Narasimha Rao and Shiv Shankar would not give way. The government, they argued, was committed to the Bill.

The doves argued that the international press had come out against the legislation and that even Moscow had expressed dismay over the government's determination to push it through, with an election only a year away.

By then, however, Rajiv's mind was made up. He went entirely with the doves, dismissed all talk of a face-saving formula and asked his information mandarins to draft a suitable statement for release the next day.

The hawks were not through, though. The next morning, as the statement was being prepared, Narasimha Rao called one of Rajiv's aides and asked him to defer the announcement. But Rao could not get through to Rajiv and this last-ditch move failed.

So finally, three weeks after his government had tried to muzzle the press, Rajiv Gandhi relented. It was—on one level—a victory for the media. But on another, it also demonstrated to the Prime Minister the perils of acting on the advice of a handful of sycophantic ministers, none of whom had a mass base and who certainly did not understand mass reactions.

If Rajiv has learnt that lesson, then, perhaps, in the last year of his term he will once again demonstrate some of the indignation he displayed when he was first elected.

Rajiv Shukla/*New Delhi*

Colour and clarity:

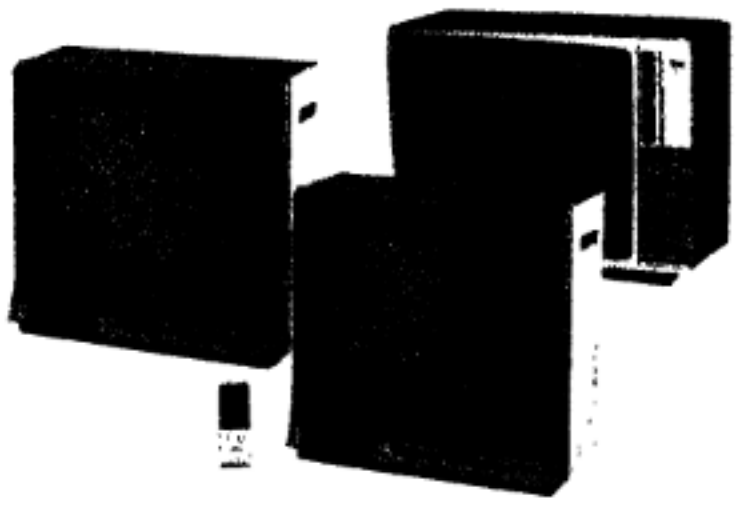
the hallmark of perfection.

When it comes to colour and clarity, BPL colour TVs make the others pale in comparison

That's because every BPL TV is designed and built to mirror life in its most natural and pleasing colours Giving you the sharpest images and providing perfect viewing pleasure Year after year

This superb quality is built in during manufacture And then double checked, using sophisticated test equipment to ensure purity, convergence and white balance As well as a host of other performance standards These tests, which conform to Sanyo's international specifications, have been fine tuned to meet Indian conditions Resulting in unmatched picture quality

Visit the nearest BPL dealer today And own the hallmark of perfection Available in a range of trend-setting models



YOU'LL FIND IT IN BPL.



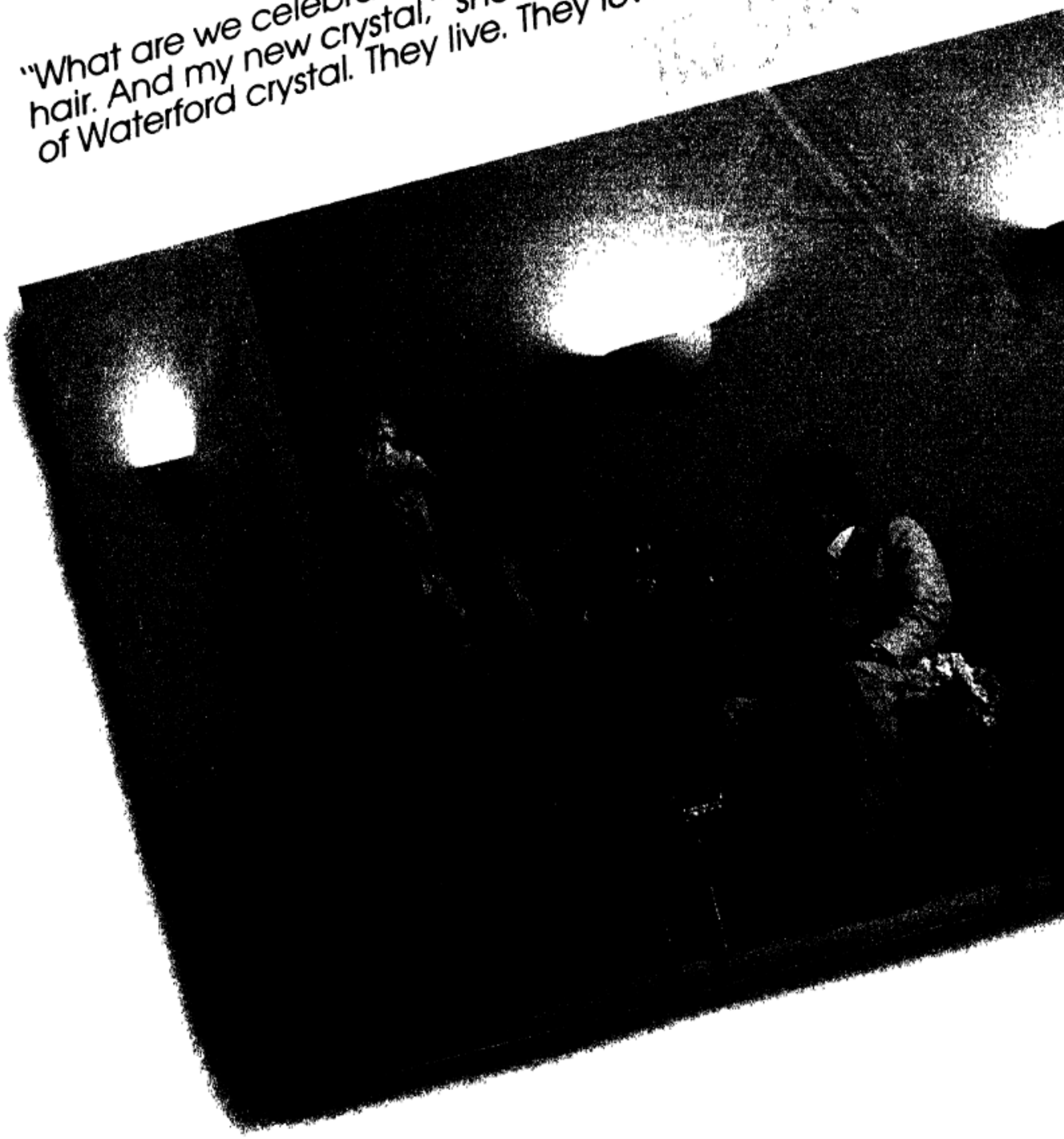
The butterfly is a striking example of Nature at her colourful best vivid, attractive, a treat to watch And very distinctive. Just like BPL. The hallmark of perfection

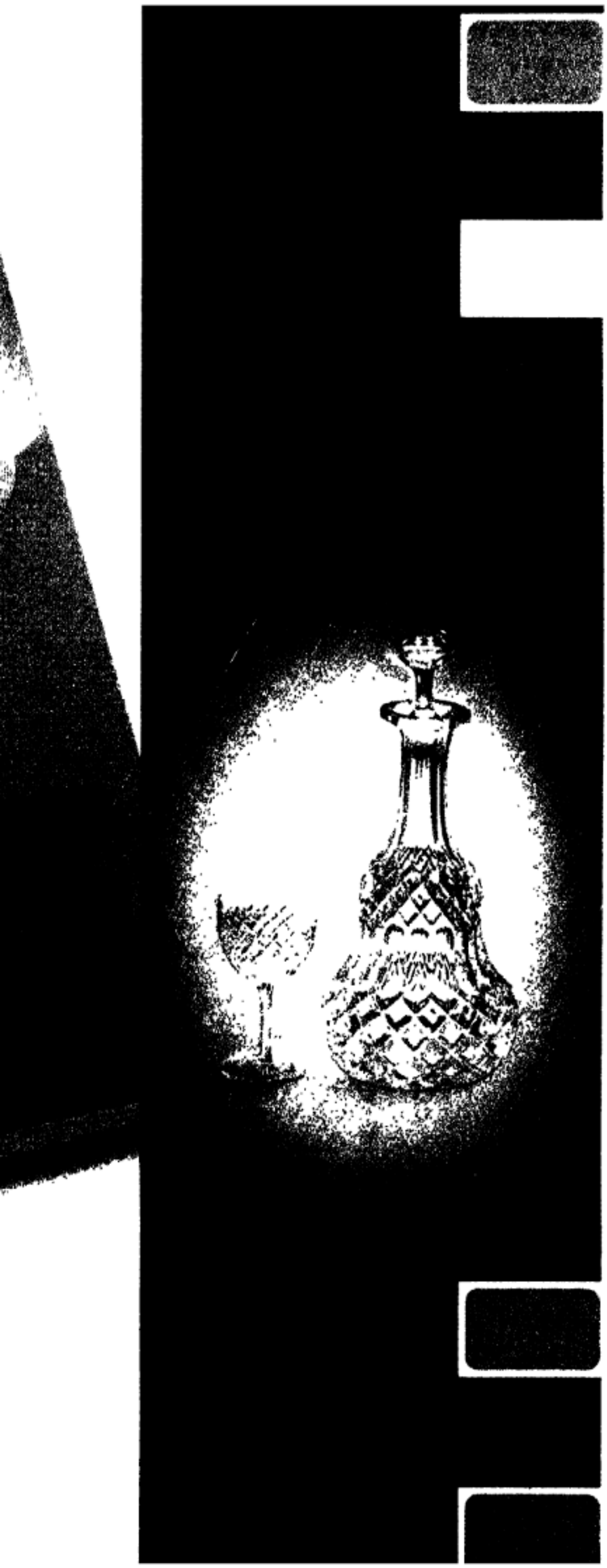
BPL-TV

Always the best!

R K SWAMY/BPL/3584

"What are we celebrating tonight?" he asked. "Your first grey hair. And my new crystal," she smiled. Their laughter, the tinkle of Waterford crystal. They live. They love.





Elegant. Exclusive. Enchanting.
The Silk People.

And the wall finish to
complement their style.

Luxol Silk.

The softest sheen. In shades
of sophistication. With a feel
richer than ever before.

Luxol Silk.

For walls that are Silk to the
touch.

Drape your walls with Luxol Silk
— the richest emulsion in the world.



Luxol Silk

from **BERGER PAINTS**



A Product of VXL India Ltd.

WE EXCEL


DIGJAM

Chic-er than thou

The Fall collection of Bombay's Ensemble, centre of couture, goes on display

It was a scene straight out of Paris. On 12 September, as 350 elegantly coiffured men and women sipped chilled white wine in the ballroom of Bombay's Taj Mahal Hotel, 13 of India's top models darted around out of sight. The party in the ballroom was for the first showing of Ensemble's Fall collection, and backstage, long-limbed mannequins scrambled for safety-pins, aerosols of hair mousse and the new obligatory black pumps.

But when the show finally got underway, the backstage berserkness had been replaced by a finely-tuned sophistication. Ninety outfits designed by six of India's hottest designers were on display and if the applause from the chi-chi crowd was anything to go by, the collection had been a grand success.

For Ensemble, the 10-month-old high fashion boutique, it was a crucial moment indeed. In the last months it had burst meteor-like on the scene, leaving the competition leagues behind. But because it had priced itself way above the rest, it had also set itself up for a shoot-down. The Ensemble designers were well aware that only half the room was full of patrons and fans, the other half being those waiting to pounce on a shabby hemline or a shoulder pad gone awry. The collection had to be good enough to prove that Ensemble was here to stay, that its success so far hadn't been a flash in the loom.

Ten months ago, Ensemble had opened its doors to much hope and more hype in the local press. Situated in south Bombay's high-priced Fort Area, the shop was 4,500 square feet of cool



Shantanu Shapoo

Rohit Khosla: among India's hottest designers

textured white walls, natural cedar flooring with jute carpeting, old teak ceilings, enough space to pirouette in, and of course, about 120 exquisite outfits rubbing elegant shoulder pads with each other as they hung chic-by-jowl. Behind all this was Tarun Tahiliani, 26, the Wharton-educated son of Admiral Ram Tahiliani, and his wife, model Sailaja, who had convinced their family to part with its engineering warehouse to locate the shop.

A fortuitous meeting with Delhi-based designer Rohit Khosla, 30, led to the decision to start a shop. Says Khosla, "We wanted a place that would display the best Indian designers, the finest production weaves and stitching; the outfits would have to look as good inside as out—the Rolls Royce of Indian boutiques."

So the trio scoured the cities looking for people who could give them the quality they desired. Scores of doors



Ensemble: the Rolls Royce of boutiques

The way Tarun tells it, it all began when the young couple decided to get married, and Sailaja, an American resident, came to India to hunt for her trousseau. "There were these horrendous *salwar-kameez* sets, and other ready-made stuff," says Tarun, "but apart from some Kanjeevaram saris, there was not much else she could take away, which got us thinking."

Says Tahiliani, "We want to tell the Indian woman: you can express yourself through your clothes. You don't have to wear your bank balance on your sleeve"

opened to reveal housewives who spun careers, retailing outfits from their living-rooms. Ultimately five labels: Jashan, Amaaya, Neil Bieff, Rohit Khosla and Ahilan (Tarun's own line along with Bapa Dhrangadhara), were signed on, and the show was put on the road.

December in Bombay is the high noon of the silly season; a time when marriages are made, parties go off like firecrackers, and swarms of dollar-happy NRIs descend looking for high jinx and hot curries. And so, in the first 15 days alone, Ensemble sold 75 outfits to a clutch of socialites, film stars and Middle Eastern princesses.

An average Ensemble outfit costs around Rs 4,000, though, according to Tarun, the range lies anywhere between Rs 1,000 to Rs 25,000. For Rs 3,500 you could get a wonderful Kanjeevaram silk sari. For Rs 6,230 you could get a Kelvinator refrigerator. An Onida television with remote control would cost you Rs 12,680 and for Rs 25,000 you could buy a second-hand Premier Padmini.



Ahilan creation: strikingly understated



Anuradha Mafatlal design: eye-catching colours

But we are talking high fashion here. *Haute couture* prices abroad have risen faster than hemlines. A YSL or Givenchy original would cost as much as a Ford. So why not here?

"Yes", says Tarun. "Our prices are steep, but then, our clients are the kind who wouldn't mind spending twice that amount of money abroad for a foreign label. And look what they're getting. *tanchois, jamevads, tussars;* each outfit cut and draped on the human form, with perfect French seaming. I mean just look at the price of our raw materials: *tanchois* are bought at Rs 350 per metre, *jamevad* for upto Rs 500, and we use at least three metres for each outfit."

"There is a lady in Malabar Hill who I'm told boasts that you can get a Rohit Khosla knock-off at half-price," fumes Ishwa with just the right amount of outrage. "Of course it irritates me, but slowly people are learning. We do have women coming in who get the clothes copied by their tailors, but at least for the original cut, they'll buy the one outfit."

Ultimately, of course, Ensemble is also selling its label. An Ensemble outfit is a chic conversation piece, as valuable as a family heirloom, and as status-enhancing as a solitaire.

Pankaja Shah, an attractive Gujarati and long-time patron of the shop, says she has been buying ever since it opened its doors. Since then, she has bought Jashan, Amaaya, Ahilan and recently Asha ex MDS. "I loved the Jashan crinkle look," she says. "Ensemble outfits are definitely worth the price. I've stopped wearing saris in the evenings, so for me, it's a godsend to have a place where I know I can walk in and pick up an outfit that will suit me, and go with the occasion." Of the newly emerging "Indian look", she says, "Yes, it's an ethnic, handloom look that's in today for evening wear. Sequins are out. Women are wearing *phulkaris*, *tussars* and silks." Shah also frequents Ravissant and admits that even within her own group of friends, Ensemble prices have proved to be too steep.



An Amaaya outfit: 'rich, embroidered and traditional'

Ensemble designs range from highly-structured sequin gowns by Neil Bieff to Amaaya's rich, heavy, embroidered tra-

Ensemble Designers

Anuradha Mafatlal

Asha Sarabhai

Amaaya—Sunita Kapoor and Anita Shivdasani

Zandra Rhodes

Ahilan—Tarun Tahiliani

Jashan

Neil Bieff

Rohit Khosla

Accessories Designers

Handbags—**Neera Nath**

Jewellery—**Prabha**

Bags—**Jaya**

Julyo Peralta

ditional *ghagra-cholis* and *alhaas*. Rohit Khosla is the only trained designer in the store (Kingston College of Fashion, UK), and does a more Westernised line, using fine Indian silks and organzas (Last season, his outfits had clever names like "Coco in Kanjeevaram" and "Sing Sing on the Ganges" Anu Mafatlal's clothes are more sporty, and Tarun's Ahilian is strikingly understated.

For these designers, selling under the Ensemble umbrella spells prestige. Their promotion, marketing, fashion shows are all taken care of by the store. "We get a lot more exposure and, of course, prestige," says Sunita Kapoor of Amaaya, who earlier sold from her house. "Since the fashion show we have had astounding sales—Amaaya sells six to seven outfits on an average per day." Recently, Sunita sold a bridal outfit for Rs 17,000 and there have been export enquiries too.

An average Ensemble outfit costs around Rs 4,000, though, according to Tahiliani, the range lies anywhere between Rs 1,000 to Rs 25,000. For Rs 3,500 you could get a wonderful Kanjeevaram silk sari

But the cache of high-pricing, superior production and exclusivity has also given the shop the inaccessibility of a five-star hotel. An ad-executive from a nearby building says that she's too intimidated to even enter the shop, and to the average Bombaywalla, Ensemble is just one more place he's not invited to.

For the chosen few, however, it's party time. Among the standouts at Ensemble's Fall collection were Anu Mafatlal's eveningwear (inspired by the Nat King Cole song, *Autumn Leaves);* shorter skirts with waisted tops, Ahilian's flowing lines, *sherwanis* worn with undershirts, Amaaya's jewel-coloured *ghagras*, Rohit Khosla's spectacular black and white line, simultaneously echoing and paying homage to classic Western styles. And the *pièce de résistance*: Zandra Rhodes' fantasy saris in tissue and chiffon, like spun gossamer.



A Rohit Khosla outfit: the western touch



Rohit Khosla (left) with Tarun Tahiliani: sharing plans

That the collection had been successful was borne out by the rush at the shop the following day. By 4 pm, many of the outfits had already disappeared from the shelves. Ensemble now regards this as vindication of their *raison d'être*. "For God's sake," says Tarun, "we want to tell the Indian woman: you can express yourself through your clothes. You don't have to wear your bank balance on your sleeve."

Simply put, that means that the money has always been around: it's just been a question of getting the women to buy high fashion. Ensemble's success proves that Indian women will pay prices that are—in relative terms—the equivalent of Parisian *haute couture* rates. More to the point, it also marks a certain coming of age. Only five years ago, many of the same women would have bought only saris in India—everything else would have had to have a Western label.

Will it last? The signs are that it will. And that a fledgeling Indian fashion design movement has had its first taste of commercial success.

Malavika Rajbans Sanghvi/Bombay

A lukewarm reception

The PM's visit to Punjab, close on the heels of the release of 138 Jodhpur detenus, fails to have an impact

PUNJAB

It was a visit that was long overdue. The Prime Minister had finally condescended to visit the state which has never ceased to hit the headlines during the four years that Rajiv Gandhi stayed away. Had he left Punjab and its people to their own devices? This was a question that was often asked not just by the people but also by the Congress(I) workers in the state and it was probably to belie this impression that the 21 September visit was announced.

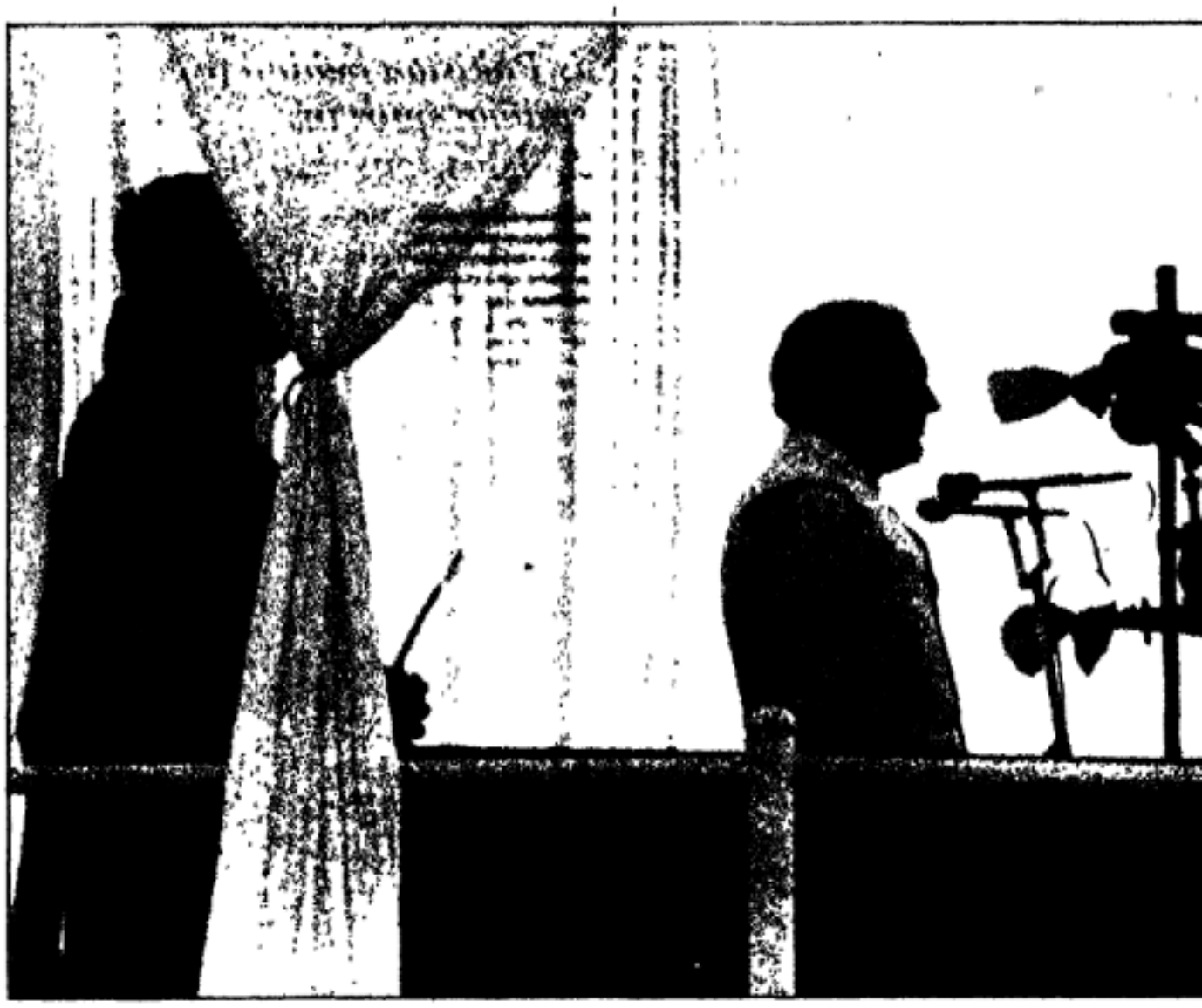
It was accompanied by the usual media blitzkrieg and the granting of



S.S. Barnala: upset about being ignored

concessions. The Centre's announcement of the release of 138 Jodhpur detenus was blatantly a conciliatory gesture and the clearance of the Rs 22-crore Pepsi project, which came two days prior to the PM's visit, was also intended to create a good impression on the people of Punjab.

But, evidently, the people as well as the Congress workers had anticipated much more than what the PM offered. In fact, they were quite disillusioned when Rajiv Gandhi neither announced an economic package nor a political one. So, the declaration that a Rs 240-crore newspaper mill would be set up in Goindwal came as an anti-climax when people had been speculating about huge concessions and a concrete economic package for days before the PM's visit. As for the Pepsico project, many pointed out that it had been in the offing for nearly two years.



Rajiv Gandhi addresses a rally at Goindwal from behind a bullet-proof platform: an image-building exercise

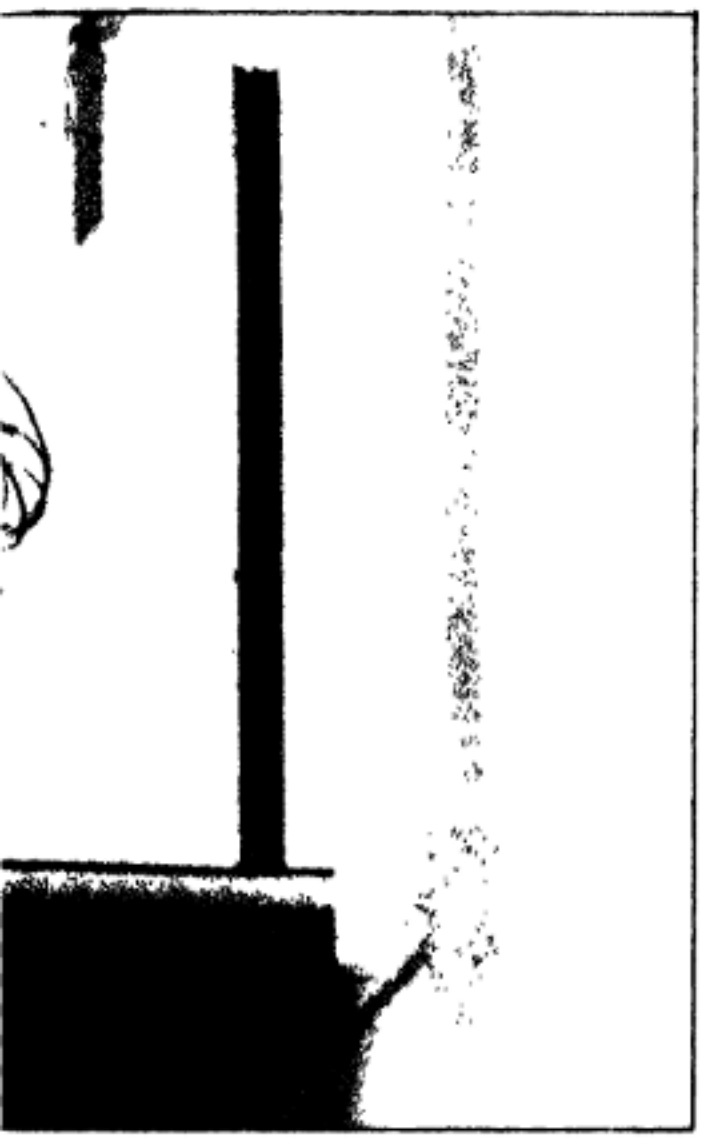
Nevertheless, the Prime Minister's presence did, in some way, help to assuage the hurt feelings of the people. At all the three places that he visited—Goindwal, Jalandhar and Jaiton—he paid rich tributes to the people of Punjab and the political parties, like the Left parties, the BJP and the Congress(I) who had tenaciously faced the threats of terrorists. But, unwittingly or not, the Prime Minister made no mention of the Akalis. Neither did he appeal to the warring Akali factions to unite nor did he make any attempts to prop either Darshan Singh Ragi or Jasbir Singh Rode.

And this did not go unnoticed by the Akali leadership. Said a visibly upset S.S. Barnala: "In the fight against terrorism Akalis were second to none. As a matter of fact, Akalis suffered the most. Therefore, it is strange that the Prime Minister should have omitted any reference to this party while paying compliments to the others."

The former chief minister too, like many others in the state, felt that the Prime Minister had failed to measure up to the hopes that were generated following the announcement of his visit to the state. "The Governor has been hinting all along at a so-called strategy for resolving the Punjab problem. But there was not even a slight reference to this by the PM. There was no healing touch for the Sikhs who suffered in the November riots of 1984. And what is this release of Jodhpur detainees supposed to mean? It is done in instalments and makes one feel as if they are the hostages of the Centre to be used as and when required to create the impression of goodwill on the part of the government," he said.

Another topic of discussion was the Prime Minister's drive from Adampur to Goindwal—a 60-km stretch of terrorist-infested territory. While most people

were impressed by Rajiv Gandhi's apparently courageous act of driving down to Goindwal, intelligence sources pointed out that the PM had been advised to travel by car as a security measure. They felt that a hovering



helicopter would have been an easier target than a speeding motorcade.

Flanked by the Governor, Siddharth Shankar Ray, the Governor s adviser, Julio Ribeiro and Union minister, P. Chidambaram, Rajiv Gandhi was very much the concerned Prime Minister. After travelling a few kilometres, he would stop the motorcade, get off the car and ask about the problems of the people who had gathered all along the roadside.

The non-implementation of the Punjab accord still remains a major grouse of the people and politicians. Commenting on the Prime Minister's remark that there was no one in Punjab with whom he could discuss the problems, Barnala said: "I am surprised that the Prime Minister feels so. He had gone on record praising me for my services to the country. How could I have become a non-entity now?"

So, the hurdles towards a solution to the Punjab problem still remain. But now that the Prime Minister has demonstrated that he bears no ill-will towards the people of the state, it could pave the way for a fresh initiative

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi* and Rita Sharma/*Chandigarh*

The Pakistani connection

Is Pakistan behind the sudden spurt in JKLF-sponsored riots ?

JAMMU & KASHMIR

What will Kashmir in the Nineties be like? Will the peace and quiet that one has associated with the beautiful Valley be shattered by the echoes of gunfire? Will Kalashnikovs and AK-47s replace the brazier of lighted coals that Kashmiris have traditionally carried under the folds of their *pherans*? If the prophets of doom in the intelligence agencies are to be believed, this could well be the scenario in Kashmir a couple of years from now. Already, it seems, the first signs of such an ominous future are discernable.

Two successive bomb explosions at the Srinagar telegraph office and at the Srinagar Club building were followed by a series of pro-Pakistan demonstrations in August this year. The disturbances reached a peak on Pakistan's independence day on 14 August and took a turn for the worse with the death of Pakistani President Zia-ul Haq. Though the sudden spurt in riots was ignored initially, it soon became obvious that they were the handiwork of the Britain-based terrorist outfit, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).

The attack on one of the toughest cops of the Kashmir police, deputy inspector general (DIG) Ali Muhammad Watali, was next on the militants' agenda. Three-time recipient of the President's police medal, Watali had been brought back by the Farooq Abdullah regime as much to silence his critics as to counter the terrorists' attacks.

Watali got on the job instantly and rounded up all the activists who were known to harbour anti-Indian sentiments. A massive manhunt was launched for the militants who had gone underground following the bomb explosions in the state. All this only helped to put Watali on the top of the terrorists' hit list and on 18 August five armed youths raided his house in the posh Raj Bagh locality in Srinagar. The midnight raid resulted in the death of one of the assailants, a second year college student, Aijaz Ahmed Dar, and left Watali's security guard, Abdur Rashid, with a bullet injury in his thigh. But the DIG himself escaped unhurt. A militant outfit, Hamzah, which has claimed responsibility for the attack, however, has a different story to tell. It has claimed that two security guards were killed during the attack. But so far, the police have not succeeded in nabbing the other members of the group.

Police officials, however, fear that worse could be in store for them in the near future. It is little wonder then that chief minister Farooq Abdullah has already warned the people that Pakistan is trying to create a Punjab-like situation in the state and never fails to talk of the "storm", that is brewing on the state's western borders, whenever he gets the opportunity.

The intelligence gathered during the



Policemen inspecting Watali's residence after the bid on his life by JKLF activists

last one month too confirms that the JKLF has been assigned a vital role in creating chaos and confusion in the state. Along with other militant groups, the JKLF is allegedly helping with the recruitment of Kashmiri youths who will be imparted training in the use of sophisticated arms and guerrilla warfare somewhere near Peshawar in Pakistan.

According to police sources, nearly 60 young men who have received such training in Pakistan have been identified so far. But other sources feel that there are nearly 300 such persons who are either undergoing training or have just returned home from Pakistan. The *modus operandi*, apparently, is to form small groups of five to six whose jobs are to blow up government installations and assassinate important personalities. The police claim that those interrogated by them have confessed that their orders are to leave the defence personnel alone and also to spare the more popular political figures as their assassination could create an unfavourable reaction among the people.

The JKLF has been active ever since it was launched in the Sixties and has also hit the news sporadically. In 1984 the abduction and murder of the Indian diplomat in Birmingham, Ravindra Mhatre, created a storm. Maqbool Butt was later hanged in Delhi's Tihar Jail for his crimes. There was also the 1971 hijacking of the Indian Airlines Fokker Friendship aircraft by two youths, Hashim Qureshi and Muhammad Ashraf Shah, who have now taken refuge in the Netherlands.

That the JKLF has the tacit support of the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) government is also obvious from the claims of its Prime Minister, Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan. He recently claimed in London that it was the smooth operation of his own government which had inspired the pro-Pakistani elements in Kashmir to "struggle" for the Valley's merger with Pakistan. The President of POK, Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, is believed to have even sent telegrams to the United Nations and a host of other world bodies, including the Amnesty International, requesting them to intervene and stop the "massacre of Muslims" in Kashmir by the Indian authorities.

The Indian authorities, on the other hand, are convinced that all this is a part of the Pakistani plot to destabilise Kashmir. But as political observers point out, a lot would depends on how successfully the police tackle the terrorists' threats and discredit them in the eyes of the people.

Yusuf Jameel/*Srinagar*

The fracas over funds

Rajiv Gandhi and Prafulla Mahanta trade charges over the allocation of flood relief money

ASSAM

Is the central government the benevolent big brother that comes to the aid of the state government when calamity strikes or is it the big bully that the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) perceives it to be? With 7.3 million people in Assam in the grip of a devastating flood, it was hardly the right moment for the Centre and the state government to start a slanging match over the issue of the source and allocation of funds for relief and rehabilitation.

Though each side claims that it was the other that started the altercation, it is clear that the immediate provocation came from Delhi. On previous occasions when the state was inundated by floods during the last year, central aid came in but only after repeated appeals by the



Padma Patar

Mahanta (right) with V.P. Singh: hitting out

state government. And that too was given grudgingly and with strings attached.

The AGP had not forgotten last year's experience and so this time it decided to take on a more pragmatic and determined approach and leave nothing to the Centre's caprices. It got down to the job, after the third wave of floods hit the state in July. A memorandum was submitted to the Centre even as the Union agriculture minister Bhajan Lal was visiting the flood-hit districts of Assam. The AGP petitioned for Rs 39.29 crores so that it could carry out its programmes for relief and rehabilitation.

But the Centre did not respond. The AGP government's patience ran out,



especially when a fresh deluge swept the state in late August causing far greater damage than the preceding ones. A delegation of eight AGP MPs and MLAs met the Prime Minister and the President and in separate memoranda urged them to grant Rs 200 crores immediately.

The national Opposition began to rally behind the AGP, and slowly but surely the issue was getting politicised. The Jan Morcha leader, V.P. Singh, lent his voice to the chorus, and on his visit to Guwahati in early September, he flayed the Centre for its indifference towards Assam. Singh tellingly noted that it was rushing to the help of even a foreign country like Bangladesh (Assam's *bete noire*) which was also reeling under floods, but ignoring Assam. The message was loud and clear to Delhi: Assam would no longer take such step-motherly treatment lying down.

But instead of being helpful or conciliatory, Rajiv Gandhi turned aggressive. Gandhi's main allegations against the state government were that since the floods hit Assam no "capital memorandum", giving a detailed break-up of the amount required, was submitted to the Centre. Nor did it account for the amount granted during last year's floods. No progress report was given on how the margin money of Rs 7.25 crores, meant for relief, had been utilised, the Prime Minister said and added that funds meant for this purpose were used in other ways, giving the impression that the state government had adequate

resources to cope with the situation.

Fortunately for the Assam chief minister Prafulla Mahanta and his aides, facts



Rajiv Gandhi during his recent visit to Assam: aggressive stance

were on their side, and they could refute most of the allegations convincingly. At press conferences held in Guwahati, Calcutta and Madras during the National Front's meeting, Mahanta pointed out that several memoranda had, in fact, been submitted to the Centre since the state was hit by floods and that the state government had periodically reported how the margin money was being spent.

Why is the issue of relief, a routine matter in flood-prone Assam, being politicised this year? Some observers squarely blame Mahanta for the controversy because, according to them, he had committed a breach of protocol by not receiving the PM on his arrival in Dibrugarh, but the majority feel that the AGP could have registered its protest only through such a defiant gesture.

Some theorise that the AGP, which was generally thought to be "soft" towards the Congress(I), has, for the first time, staunchly backed the Opposition by joining the National Front. And this is what has irked the Congress which hopes to use the issue of fund disbursement as a political lever. Rajiv Gandhi's attacks on the AGP are perceived as an effort to resuscitate the Congress(I) in Assam.

But this diatribe is unlikely to impress the people who only want normalcy to be restored. And by indulging in an acrimonious exchange with the AGP, the Congress stands more to lose than the AGP.

Radhika Ramaseshan/*Guwahati*

The UN's biggest debtor

With a $480 million arrear in US contribution, the United Nations is facing a severe crisis

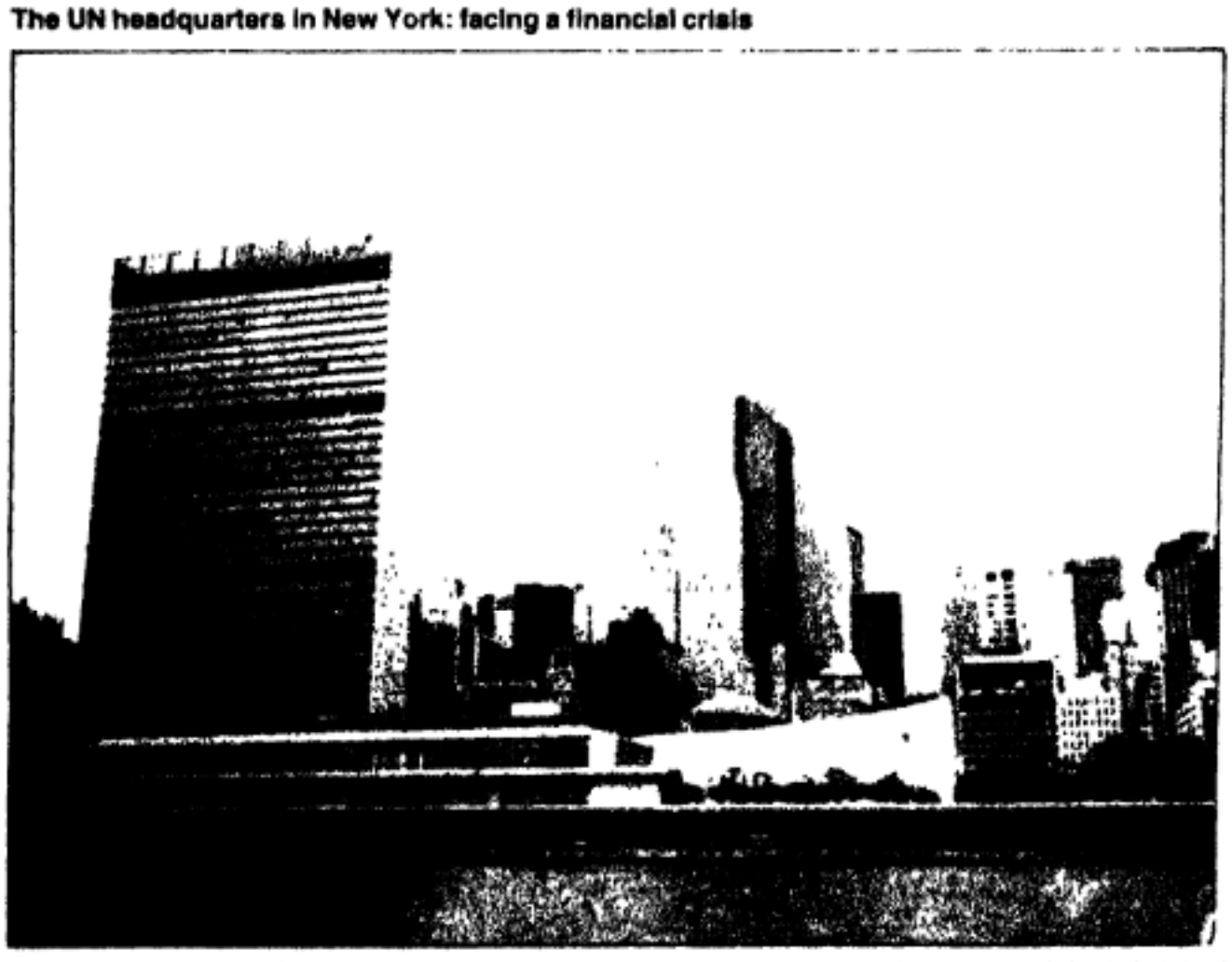
UNITED NATIONS

If the United States' Monroe Doctrine had proved to be the undoing of the League of Nations it is the same country's failure to meet its financial commitments that has brought the United Nations to the brink of peril. With US arrears totalling a record $ 480 million over the last two years, "the UN has just about enough money to pull on with its on-going projects", according to the former president of the General Assembly Peter Florin. How the situation will be resolved is anybody's guess. But as a US spokesman in the United Nations said, his country plans to "give the organisation three cheques from 1 October to end-November for a total of $ 144 million", which will still leave the organisation in the red.

The total UN budget for 1988 is $ 875.9 million. Till 31 July 1988, the UN's arrears amounted to $ 602 million. Its ten largest debtors are the US ($ 466.9 million), South Africa($ 33.9 million), Brazil ($ 17.9 million), Iran ($ 12.1 million), the USSR, excluding Ukraine and Byelorussia ($ 9.8 million), Argentina ($ 6.3 million), Mexico ($ 6.2 million), Israel ($ 4.7 million), Poland ($ 4.3 million) and Romania ($ 4 million). A country's arrears can be allowed to accumulate upto a point. But as the outgoing president of the General Assembly, Peter Florin, said, on 20 September -- the day when the election for the new president was held. "A member of the UN which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the organisation shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years..." That is undoubtedly a clear warning that the US would not be allowed to vote if it didn't pay up.

Will the US pay up? Said a state department spokesman at the UN: "Our government plans to issue a cheque of $ 85.6 million on 1 October, another of $ 29.6 million by end-October and $ 28.8 million by end-November. And that is going to retrieve the situation to a great extent." The Congress is yet to vote on the succeeding year's contribution of $ 214.9 million. Even after the US pays up the expected $ 144 million this year, it will still have to cough up a staggering $ 537.8 million.

Why has the US allowed its debts to the UN to grow? According to a UN official dealing with the subject, the US' foot-dragging on payments began in the early Seventies, when "the US was literally hijacked by the developing world and used by developing countries to promote ideals and strategies that are



The UN headquarters in New York: facing a financial crisis

anti-free trade and anti-free speech while the USSR successfully exploited the Third World's disenchantment with US values". He said the US was also peeved at the Third World's support of Arab countries and their deep hostility towards Israel. "Israel," he said, "has a strong constituency in the US but the main reason why the US supports Israel is strategic."

The budget deficit in the US forced the country to choose between domestic and international priorities and between progress that would be directly beneficial to its constituents and multilateral initiatives. "After all, a vote for $ 200 million to the UN does not give the



Ronald Reagan: going slow on payments

government or party any votes." In fact, one of the reasons why President Reagan has gone slow on the UN payments is a desire to pass the buck on to the next President.

On 26 September President Reagan addressed the General Assembly. Hard on the heels of his visit will come the US' cheque of $ 85.6 million. The problem of payments may have been an inevitable consequence of global politics and the increasing strength of the non-aligned bloc in the world body - the latest result of which was the election of Dante Maria Caputo of Argentina as the president of the 43rd General Assembly -- but it is still difficult to understand. Most of the money it owes the UN has already been voted by the Congress, even though it has not yet been paid. The US is also reluctant to have its share of contributions to the UN reduced from the present 25 per cent for fear of losing control over the organisation. The question UN officials are now asking is: "Why doesn't it then pay on time?"

Nirmal Mitra/*New York*

BIHAR

Signalling a 'red' alert

Is the joint Centre-state action against "left extremism" aimed at stemming the growth of the IPF?

It was disgust and anger, at the administration's failure to prevent the massacre of hapless Harijans, that motivated a youth to blacken the face of the chief minister. But it is hurt dignity and fear that motivates the government to strike out at the Indian Peoples Front (IPF) which is fast emerging as a major political force in Bihar. Smarting from the indignity of having his face smeared with black paint, Azad has launched an all-out attack on the organisation whose activist was responsible for the act. Of course, the move is touted to be part of a massive operation to wipe out "left extremism" in Bihar, *a la* Operation Black Thunder.

According to intelligence sources, para-military and armed troops would be mobilised to raid the 100-odd hideouts of the extremists in the districts of Jehanabad, Aurangabad and Gaya. But observers feel that the move is a desperate bid by the Congress(I) to stem the growth of the IPF.

Though the ruling party has all along been aware of the threat that it faces from the IPF, it was spurred into action by the three-day state level conference held by the Front at which the IPF chairman, Nagbhushan Patnaik, directed the party cadres to prepare for the elections and consolidate the party's rural base. Patnaik also hinted at the possibility of an alliance with the Lok Dal and the CPI, the two other parties which have established themselves in rural Bihar.

But a joint Centre-state programme, ostensibly aimed at flushing out extremists, could usher in the trend of confrontationist politics. Already, the IPF has begun to feel the heat as many of its leaders allege that the government is trying to implicate IPF activists in the massacre of Harijans. They allege that police officials had connived with Hareram Yadav of the Lorik Sena in the massacre of the Harijans in Jehanabad.

K M Kishan



Nagbhushan Patnaik addressing an IPF rally: growing popularity

Yadav, they say, had been shifted to Hazaribagh Jail from the Jehanabad Jail just one day before the Nonhi-Nagwan killings. But after the Damuha-Khagari carnage—which the local people suspect was the handiwork of Yadav who had been released from jail for a few hours to commit the crime—he was returned to Hazaribagh Jail.

Dr Vinayan, president of the outlawed Mazdoor Kisan Sangram Samiti (MKSS) wonders why Hareram Yadav has not been interrogated about the murders despite his well-known track record. Vinayan alleges that Yadav has escaped police interrogation, thanks to the protection of his political mentor, Ramashray Prasad Singh of the CPI. He also feels that while the activists of the MKSS and IPF would become easy targets for the police, the joint action would also result in the victimisation of the very Harijans that the government professes to protect.

So, the Congress(I) and the IPF are going to be locked in battle even before the elections are due to take place. And the Congress(I) has reason to feel threatened: in the last Assembly elections, the IPF had contested 52 seats and in three constituencies its candidates had turned out to be close runners-up.

While the Dr Vinayan-led MKSS will not participate in the elections, it may "launch a campaign during the elections to protest against the electoral malpractices and ensure that the landless too get a chance to exercise their franchise", he declared. All in all, the next elections will be a testing ground for both the IPF and Congress(I). Will the IPF be able to score a lead over the Congress(I) with the huge base that it has built in rural Bihar or will the ruling party still have the edge?

Faizan Ahmad/*Patna*

Terms of disagreement

N.T. Rama Rao's plan to install his son-in-law, Chandrababu Naidu, as chief of the Pradesh Krishak Parishad is foiled by the AP High Court's ruling

ANDHRA PRADESH

N.T. Rama Rao proposes, the High Court disposes. For nearly six months now the chief minister has been trying to install his son-in-law Chandrababu Naidu as the president of the all-powerful Pradesh Krishak Parishad. But every time his move has been foiled by the High Court. The latest incident occurred on 19 September when Justice Upendralal Waghray quashed the order reappointing Naidu as president of the Parishad following the writ petition filed by Peddireddy Chengal Reddy, a member of the Bharatiya Krishak Samaj. Reddy questioned the validity of Naidu's reappointment when the High Court had quashed his earlier appointment to the post on 31 August.

The 12 September reappointment of Naidu was hailed by NTR at a press conference in Tirupati on 15 September where he claimed that his son-in-law was the "best available person in the state to hold the post" as he had a doctorate in agriculture, had worked with the agriculture department and, above all, was a farmer. He denied that he had pulled strings so that Naidu could be appointed for the post.

Whatever be NTR's claims, the fact remains that the chief minister has tried every trick in the book to appoint his son-in-law as the president of the Parishad. In fact, just four days before the division bench passed the verdict, the state Assembly passed the Rashtra Krishak Parishad Bill amidst a walkout by the Opposition. The Bill empowered the Parishad president to act as the chairman of the body till a new chairman is elected or appointed under Section 28 of the AP Rashtra Krishak Parishad and Allied Bodies Act, 1987.

The Bill was soundly criticised by all the Opposition parties of the state. The state secretary for the Communist Party of India (CPI), N. Giri Prasad, said: "The Bill was enacted to circumvent the odium of Naidu being dubbed an extra-constitutional authority and to bring him within the so-called constitutional framework." Pointing out that the Act empowered Naidu to interfere in the functioning of almost all departments through the creation of a super-department namely, the Krishak Parishad," he said that NTR owed an explanation and apology to the people for perpetrating a fraud on them. NTR, he alleged, was trying to impose his son-in-law as his successor by bringing him in through the back door.



Chandrababu Naidu (left) with N.T. Rama Rao: a controversial appointment

Courtesy Udayam

The CPI has also urged the Governor, Kumudben Joshi, not to approve the Bill as it was "authoritarian and undemocratic". Ch. Rajeswara Rao of the CPI said that the High Court had vindicated the Opposition parties' stand against the "arbitrary, politically motivated" plan of foisting Naidu on the people by quashing his appointment.

The petitioner, Chengal Reddy, was no less vocal in denouncing NTR's motive. He pointed out that NTR was a great advocate for decentralisation but he practised double standards when it came to the affairs of his own administration. "How can a nominated body exercise control over six ministries in the state?" he asked.

Naidu has been a controversial figure ever since he defected from the Congress(I) in 1983 and joined NTR's Telugu Desam Party (TDP). Despite NTR's proclamations against defection, Naidu was nominated for the TDP's general secretaryship. Though the move was opposed by many in the party, it drew the most scathing criticism from NTR's other son-in-law, Dr D. Venkateswar Rao, who is now the health minister in NTR's Cabinet.

It is believed that Naidu's nomination as the general secretary had effectively stalled Venkateswar Rao's entry into the Cabinet. But the clash between the two sons-in-law came into the open during the 1986 TDP convention when Rao's supporters staunchly opposed the move to oust Rao from the presidency of the youth wing. Naidu had his way and Rao had to quit his post at the Telugu Yuvatha. However, Rao, too, had his revenge when he was inducted into the Cabinet and he relieved Naidu of the party's general secretaryship. Though there is a stalemate right now, it is rumoured that Naidu may be given the post again what with NTR being even more burdened after his appointment as chairman of the National Front.

The war of succession that goes on has only made the Opposition parties clamour for NTR's resignation. The recent move to foist Chandrababu Naidu as the political heir may only spur the Opposition to launch a sustained campaign against the TDP. Union minister Vengala Rao has already taken the lead and has demanded NTR's resignation as he claims that the chief minister has lost the "moral authority to rule". And if the electorate too begins to share Vengala Rao's views, it could spell trouble for the chief minister.

Mukundan C. Menon/*Hyderabad*



HERE'S ONE LOVELY REASON WHY YOU SHOULD TAKE UI'S HOUSEHOLDERS INSURANCE POLICY

Your valuable belongings

Things that you toil for. Things that you buy for your wife and family To build your very own world of comfort and happiness

Wouldn't you like to do everything you possibly can to keep that world safe and secure?

United India's Householders Insurance Policy is one way of giving your wife and family a sense of security about your belongings

With this one policy you can cover the building and contents of your house against burglary, fire, flood, lightning, cyclone, riot, earthquake and other such misfortune and perils. The goods covered could include anything from refrigerators, VCRs and music systems to watches, cooking appliances and furniture.

So whether you live in a metropolitan city, small town or village; whether you have household goods worth Rs 25,000 or 1,00,000. . United India's Householders Insurance Policy is the one simple step to comprehensive security. A sensible act of caution that shows how much you care

Act now. Contact any of our 1000 offices.

UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.

(A subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India)

24 Whites Road, Madras 600 014

HTA 7015

Lever takes it all

The Unilever style of functioning is being gradually imposed on the newly acquired Brooke Bond, Lipton and Pond's

Whatever else he may be, Dr Ashok Ganguly, chairman, Hindustan Lever, is not one of India's corporate takeover artists. But over the last one and a half years, Ganguly's empire has grown by almost Rs 500 crores—through a series of takeovers.

The sprawling new industrial group of which Ganguly is now the *de facto* superboss is a Rs 1,650-crore colossus. It includes some of the best known marketing companies in India—Hindustan Lever, Brooke Bond, Lipton India and Pond's. Also in the new group are three smaller companies, Naarden India, Doom Dooma Tea, and Tea Estates India Ltd. Together, this clutch of seven companies is easily the third largest industrial house in India and by 1987 figured way ahead of the other frontrunners like the Modis, the Thapars and the Singhanias.

But it is an industrial group which, oddly enough, has come into being almost by accident. Lipton joined the Hindustan Lever fold when its parent company in the United Kingdom was bought up in the 70s by Unilever plc, the powerful multinational which holds a 51 per cent stake in Hindustan Lever. Brooke Bond's parent suffered a similar fate when it was swallowed up by Unilever in 1984. And in December 1986, Unilever, which has been on a buying spree for the last few years, bought US multinational Chesebrough-Pond's Inc.

To the world at large, Lever has consistently maintained that these ownership changes would not have any impact on its operations in India. But behind the scenes, a series of major changes have taken place, and company executives are reluctant to talk about them.

The first clear indication of the way the wind was blowing came in August 1987, when Ganguly was coopted as an additional director on the Brooke Bond Board. Then in June this year, Ganguly moved unobtrusively onto the board of Pond's. Similarly, Brooke Bond chairman C.S. Samuel and Pond's chairman V. Narayanan were brought onto the board of Hindustan Lever in August 1987.

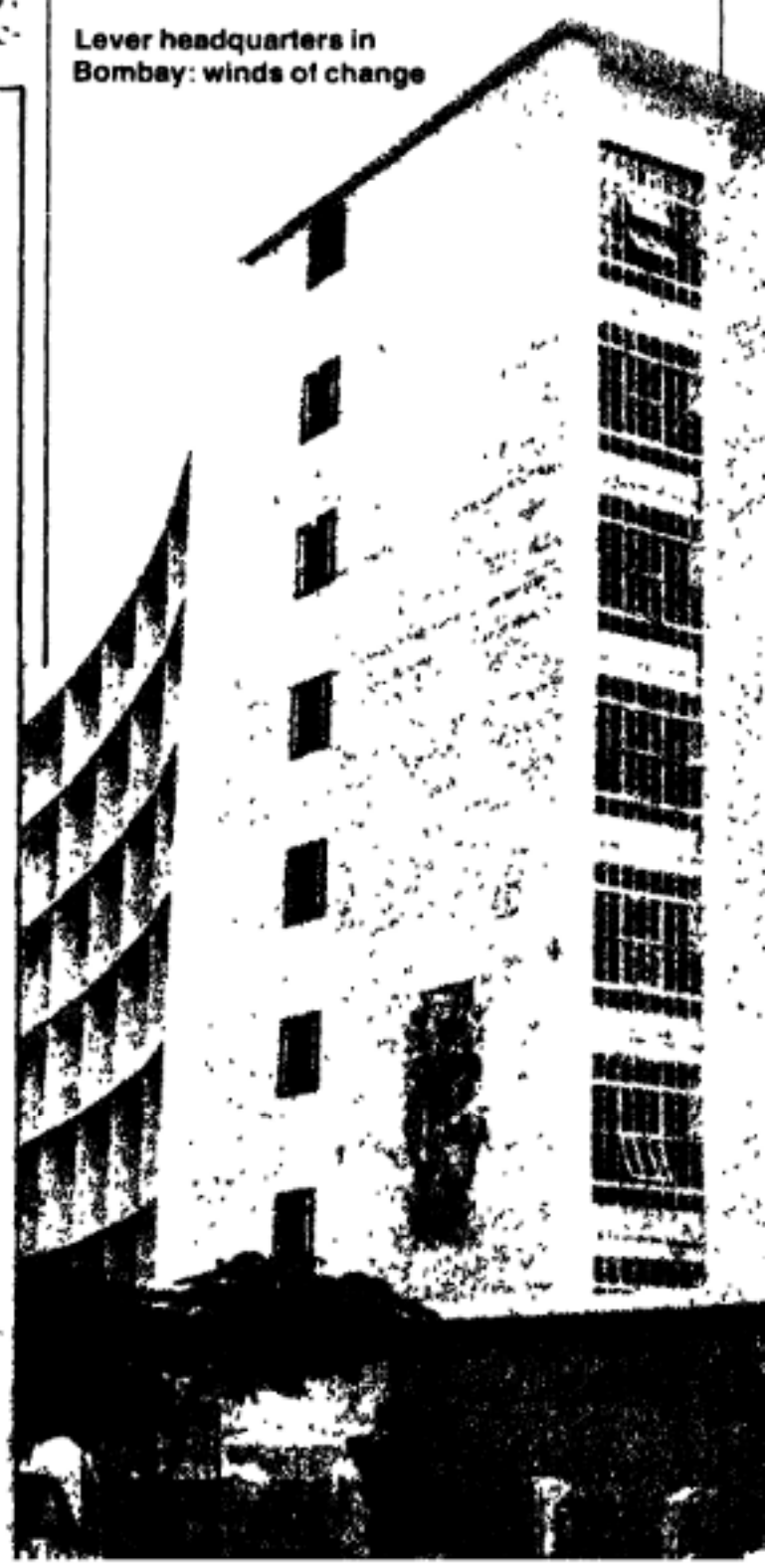
The top-level manoeuvring has created rumblings and a climate of uncertainty in all the corporations. But this summer, the first open indications of sweeping changes were evident all along the line. Recently, Pond's executive vice-president C.B. Nageswara Reddy, who was once tipped to head the firm, was moved to Hindustan Lever as a deputy general manager in the personal products division. Other corporate moves have also been taking place. K.K. Nair, the general factory manager of Hindustan Lever's Sewree factory, has recently been moved in as director (technical) of Brooke Bond. Besides this, Lever's general manager, corporate development, K.S. Srinivasamurthy, has been appointed chief executive officer of Naarden India. Several Lever personnel have been moved to Tea Estates India and the two other smaller companies. And other changes are on their way too. Several more personnel are likely to be moved between Brooke Bond and Lever in the near future. And there is even a strong rumour in Bombay's corporate circles that V. Kasturirangan, general manager of Lever's personal products divisions, may soon shift to a senior post at Pond's.

The staff transfers have been the first concrete indications of the shape of things to come. But even bigger changes have already been taking place behind the scenes over the past year affecting Pond's chairman Narayanan and Brooke



Ashok Ganguly: Lever's superboss

The sprawling new industrial group of which Ganguly is the *de facto* chairman is a Rs 1,650-crore colossus. It includes some of the best known companies in India—Hindustan Lever, Brooke Bond, Lipton India and Pond's...Oddly enough this group has come into being almost by accident



Lever headquarters in Bombay: winds of change



Pradip Dutt: marketing whiz-kid



B.R. Shah: steering Lipton

Bond chairman Samuel. Though the exact date is not certain, it is definite that by mid-1987, Unilever had indicated that Ganguly was the boss of the group's operations in India. Accordingly, both Narayanan and Samuel began informally meeting Ganguly regularly. Major corporate decisions had to be cleared with Ganguly before they were passed on to Unilever in London. During the course of 1987, a national management committee for the entire group was set up. It consisted of Ganguly, Narayanan, Samuel and Lipton chairman B.R. Shah. Additionally, on the management committee were other senior executives from the companies including J.S. Sabharwal who has recently been appointed managing director of Brooke Bond, Lipton's senior vice-president P.K. Dutt, S M. Dutta, Lever's senior vice-president (technical), P.J.M. Panikar, Lever's vice-president (commercial), and K.B. Dadiseth, Lever's vice-president (personnel). Dadiseth is in charge of certain aspects of personnel policy for the entire group.

The centralised control system is likely to lead to a lot of other changes as well. The Lever reorganisation is likely, in particular, to affect the future corporate plans of all four companies. One scenario for the future is that Lever which has expanded steadily into the core sector during the last decade will continue in this direction. It may decide, as a result, to shed its personal products division and hand it over to Pond's, which has fared creditably over the last few years despite heavy competition in the market. Brooke Bond will get the tea business and Lipton will concentrate on building up its strength in food and beverages. This year, Lipton has already had one major success with its tetrapak drink, Tree Top.

The changes that are taking place come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the way Unilever works. The company has certain rigid systems which are followed all round the world. As a result, a degree of standardisation becomes inevitable

Even if it does not work out quite like that, the moves of the four companies in the future are likely to be on these lines. In 1983, Hindustan Lever handed over its edible fats and dairy and animal feedstuff divisions to Lipton so that it could retain its FERA status. Similar changes are definitely being toyed with at the moment. Earlier this year, the head of Lever's personal products division, Kasturirangan, was asked to conduct a study on the feasibility of transferring the division to Pond's. The personal products division handles a range of products like Signal, Close Up and Pepsodent toothpastes, Clinic and Sunsilk shampoos and skin cream Fair and Lovely.

Senior Lever executives, however, insist that even if they do hand over some products, they will definitely keep the more successful ones like Sunsilk and Fair and Lovely which are faring extremely well in the market. Lever has also stopped making its Erasmic shaving cream and it is likely that Pond's may start making shaving creams at some point of time.

The other companies are also likely to take a careful look at their product lines. Pond's which has made a valiant attempt to get a grip on the soap market, may give up the attempt and leave the field clear for Lever. Brooke Bond, meanwhile, has already abandoned some of its diversification efforts. Its attempts to sell two-wheelers failed miserably and it is also abandoning its efforts to expand into meat products. Lever executives, however, insist that the tea divisions of Brooke Bond and Lipton will be kept separate and that executives will not be shifted between these divisions.

Some of Lever's facilities have also started being shared. Courses at Lever's Gulita training centre are being attended by executives from all four companies. The executives are addressed by senior personnel from the entire group including Narayanan. The executives are also being sent to Lever's training centre at Four Acres in the United States.

The companies have also started making use of Lever's research and development centre at Andheri in Bombay. Over the years the Lever research centre has developed a formidable reputation for its research activities. In fact, one of the main jobs assigned to Doug Walker, the head of the food research and development group, is to coordinate food research between Brooke Bond and Lipton.

C.S. Samuel (left) and V. Narayanan: moving up



The changes that are taking place come as no surprise to anyone familiar with the way Unilever works. The company has certain rigid systems which are followed all round the world. As a result, a degree of standardisation becomes almost inevitable.

Besides, there is also the example of what happened gradually to Lipton in the 70s. When Lipton was taken over by the Unilever group, it was faring very poorly. Gradually, some of Lever's best people were sent to Lipton. Pradip Dutt, Lipton's senior vice-president, was one of Lever's marketing whiz-kids who was partly responsible for the success of the company's personal products division in the 70s. Lipton did take a beating when it tried to make a break into the soft drink market by introducing '21' a few years ago. Of late, however, it has redeemed this failure by making a runaway success of its new fruit drink Tree Top. Lipton is also planning to introduce several new products. It is test marketing chocolates, biscuits and pasta. Almost all Lipton's top personnel are people who have been seconded from Lever.

But Lipton's personnel did find to their discomfiture that in the end they had to do things the Unilever way. Lipton in the pre-Unilever days was typical of a company set up during the colonial era, in some ways. For instance, the company originally had three dining rooms and a tradition of elaborate lunches for senior managers. In its new Bangalore offices, Lipton has come round to the more egalitarian system of having one lunchroom for all its staff.

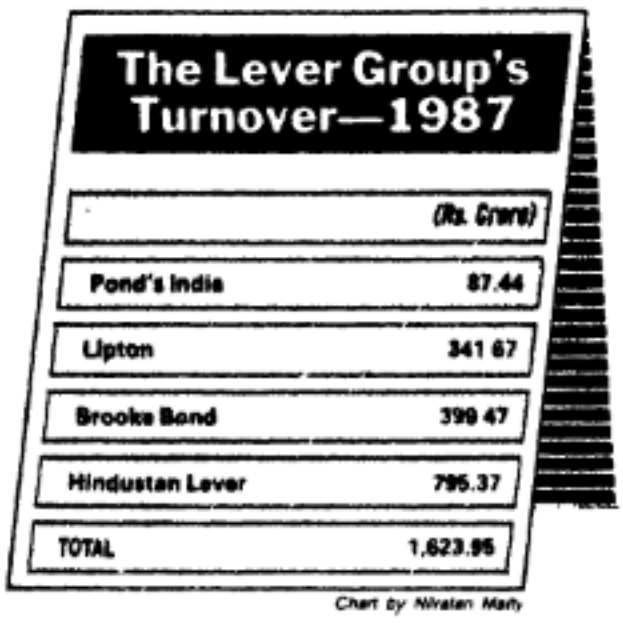


Chart by Niralan Mary

Similar situations are already cropping up at Pond's and Brooke Bond. All the managers at Hindustan Lever, including Ganguly, travel by Ambassador cars and fly economy class on all internal flights. Pond's chairman Narayanan uses a Mercedes Benz. The Lever manager transferred to Brooke Bond, recently found he was entitled to use a Rover 2000.

Over the next five years, a harmonisation of salaries of all the companies is likely to take place. The company is said to have decided that individual salaries should not be hit in any way. In the long run, however, the company is said to be thinking in terms of a more centralised recruitment system, on the lines of the Tata Administrative Service.


George Fernandes, Scoop Photos

Within Levers the sudden expansion has been received with distinctly mixed feelings. On one hand, company executives in Lever are enthusiastic about the changes, viewing them as new opportunities opening up. On the other hand, however, it has meticulously planned careers. Many executives have been suddenly sent scrambling to find out who the high-flyers are at Pond's and Brooke Bond. The smaller companies also have similar mixed feelings. On one hand they also have new opportunities to look forward to. But on the other there is the fear that they may end up getting swamped by the Lever juggernaut.

The staff transfers have been the first concrete indications of the shape of things to come. But even bigger changes have already been taking place behind the scenes over the past year affecting Pond's chairman Narayanan and Brooke Bond chairman Samuel

Even at the top rungs of the group, the new order could mean a lot of changes. One possibility being mentioned is that Narayanan of Pond's who is in his early fifties, becomes one of the contenders for the top spot in Hindustan Lever when Ganguly retires two years from now. Samuel is on the verge of retirement and the new Brooke Bond chief executive, J.S. Sabharwal, is still new in his job.

Whether Lever will be able to make its new strength work for it, remains to be seen. With the coming together of these four major companies, the group will certainly have an incomparable pool of marketing talent available to it. But how it will deploy this strength remains


Brooke Bond's corporate offices in Bangalore

to be seen. The general feeling is that Lever will use its new size to expand faster into the core sector business. So far, however, its expansion has met with indifferent success. The agri products division has not had a very good year. And the company is only now beginning to face the Nirma challenge head on. Lever has gone into the offensive with Breeze soap to counter Nirma's diversification into toilet soaps.

Ganguly must take the credit for managing the transition with the minimum of friction both within the company and with the government. His relations with the government are generally acknowledged to be excellent. He is said to hope that he will be able to see the company through its period of transition over the next few years. And if he succeeds, the company will be a formidable force in the Indian corporate scene.

Paran Balakrishnan/*Bombay*

SOFT DRINKS

Pepsi wins the battle

The US multinational finally gets the clearance to set up shop in India

Pepsi's pitch to quench Indian thirsts finally paid off. Last fortnight, on the eve of the Prime Minister's long-awaited visit to Punjab, the government cleared the controversial Pepsi project. "There could not have been a better project than this," said food processing minister Jagdish Tytler who has already earned the sobriquet of *'Pepsi Cola minister'*. On the other side is George Fernandes, the one-time stormy petrel of the Janata Party who had orchestrated the move to throw out Coca-Cola a decade back. "...The new government that will be installed in Delhi after the next elections, will ask companies like Pepsi-Cola to summarily get out of India," swore Fernandes, the day clearance was given to PepsiCo to enter the Indian market.



Jagdish Yadav

Though its opponents may rave and rant, Pepsi is obviously gleeful. It had taken three long years, a lot of hard-sell and some really smart lobbying in political circles for the US-based multinational to gain entry into India—the dream of many mass marketers in the West. The Rs 22-crore project had become, perhaps, the most politicised foreign collaboration proposal in recent times. The high-voltage campaign launched by Pepsi's prime opponent, Ramesh Chauhan, chairman of Parle Exports (makers of Thums Up), alongside other local soft drink manufacturers, to block Pepsi's entry into the country, had reached such a point that the Pepsi bosses in the USA told Ramesh Vangal, the company's representative in India, to start concentrating on markets in the Far East instead. "No project has gone through this kind of scrutiny by technical committees of the government like this one," says Zahid Baig, the principal executive officer of Tata Services Ltd, Delhi, who has been connected with the Punjab Agro Industries Corporation (PAIC)-Pepsi-Voltas joint venture right from the start.

Pepsi had taken three long years, a lot of hard-sell and some really smart lobbying in political circles for the US-based multinational to gain entry into India—the dream of many mass marketers in the West. The Rs 22-crore project had become, perhaps, the most politicised foreign collaboration in recent times

Ramesh Vangal: triumphant

But why such a fuss about fizz? In essence, the Rs 22-crore joint venture envisages the manufacture of Pepsi-Cola, snack foods and export of fruit-based drinks. It is also a part of the package of incentives for the development of Punjab, say government officials. And yet, the debate on whether to let Pepsi enter the Indian market as part of a bigger fruit and food product project took such emotional and political dimensions over the last 26 months or so, that the government was forced to set up more ministerial and inter-ministerial committees to examine this project than any other industrial venture in the country.

Says Baig of the Tatas, "The biggest problem has been that of communication—to get people to think of the project as one beyond its soft drink component. The rivals played up on this perception of the project as a low-tech, low priority one. But once we got over this hurdle, the logic of the project took over."

Pepsi representative Vangal admits that in 1985 when the proposal was first mooted, the multinational's terms were different, and through the months of haggling with government departments, the promoters have had to agree to increase their export commitment by some 65 per cent and to limit the soft drink business to just a quarter of the total turnover. Senior bureaucrats who have been dealing with the project for the last three years say that the lobbying by Pepsi's opponents in industry and in political circles have actually helped and the terms agreed to by PepsiCo Inc. in India are far better than their existing agreements with Russia, China and various other countries. In Russia and China, PepsiCo has an export-import ratio of 1:1, whereas in the case of India the ratio will be 5:1. In Russia and China the concentrate (for the soft drink) is imported from Pepsi's plants abroad, but in India, the stuff will be made within the country, point out Pepsi's Indian partners.

Countdown to PepsiCo's entry

January 1985: Pepsi-Cola team in New Delhi for talks to enter India in tie-up with R.P. Goenka group.
25 May 1985: Goenka-PepsiCo proposal submitted to government.
July 1985: Licensing committee rejects PepsiCo proposal. Reason: to safeguard the domestic soft drink industry.
30 July 1985: Government makes formal announcement rejecting proposal.
August 1985: PepsiCo makes fresh bid to enter India in collaboration with the Calcutta-based NICCO group.

PepsiCo, Punjab Agro Industries Corporation (PAIC) and Voltas submit fresh joint proposal to Projects Approval Board (PAB). Proposal includes a soft drink unit, a fruit and vegetable processing unit and an agro research centre.

12 August 1986: Industry minister N.D. Tiwari tells the Lok Sabha that a final decision on the proposal of PAIC will be taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).
September 1986: PAB seeks view of agriculture ministry on PepsiCo project.
November 1986: Opposition mounts pressure in Parliament against PepsiCo's entry.
January 1987: A team of senior PepsiCo officials visit New Delhi to thrash out the details of the collaboration. PepsiCo agrees to a 3:1 obligation insisted upon by the government.
February 1987: Industry ministry comes out in favour of the PepsiCo-PAIC-Voltas proposal despite objections from the agriculture ministry.
8 July 1987: Bombay High Court dismisses PepsiCo appeal seeking restraint against an Indian bottling company using its trademarks 'Pepsi Cola', 'Pepsi' and 'PepsiCo
10 August 1987: Industry minister Vengala Rao tells the Rajya Sabha that "for the present, we are not considering the PepsiCo project".
September 1987: PepsiCo ropes in the good offices of the US ambassador to get its proposal cleared.
2 February 1988: PAB clears project on condition that PepsiCo will not use its brand name. Industry ministry to prepare note for approval by CCEA.
10 February 1988: CCEA approves project on condition that income from soft drinks sale will not exceed 25 per cent of the annual turnover. Collaborators agree to export 50 per cent of annual turnover.
11 February 1988: Government again develops cold feet over PepsiCo project: final decision deferred by Cabinet.
12 February 1988: AICC general secretary K.N. Singh strongly opposes PepsiCo's entry because the US giant had "imperialist designs".
23 February 1988: Vengala Rao tells Lok Sabha that a final decision had not yet been taken on the PepsiCo project.
7 July 1988: Minister for food processing Jagdish Tytler says that the government is still considering the proposal.
19 September 1988: The Union government at last clears PepsiCo's entry into India.

Compiled by Mitali Sarkar

The Pepsi can: the wait is over



In June 1985 when Pepsi first mooted its proposal, the government flatly said "no", confesses Vangal. "It was considered too low-tech." But Pepsi was persistent. Two months later, it tried again. And this time, the PAIC—one of the proposed partners—said bluntly to "come back with a broader food-based project". In June 1986 Pepsi modified its terms and came back with the second proposal. The MNC had been really smart and roped in one of the most respected business houses, the Tatas, for the joint venture proposal. "We thought the government will clear it within the stipulated 90 days," recalls Vangal. But Pepsi was in for a nasty shock. On 28 July, incidentally also Vangal's birthday, a storm raged within Parliament on Pepsi's proposed bid to enter India. Why should a multinational be allowed into a non priority industry like soft drinks when a domestic industry had flourished after Coke's exit? Why should import regulations be bent? The All-India Soft Drinks Bottlers Association and the Perfume and Flavour Manufacturers Association pitched in their might. "That was our first taste of blast," says Vangal.

According to Vangal, it took a "great deal of persuasion" on Pepsi's part to convince its Indian partners to go in for an equally strong counter-campaign. The Tatas had a conservative approach *vis-a-vis* the media and reportedly were not in favour of an acrimonious slanging match with Chauhan and company initially. But, nevertheless, a press conference was held in September 1986 by the promoters of the project to put across their point of view. At the same time, concerted efforts were being made to mobilise public opinion and a positive response from sections of politicians. In Punjab, politicians cutting across party lines started rooting for the Punjab Agro-Voltas-Pepsi project. Farmers movements like the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), the Farmers Forum headed by Lok Sabha Speaker Balram Jakhar, and Sharad Joshi's Shetkari Sangathana in Maharashtra started extending support. From early 1987 editorials favouring Pepsi's entry into the country began to appear in mainstream publications.

Simultaneously, the Perfume and Flavour Manufacturers Association and the

Key features

The Rs 22-crore Pepsi-Punjab Agro-Voltas joint venture has four main components- -an agro research centre, a potato and grain processing unit, a fruit and vegetable processing unit and a soft drink concentrate manufacturing unit. The Indian shareholding in the company will be 60.11 per cent while Pepsico will hold 39.89 per cent. The total imports owing to capital equipment, raw materials not locally available, engineering fee, etc., for a period of 10 years will be Rs 37 crores. The total value of exports for the same period will be Rs 194 crores. The company will be allowed to repatriate profits only after meeting export obligations. No foreign brand names will be allowed for domestic sales. Soft drink production will be limited to only 25 per cent of the total turnover of the project. Additional tax revenue of Rs 174 crores per annum is expected to be generated. Official sources claim that the project will create employment for 50,000 people nationally including 25,000 extra jobs in Punjab. The neighbouring states—Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir—will also benefit, it is claimed.

The Pepsi logo

All-India Soft DrinksBottlers Association started getting louder in their protests against Pepsi's entry The Pepsi camp said Ramesh Chauhan was orchestrating the campaign. Chauhan denies the charge stoutly. Zahid Baig recalls how at one stage of the battle.Pepsi's detractors had made personal digs about none other than J.R.D. Tata. Says Baig, "They started saying- look at him (JRD), his family founded the first steel plant in the country and he is getting involved with soft drinks—the idea was obviously to knock at the Tata image.." According to Baig, it was after these snide jibes that Tata decided to get personally involved with the project and lend his weight to it.

Towards the end of 1987, Pepsi's detractors changed tactics. It was no longer a question of import regulations and technology, but on the emotive issue of "subversion" "Pepsi is CIA in another garb, look at its track record in Chile, what happened to Allende. Punjab is a border state, can we allow multinationals, specially American ones, there?" went the arguments. One of the unsigned pamphlets being circulated to mediamen during this time argued thus. "Why does Pepsi want Punjab? Answer: Punjab is a troubled state and every foreign power is interested in a foothold there. Remember that Pepsi has been a willing tool of the US State Department in subverting other countries....." Pepsi reacted by sending out personalised letters to selected editors explaining the merits of the project and rebutting the charges point by point

In November 1987, there came a surprise. The Project Approval Board (PAB) favourably considered the latest amendments (that is, increase in export commitment, etc.). Then it was sent to the Cabinet Committee for Economic Affairs (CCEA) according to a senior government official. The CCEA in turn remitted it to a group of ministers—Buta Singh, (home), G.S. Dhillon (agriculture and rural development), N.D. Tiwari (finance), J. Vengala Rao (industry) and H.K.L. Bhagat (food and civil supplies). The ministerial group examined the proposal in great detail and asked for further particulars, for example, the import obligation and the export commitment. Soon after, Rajiv Gandhi reshuffled his cabinet and portfolios were changed. A new group of ministers became the referral committee. The only addition was the newly-formed food processing ministry under Tytler.

That was the first signal that Pepsi's efforts had paid off. Tytler, at a press conference in the capital in the first week of July this year, had said, "The doors for PepsiCo are not closed. On the contrary it is still wide open..."

Fortunately for the promoters of the project, a view was also gaining ground

Can Coke be far behind?

Both are quintessential multinationals and bitter rivals in more than a hundred countries. And if PepsiCo is now coming to India, can the grand American institution, Coke, be far behind? However, officials in the newly-created ministry of food processing cannot be blamed if they are none too wise about what is happening. They were thus taken aback by reports that Coke—unceremoniously thrown out of the country by the irrepressible George Fernandes in 1977 during the Janata regime—was making a comeback. And if they are in the dark, it is because Coca-Cola appears to be playing its re-entry games on a low key.

That Coca Cola Company had been watching the Indian situation on the sly was evident earlier this year when, in the first week of June, Coke put out advertisements in some of the leading Indian dailies warning that trademarks like "Coke" and "Cola-Cola", including calligraphy and the colour scheme for the logos, were the exclusive property of Coca-Cola Company of Atlanta, United States. The ad had a routine purpose: "to assert Coca-Cola Company's right to its registered trademarks," asserts Amar Raj Lall of Lall, Lahiri and Salhotra, Coca-Cola's attorney for its trademark in India.

However, the advertisement was more than a routine declaration on trademark violations. This was a warning to its former Indian partner—Pure Drinks Ltd—that it was time the soft drink company changed the calligraphy and colour scheme of its soft drink—Campa-Cola. In the wake of Coca-Cola's exit from India, the domestic manufacturers had a field day, especially Pure Drinks Ltd. Almost overnight, Pure Drinks launched Campa Cola and easily wrote one of the biggest success stories in the soft drinks industry. The product was not only a look-alike of its illustrious predecessor, but its name also sounded like the drink it was replacing. It followed the same calligraphy and the same colour scheme. Since then, Campa Cola did not have reason to look back, that is, until it ventured out of the country.

Initially, Coca-Cola Company treated the Indian look-alike with indulgence. The US company probably thought that by keeping the Coca-Cola flag flying with the look-alike Campa Cola, it would help it in making an easier re-entry. Howev-

that the Pepsi project was a test case and that if Pepsi was not allowed in, no foreign companies would show interest in collaborations in future Vangal however says that "the period between March to September this year was a very tough phase because the PAB had cleared the project It was being tossed around from one select committee to another "

"It had to be a political decision " says a senior government official connected with the project Though the amended terms of the project demanded that the government did not dither about giving the green signal, there remained the political questions An insider in the Pepsi camp says that though it was clear that people at the highest level wanted it, the government had to wait for a "politically opportune time" The battle against Pepsi had been a political one and



Ramesh Chauhan Unsuccessful lobbying

the battle for Pepsi also had to be settled politically The Pepsi camp was lucky in having people like Captain Amrinder Singh of the United Akali Dal vociferously defending the project Punjab Governor S S Ray, too, was one of its stoutest supporters

On 3 August, 1988 just a month or so before the CCEA was to give the final green signal, Ray convened an all party meeting in Chandigarh to discuss the Punjab Agro PepsiCo Voltas project

Everyone supported the project including the communists

The imperatives of Punjab politics ultimately swung the deal for Pepsi feel many officials Said a senior Tata official 'Rajiv Gandhi had to go to Punjab with some tangibles And the Pepsi project was one of them '

While Double Cola and Parle Exports have been dead against the entry of Pepsi Cola into India their main fear is the threat from Pepsi to reduce the price of the soft drink But S N R Muthanna, manager, marketing and sales Double Cola said 'As long as the structure is maintained by the government there can be no reduction in prices Today the

The debate on whether to let Pepsi enter the Indian market took such emotional and political dimensions over the last 26 months or so, that the government was forced to set up more ministerial and inter-ministerial committees to examine this project than any other industrial venture in the country

ingredients accessories bottle rates and the present price is a neck to neck race Unless Pepsi compromises on its ingredients there is no way they can reduce the price

Ramesh Chauhan still insists on calling the Pepsi project a 'junk package' Said he, "I assure you that Pepsi cannot lower its prices Its import content forms 63 per cent of its selling price, so I don t understand how they can lower it This 63 per cent amounts to Rs 2 40 per case of 24 bottles In our case, the same stuff which is concentrate flavouring, is one paise per bottle or one tenth of their cost "

But the main question now is whether the promoters will stick to their export commitment Multinationalshave not had a particularly good track record in this regard and justifiably apprehensions are being expressed

And even as PepsiCo has finally cleared the last hurdle, there is an interesting development in that arch-rival Coca-Cola has initiated the first moves to stage a comeback If Coke succeeds, the Indian marketplace may soon witness a cola war of the multinational variety

Patralekha Chatterjee/*New Delhi* and Olga Tellis/*Bombay*



The Coca-Cola logo

er, its calculations went haywire when its former partner proved to be its most dogged opponent. Coca-Cola has nourished a grudge ever since but there was precious little it could do.

Coca-Cola got its chance for revenge when Campa Cola ventured out of India. Campa was exported to Algeria in the early Eighties and subsequently to the United Kingdom. As the first consignments reached the British Isles, Coca-Cola pounced on its erstwhile Indian ally. A threat of legal action again Pure Drinks was enough to spoil its export market. A hasty agreement was concluded between Coca-Cola and Pure Drinks under which the latter agreed to change its logo and colour scheme. It is now expected that the new Campa Cola logo will be introduced shortly.

Meanwhile, Coca-Cola is tying up a few other knots in India to provide for an eventual re-emergence in the future Under the Trade and Merhandise Marks Act 1958, a trademark registration may be cancelled if it has not been used for five years and one month However, there is one loophole the registration could be retained in case import restrictions make the use of the item difficult. Besides, the trademark owner must also prove his continuing interest in the market Hence, the newspaper ads

Coca-Cola is doing much else too. It supplies crates of its drinks to the US embassy in New Delhi. It tried to sell Coke to Air-India It has tried to sell Coke to five-star hotels in the country, which, however, has not made much headway because the hotels find spending their foreign exchange entitlements for bringing whisky more profitable.

Meanwhile, the company's attorney has been keeping a tab on the availability of Coke in the local market as well. Apparently, Coke has an unlimited market in India. In Delhi a can of the drink sells for anything between Rs 16 and Rs 18. One can get any number of coke cans if one is willing to pay the price So remember, the next can of Coke you drink will go a long way in helping the US company to come back to quench your thirst.

Anjan Roy/New Delhi

Fresh lease for BST

Bharat Steel Tubes (BST), the laggard of the Raunaq Singh Group, is about to get a new lease of life. The banks and the financial institutions are working out a package to bale the company out of its present straits. The Industrial Finance Corporation of India

Raunaq Singh: looking ahead

(IFCI) and the Punjab National Bank are together likely to put almost Rs 10 crores more into the company which may give it a chance to return to profitability.

Whether this will be enough remains to be seen. For most of the last one year, BST has operated at around 18 per cent capacity, and it has lost out in the marketplace to other tube manufacturers like the Jindals. The FIs and the banks, especially PNB, have invested heavily in BST and can ill-afford to see the company come to harm.

Fun times ahead

Bombay's Fun City project has got just the break it needed. Last week, the Union finance ministry decided that the Fun City project is a good idea after all. In a show of unprecedented generosity, the ministry agreed to waive customs duty on the import of equipment.

The project envisages the import of 20 sophisticated machines, on which the developers would have to pay duty to the tune of Rs 2.4 crores. The concession has been given on the ground that the imported equipment would help children "to learn more about latest technology and inculcate a spirit of scientific knowledge and a sense of adventure". With this kind of recommendation, the Fun City project has got just the boost it requires.

RPG banner flies high

So what if R.P. Goenka is stuck with the grandiose Haldia Petrochemical project which refuses to take off? The RPG Enterprise banner is flying high nonetheless through the corporate acquisition route. Goenka has been selected by the Australia-based Guinness family to become a partner in managing the Cochin-based plantations company, Harrisons Malayalam.

The RP'G Enterprise seems to have struck paydirt on another front too. International Computers Ltd (ICL) of the UK has almost decided to rope in the Goenkas as partners to manage their Indian subsidiary, ICIM—India's largest computer manufacturing firm.

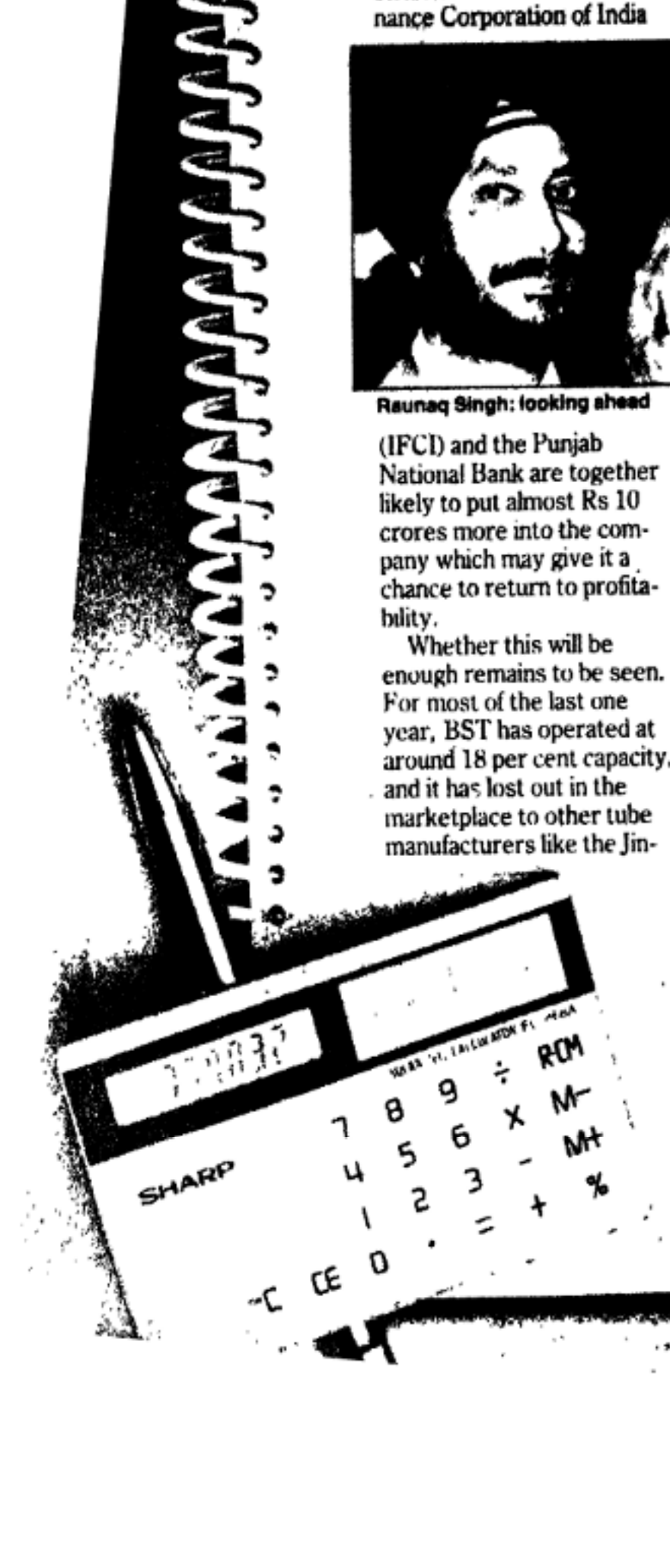
HTA back at the top

Hindustan Thompson Associates (HTA) is getting ready to climb back onto its perch at the top of the advertising industry. In 1987-88 it had billings of Rs 65.7 crores putting it ahead



Mike Khanna: sweet revenge

of Lintas which claimed the top spot on the basis of its Rs 60-crore billings last year. The present results are sweet revenge for HTA. Last year the agency had billings of Rs 52 crores, but HTA chief Mike Khanna had predicted that the agency would do well. However, the problem is that HTA closes its year in June and Lintas ends its year in December. So January may see the next round in the slugging match between the two agencies.



R.P. Goenka: good going



Anita Raaj goes coy. After leaving nothing to the audience's imagination *vis a vis* her figure, the newest Jane Fonda of the Bombay film world has suddenly discovered virtue and the saree, which she demurely wraps around herself, come shooting time. What's more, Ms Raaj is not willing to be drenched in pools or under falls, ride horses or even perform the *bhangra*.

Did we hear you join the chorus of distraught producers asking "Why?" No, the lady hasn't suddenly been visited by modest compunctions. Instead, it's the stork which has come calling at the Hingorani household. (Yes, that's what Mr Anita Raaj is called.)

Anita, strangely enough, is very secretive about the imminent arrival. Curious, considering that unlike certain other screen mamas, she, the legally-wedded wife of Sunil Hingorani, isn't bringing a love-child into the world. Perhaps, in this instance too, she believes in following the lead of more successful names than hers.



Anita Raaj: going into purdah

So, the ice-maiden has finally thawed. *Thandi* Meenakshi, whose cold-blooded professionalism had all the *filmi* wolves (with the exception of "good friend" Jackie, of course) yelling "frigid", has finally proved that there is fire 'neath that frozen exterior. So say people who have seen her performance in a recent film where her passionate clinches with Anil Kapoor very nearly turned the screen a delicate shade of blue.

Why the sudden change of heart? Ms Seshadri, you will remember, was prudish enough to make the most strait-laced Victorian schoolmarm seem a fun-time girl. Must say, Competition has a way of destroying all inhibitions, especially if it comes equipped with the nubile charms of Madhuri Dixit. Right, Meenakshi?

Sunny Deol was holding forth recently on what he found most objectionable in women in general and Farha



Meenakshi Seshadri: the ice melts

in particular: swearing, smoking and drinking, in that order.

Guess which other woman possesses all these vices. None other than Deol's darling, Dimple. Love, we always knew, was blind. In Sunny's case, it seems to be stone-deaf, too.

Sunny Deol: voicing his objections



Chunky Pandey: from one stud to another

The prize stud of Hindi cinema had a rather unfortunate experience with another of his kind. Shooting at Film City recently, Chunky Pandey insisted on doing all the horse-riding stunts himself. He had his way, but at his own peril.

For one particular scene, Chunky was required to run alongside a horse, grab his neck and mount him. Cameras rolled and the action commenced, with the real stud worsting the pretender, telling him precisely where he got off—in mid-stride, that is. Forgetting his good breeding momentarily, the beast even kicked the bested man while he was down, drawing blood.

If nothing else, the incident has, at least, dinned some horse sense into the sexy Pandey.

Shashi Kapoor has rediscovered women. And it took the ample charms of Russian beauties to do the trick. Back from the land of the Reds after an outdoor shooting stint, all Shashi could talk about was the Soviet stunners: "They are gorgeous (drool, drool)." And then for good measure: "If you don't believe me, ask Chintu."

We believe you, we believe you, Shashi *baba*. If they could put the sparkle back into your jaded eye, they really must have what it takes.

HE'S "ABSOLUTELY bushed", says adviser to *The Times of India* and chief organiser of the Human Rights Now concert, held to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the group. And with reason. For the past so many weeks **Anil Gupta** has worked 21 hours a day to ensure that the never-before event went off without a hitch, proving ungrounded the doubts of sceptics. The "nodal point" of the organising effort, Gupta had to contend with many last-minute problems: import of equipment (the roof alone weighed 13 tonnes); putting up the stage with its computerised lighting arrangement; setting to work the hi-tech music system and most importantly, handling the thousands of rock fans



Anil Gupta: all for a good cause

who turned up at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium

All in all, it made for hectic times. But "all for-a-good cause" Gupta is not complaining.

◆

"THE MADRAS chapter of the Amra Bangali," wondered **Prafulla Mahanta** as he spied the 200-odd *dhoti*-clad, black flag-waving demonstrators. The Assam chief minister was on his way from Madras airport to the city when he encountered the annoyed rabble. Surprise turned to sheer amazement when Mahanta discovered that the protesters were in fact AIADMK men, led by worthies such as Nedun



Devi Lal: what's in a tongue?

chezhiyan and P. Ramachandran.

It was only later that evening that the mystery of the miffed Madrasis was manifest to Mahanta. The



Mahanta: mistaken identity

AIADMK men had mistaken him for that Haryanvi in a hurry for Opposition unity—**Devi Lal.** Lal was to arrive in the city the same day and the demonstrating Dravidians had congregated to denounce his pro-Hindi stance. When he did finally arrive, the paunchy peasant politician told journalists (after hearing of the incident) that he was far better versed in Urdu than in Hindi. Under-



Michael Jackson's on his way: an artist's impression; (inset) the star himself



standably, a distinction that failed to cut any ice. "Sounds just the bloody same to me," one local hack was heard to remark.

◆

HE HAS nearly tried it all—from plastic surgery to oxygen chambers. But now **Michael Jackson's** had another idea. This December, the world's most popular concert attraction, will be in Bangalore hoping to find salvation at the feet of Satya Sai Baba, the Afro-headed dispenser of Omega watches.

Jackson is religious—that much is established. But so far, he's only been linked to such Christian cults as Jehovah's Witnesses. The Sai Baba fixation is therefore a first. But then, Jackson's been fascinated by Elizabeth Taylor and boa constrictors before, so maybe, the Sai Baba obsession is not such a big deal.

◆

WHAT IS it about gangsters that makes them so irresistible to Bombay film stars? Haji Mastaan was an honoured guest at film parties throughout the Seventies and Karim Lala proudly displays photographs of himself hugging Dilip Kumar. And there's Shatrughan Sinha and the Bihar coal mafia.

The latest gangster to fascinate the film industry is **Dawood Ibrahim.** Unfortunately, Dawood can't attend film parties as he is in hiding in Dubai, hoping to beat murder charges filed against him in Bombay. But no matter. He decided to throw his own party at Dubai's Hyatt Regency and the Bombay industry obligingly turned up. Among the guests were Anil Kapoor, Vinod Mehra, Jackie Shroff, Mithun, Govinda and Farha. No doubt, Govinda will now play a Dawood-like Don in *Deewar Ka Bachcha.*

◆

EVERYTHING YOU wanted to know about orgasms but were too diffident to ask will be revealed to you by **Dr**

Prakash Kothari's next book, tentatively titled *The Organon of Orgasm.* This "definitive, scientific work", will, according to the good doctor, render Masters and Johnson (who, like all Western sexologists, consider failure to achieve orgasm, a dysfunction), irrelevant. The Indian specialist says that it's only a case of mind over matter: sexual failure stems from disinformation and improperly-learnt responses rather than from a failure of the orgasmic apparatus.

The central theme of the Kothari Theory of Sex is mutual pleasure. To spread the word around he has taken to visiting girls' colleges, educating the nubile maidens about the birds and the bees, with illustrated talks.

With Prakash Kothari around, sexual revolution couldn't be a long way behind.

Mrinal, though, has now gone one step further. Not content with Shabana alone, he has also cast the duskily attractive director of *36 Chowringhee Lane* in a cameo role, in his latest effort. One waits to see which one of the two prima donnas steals the show. It promises to be an absorbing contest.

◆

THIS TIME round it's not FERA, but beer baron **Vijay Mallya** is in trouble all the same. Last year, apparently, the presence of two blackbucks was discovered on his Mandhwa estate by environmentalists. Appalled at seeing endangered animals consigned to the loving care of a private person, instead of being subject to the tender mercies of the state machin-



Tapan Das

Vijay Mallya: beasts of burden

ery, they raised a stink, filing a complaint with the district forest officer. He, conscientious soul, promptly confiscated the animals and sent them to Borivli National Park, for safe-keeping.

Mallya, in the meanwhile, was asked to do some explaining: how, for instance, had the beasts come into his possession? For about a year his answer was unforthcoming, until finally, buckling under pressure, he confessed. The animals, apparently, belonged to a relative and Mallya had only been playing temporary guardian, out of sheer goodness of heart (How's that for passing the buck?) The story, however, did not wash and a criminal case has been registered against Mallya in the Alibag district court.

Blackbucks, for Mallya at least, are proving to be burdensome beasts.

◆

THE LAST resort of **Raj Babbar** will also, one feels, be politics. Or else, why would the release of his latest film *Andha Yudh* be attended by sundry political



R S Chopra

Raj Babbar: career change?

stalwarts, all from the ranks of the Opposition, instead of the usual *filmi* riff-raff.

Going by appearances, the *quid pro quo* arrangement is this. Babbar will, drawing on his matinee idol appeal, attract the crowds to Opposition meetings (general elections are only a year and a half away, remember) and in return they will grant him that magic key into the charmed circle of the powerful — an election ticket. The constituency, apparently, will be Agra. Say informed sources, Babbar's close links with V.P. Singh, the Jan Morcha *numero uno*, helped him swing this deal.

Times to come may well see Raj Babbar with more in common with Amitabh Bachchan than a certain sultry beauty.

Compiled by Seema Goswami

Shabana Azmi: third time lucky, (inset) Aparna Sen: cameo role



Tapan Das

WHAT DO Mrinal Sen and **Aparna Sen** have in common, other than their surnames? A **Shabana Azmi** fixation.

Mrinal Sen has once again cast Shabana in the lead for his forthcoming film *Ek Din Achanak*, making this the third consecutive occasion that the director has opted for Ms Azmi. Aparna, too, had cast the Bombay actress in her temporarily-shelved film, *Sati*, as also in her telefilm *Picnic*.

IMPRESSIONS THAT LINGER... JCT

The Thapar Group



Phagwara FABRICS

Contract. JCT 20103/88

An Indian spread

With the successful marketing of packaged Indian meals it looks as though Indian food is there to stay in Britain

It has always been a tradition in Britain—on your way back home from work, you stop in at the pub for a drink, with or without your friends. The Brits are still happily maintaining the tradition, but with a difference. With their beer or their martini they are now likely to have something far less innocuous as munchies—something hot and Indian. Peanuts and pretzels are giving way to *papadams*, crisp, fried, laced with chilli

And it is not just the pubs. Even the swankiest department stores now sport packaged Indian snacks, while restaurants all over town serve them with pre-dinner aperitifs. As for the ubiquitous "curry", it seems to have become one of the hottest rages for the bland English palate. Serve your chicken and lamb in a delectable curry—and you are sure to be a winner.

It did not take long for the large department stores to cash in on the curry. Marks and Spencer started their Indian ready-meals five years back. "At that time it wasn't very popular," said Janet Bards of the Marks and Spencer press office. "Then one day we got a call from an Indian lady who said we weren't really serving the right dishes. She drew up a menu for us and the dishes we introduced have been a real draw." The lady, whose name was not disclosed, now works as a consultant with Marks and Spencer.

At £2.75 for a packet that serves two, the Marks and Spencer Chicken Tikka Masala is one of the most popular dishes in the ready-meals section. In addition there are other mouth-watering delicacies like Chicken Korma, Chicken Curry-Rice (a complete meal), Lamb Koftas, Indian Rice and Onion Bhajias

From October, a new range of packets will appear on the Indian shelf—Prawn Tikka Masala with Rice, Fish Korma and Fish Madras. "It's the tremendous popularity of Indian meals that have led to the extension," said Bards. "The chicken and lamb dishes are quite the most popular and our *bhajias* sell very well too."

The grocery section or the long-life foods in the Marks and Spencer range include Spiced Lentil Dal, Potatoes and Peas Curry and Chick Pea Dal. Spices include hot curry paste and mild curry paste and there's a special mango chutney thrown in as well. All 281 branches of Marks and Spencer stock the Indian meals picked from their shelves, more by the Brits than by the Indians. All recipes are genuine Indian ones prepared by Indian chefs, they claim, though maybe a small compromise in hotness is made for the English palate.

Not to be left behind by Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury introduced a new range in Indian meals last year. Seven authentic Indian dishes added a new flavour to its ready-meals section: Spiced Basmati Rice, Chicken Madras, Vegetable Curry with Spiced Basmati Rice, Vegetable Samosas, Onion Bhajias, Chicken Tikka Masala and Gobi Aloo Saag.

Observers couldn't help noticing the similarity with the Marks and Spencer range but then that wasn't bothering customers who went for the lower prices offered by Sainsbury. "Our Chicken Tikka Masala is definitely the most popular dish," said the Sainsbury spokesperson. "All the other packets introduced have been doing very well too."

If Sainsbury's ready meals have been doing well, John Lewis' food section Waitrose claims that both its chilled and frozen Indian meals are a real hit. In the frozen section Waitrose tempts customers with Lamb Rogan Josh, Chicken Moghlai, Shahi Chicken, Chicken Madras, Chicken Masala and Pilau Rice. In the chilled section it offers Lamb Curry, Prawn

An array of Indian dishes: tempting Brits



Bhuna, Chicken Korma, Vegetable Samosas and Pilau Rice. At prices ranging from £2·50 for a packet of Lamb Curry serving two, Waitrose's prices can compete with those of Marks and Spencer and the meals enjoy high ratings. However, all department stores keep their sales figures a closely-guarded secret, confirming only the "tremendous popularity" of the dishes.



G K. Noon: catering the 'real thing'

But is the everyday customer that the three largest department store chains cater for, those with a taste for the exclusive drop in on the biggest consumer mall in Knightsbridge Harrods. At this international store visited by rich buyers from USA and the Middle East, curious Indians and passing Brits, the Indian food section provides its own special range. Lamb Pasanda, Kofta Curry, Chicken Korma, Chicken Jal Freza, Lamb Spinach, Chicken Vindaloo, Chicken Tikka Curry and Lamb Rogan Josh. Each priced at £4·65 per packet, in keeping with the grandeur of Harrods.

The vegetarian meals Okra, Green Pepper and Peanuts, Mixed Vegetable Curry, Cauliflower, Sweet and Sour Aubergine, Potato and Spinach, Dal, Pilau Rice, Nan and Paratha are all priced at £3·45 per packet. And there are *samosas* and cutlets as well.

"All the dishes are very popular," said E Winter of the Indian food section. "On a rough estimate we sell about 40 lbs of non vegetarian dishes a day, and about 20 lbs of the vegetarian dishes. Customers come from all over—we have American tourists, Britishers and quite a few Indians as well." And what is more, the food is authentic, say Harrods. The customers obviously think so.

Like Harrods, another shop claiming a somewhat exclusive clientele, Selfridges on Oxford Street is proud of its Indian food section. A whole range of *nan*, garlic bread and *chapatis* are offered here as well as whole and powdered spices, authentic mango and ginger chutneys from Calcutta and the inevitable *papadams*.



Parminder and Jatinder Bains: smiles of success

While the department stores are cashing in on the Indian food craze, Indians themselves aren't doing too badly. Innovative couples like Parminder and Jatinder Bains have brought Indian recipes to British pubs thus invading one of the last bastions of British tradition.

The King William IV pub in Coventry, which the couple has been running for the last 12 years, introduced Indian lunches and dinners three years back and has not looked back since. The Bains have won the "Best Pub in Midlands Award," and the "Pub Lunch in Midlands Award" this year, and the "Pub of the Year Award" in 1986. "People come here from as far as Scotland to taste our dishes," said Parminder Bains, known popularly as Pele.

It is not just the pubs. Even the swankiest department stores now sport packaged Indian snacks, while restaurants all over town serve them with pre-dinner aperitifs. As for the ubiquitous curry, it seems to have become one of the hottest rages for the bland English palate

The award-winning dishes in Pele's pub are Dum Ka Raan (lamb marinated for 24 hours and then grilled and served with peas, potatoes and cauliflowers), Karai Chicken, Malabari Chicken and Karai Gosht. Other dishes prepared every morning by the Bains include Chicken Tikka, Shahi Kebab, Chicken Bhuna, Chicken Korma, Rogan Josh, and Onion Bhajias.

"The atmosphere in our pub is different," said Pele Bains, "and that's what makes it popular. We cook and serve ourselves. Most of the staff is Indian and we look after our customers well. We have a lot of people at mealtimes—and they are mostly English. At lunchtime there's a lot of business people coming in. They come from all over the Mid-



lands. In the evenings, it is usually families."

Pele, originally from Jullunder, came to Britain to study electrical engineering in 1966. Working part-time in pubs during his student days gave him the idea of running a pub.

Jatinder, who comes from Hoshiarpur in Punjab, helps Pele with the pub. Every morning the Bains es begin cooking at six in the morning and prepare all their food. "Sometimes the demand is so much, that we have to cook during lunchtime as well," says Pele. The Bains plan to buy a few more pubs in London and in other areas, get Pele's brothers to manage them, and continue the tradition.

It is not just the curry-with-a-pint idea that has scored in Britain. British Airways also has queued up for Indian food on its menu. From September this year, all British Airways flights will serve the new Asian Vegetarian Meal section, orders for which have gone to none other than Royal Foods, the pre-

mier sweets people in London.

Royal Foods, which has been supplying British Airways Economy Class with meals since 1986, is now entering Club Europe and Club World, First Class and Concorde with its menu ranging from Alu Chat to Palak Paneer.

"We are the first people to have mechanised the process of Asian sweets," said G.K. Noon who had set up Royal (Bombay Halwa Ltd) Foods along with his partners, Suterwalla Brothers 15, years ago. With 13 outlets in Britain, Royal Foods is popularly known for its wide range of sweets and the popular Bombay Mix which was introduced by them as a cocktail snack.

Limited so far by a largely Indian clientele for his sweets, Noon is now launching a new company Noon Products PLC - which will manufacture non vegetarian meals and supply them



Sainsbury s tempting new range

to the department stores. Following up a similar project already started by him in New York, Noon is out to become the first Indian manufacturer with a totally mechanised, aseptic food production unit.

His mechanised ready meals will include Chicken Biryani, Lamb Rogan Josh, Tikka Makhanwal, Bombay Alu and Paneer Palak, and will be prepared with equipment imported from Germany and cooked in a conveyerised oven brought in from the US. With Ashok Kaul (ex-Taj Group) as his executive chief, Noon is confident that his ready meals will beat everything that is presently being served in supermarkets here.

"It may be popular, but the food lacks the distinctive Indian taste," says Noon. "Mine will be the real thing." No artificial colour, additives or flavours, says Noon.

By now, there are some 400 Indian restaurants in the London area alone, catering daily to eager Brits and Indians, and the going looks good for all those in the Indian food business. While the bigger and more expensive restaurants like Viceroy of India, Copper Chimney, Veeraswamy and Bombay Brassene draw in the big bucks, the smaller-scale Moti Mahals and Roxys in Southall and the Tikka and Tandoori Centres in Ealing and Wembley, all thrive on their fare of Indian delights.

It is cash and curry for those in the food business—and no one is yet the loser.

Shrabani Basu/*London*

...Innovative couples like Parminder and Jatinder Bains have brought Indian recipes to British pubs. This couple's offerings have managed to compete with English lunch items like steak and kidney pie and lasagne. The going looks good for all those in the Indian food business



Chipko leaders on a *padayatra:* educating the masses

BOOK EXTRACT

Fight for your trees

Thomas Weber provides a glimpse into the beginning of a long struggle to protect nature's bounty. Are women the backbone of the Chipko movement?

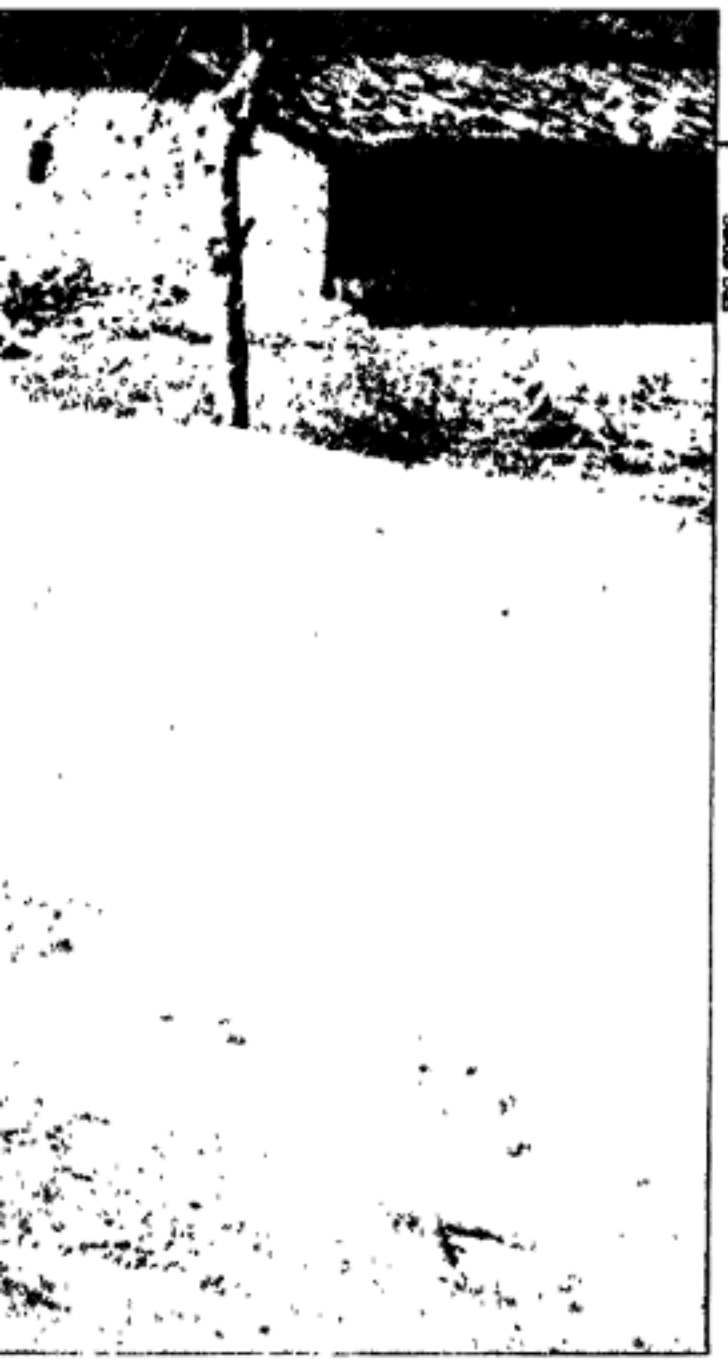


Through the anti-forest law activities in the 1930s, but especially because of the guidance of Mirabehn and Saralabehn, the genesis of the Chipko *andolan* had strong links with the Gandhian tradition. The *de facto* leadership of the movement came from the ranks of Gandhian *sarvodaya* workers and consequently the techniques employed by the activists were taken from, or were an adaptation of, Gandhi's *satyagraha,* the Mahatma's method of non-violent resistance. Concrete examples are many. During the first campaign against the Simon Company at Gopeshwar, the Company agents were tolerated and sometimes even invited to attend what, in other circumstances, could have been secret war councils, and even encouraged to present their case.

In many of the campaigns the activists took care not only to stop labourers of the contractors from felling trees through direct action that may have alienated or threatened them, but also to carefully explain the struggle to them and point out the need for the forest and the villagers' dependence on it as well as to remind them that they too were (generally) mountain people who would experience the same problems in their own homes if they did not protect the forests. The response from the out-of-work axemen was often extremely sympathetic.

For the women activists of the Chipko *andolan* there is a larger paradox involved: while on the one hand they are seeking alterations to their position in society, on the other hand they are supporting a social movement the basis of which is a resistance to change

In order to bring the Chipko message to isolated villages the only viable method of communication is still the *padayatra,* or footmarch. India has a long history of religious pilgrimages undertaken on foot to distant corners of the land. The method has also been used for communication purposes: in 1930, Gandhi walked from his *ashram* in Ahmedabad to the sea-side village of Dandi, some 320 km distant, to build support and



Sanjay Dasa

educate the people for the forthcoming battle centering on the oppressive salt-laws. The aim was to communicate with the villagers in the villages visited and more so to raise the political awareness in the country. This was possible because of the wide media coverage of the event. In the 1950s and 60s Vinoba Bhave walked 80,000 km from village to village, taking his request of land for the poor directly to wealthy landlords, and spreading the message of rural reorganization along Gandhian lines. This was not a publicity stunt but a means of communicating face to face with the masses. In the mountain regions there is often no other choice. Bahuguna, has commented that "It is our firm conviction that personal contact through *padayatras* would remain for all time to come, the best means of awakening mass consciousness, of reaching and touching the hearts of countless common people and activating their thought processes in support of the great social causes of our time."

On 2 April, 1981, Bahuguna commenced an eleven-day fast in Uttarkashi district, near the sources of the holy Ganga. The time of prayer and fasting culminated in a pledge to "continue the crusade against the destruction of nature until those stony hearted people who have turned a deaf ear to the swan song of the trees have turned." During this time he decided to walk the entire length of the Himalaya with his message. Many ridiculed the idea, but he saw it as the only possible way of teaching ecological concern through the hill regions. Besides, it was the most appropriate way of talking to people when part of the message was the need to return to an era when people lived in harmony with the land.

The message was to move beyond the boundaries of the Garhwal Himalaya. On Martyr's Day, 30 May, Bahuguna and 72-year-old *sarvodaya* worker, Rattan Chand Dehlu, and two young students from Uttarkashi, accompanied by Forestry Department officials, set out from the capital of Kashmir state. A year and a half later Bahuguna arrived at Kohima in Nagaland. He and various companions (Dhum Singh Negi covered most of the distance with him) had traversed 48.70 km in 300 walking days. (During the monsoon periods the walk was temporarily abandoned). The walk took the marchers over dangerous snow-bound passes and brought them into direct confrontation with contractors. Occasionally, suspicious villagers were openly hostile and Bahuguna likened the *padayatra* to "sowing seeds in the desert". The marchers spoke to villagers who would listen, they addressed meetings in schools and tried to draw the attention of the authorities to the ecological ruin they perceived. They prepared and submitted reports to various state governments on the situation in Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, the Uttar Pradesh hills, Nepal and the West Bengal hill areas. They also prepared a survey on resin tapping.

As the march progressed, official recognition and praise increased. Warm welcomes were accorded to marchers by senior officials. The Government of Bhutan made the accompaniment of the *padayatris* part of the official programme for its foresters. Various governors and chief ministers applauded the march and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent her personal best wishes. Reports from the epic march were presented at numerous conferences and seminars, including the UN Energy Conference in Nairobi in August 1981.

The Kashmir-Kohima foot-march brought the plight of the Himalaya home to all Indians. It raised the level of environmental debate around the country and gave the Chipko movement a new-found respectability and the middle-aged Bahuguna almost star status and the title of "gentle crusader".

* * *

In order to give people courage to fight for their trees, Chipko leaders fasted and recounted the story of previous actions where hardship and overwhelming odds were overcome in the battle for trees. One of the grandest of these stories, designed to put steel into the soul of the most timid villager, is the story of the Bishnoi woman, Amrita Devi. This story has featured in many Chipko pamphlets, was recounted to villagers and retold in press interviews. Bahuguna related the story to Richard St. Barbe Baker, who in turn, through his *Man of the Trees* newsletters, told it to the world. The story is a wonderful propaganda piece; it is about simple, religious-minded villagers laying down their lives for trees. It is almost guaranteed to instil pride in a forest heritage and make the listener determined to face the tree felling adversary with redoubled courage.

After witnessing hardships caused by an extended drought and the resultant deforestation, Jambhoji, the son of a village headman, had a vision of men quarrelling with nature as the cause of the hard times. In 1485, the founder of the Bishnoi sect (now known as Swami Jambeshwar Maharaj) laid down the 29

Sunderlal Bahuguna: relentless crusader



tenets of the faith which are still followed by the Bishnois of Rajasthan. The rules include a prohibition on the cutting of green trees (and especially the protection of the all important shade and fodder tree, the drought-resisting *khejari*), the wood conserving practice of burial (as opposed to the normal Hindu practice of cremation) and a ban on the killing of animals. Along with the growth of trees and a life of harmonious balance with the now protected wildlife, grass for cattle grew and the soil became increasingly fertile. The prosperity of the Bishnois increased as the desert spread in non-Bishnoi areas of Rajasthan.

There were early examples of Bishnois laying down their lives for trees. In 1604, in Ramsadi village, two Bishnoi women died to protect trees and, in 1643, a saint called Buchoji lost his life at Peelawas in a similar act of sacrifice. Such acts occasionally still continue, but the most inspiring example was the sacrifice of Amrita Devi and the massacre of Bishnois over 250 years ago.

The Bishnois had been taught from childhood to love trees; children had their own special trees that they would regualrly talk to and hug—and Amrita Devi was no different. One day in 1731, the peace in Jalnadi village, some 25 km from the Rajasthan town of Jodhpur, was broken when the Maharaja's axemen arrived.

The Maharaja of Jodhpur, Abhay Singh, had decided to build a new palace for himself and so dispatched Giridhar Das Bhandari and a detachment of men to fetch wood for his lime kiln. The Bishnoi village was surrounded by hundreds of trees. Bhandari ordered his men to cut the trees. When she saw the axemen approach, Amrita Devi rushed to the scene and begged them to stop. She explained the faith of the Bishnois. The king's men were unmoved, so Amrita Devi hugged the first tree marked for felling. She allegedly uttered the now well known couplet of the sect: "a chopped head is cheaper than a felled tree," as she was cut through by the angered axemen. As her dismembered body fell to the ground she was replaced, in turn, by her three daughters, who were also brutally killed. Bhandari withdrew to gather reinforcements. The Jalnadi villagers also sent out a call for assistance to the 84 surrounding Bishnoi villages—only one (to its eternal shame) did not respond.

When Bhandari's axemen returned there was a major confrontation. He warned the villagers that if they continued to resist, the axe would fall upon them also. But the Bishnois held firm. By the end of the day a further 359 people (294 men and 69 women) from forty-nine different villages had been butchered. Whole families had been wiped out.

The axemen had managed to secure only one-third of the required timber and the enraged Maharaja demanded an explanation. When he heard the ghastly story of the 363 villagers who had sacrificed their lives in order to prevent the work of the axemen from continuing, he immediately ordered a stop to the work on the palace and set out to visit the scene of destruction. As the full realization of what had happened impressed itself upon him, the fiery-tempered Maharaja underwent a change of heart. He apologized to the villagers and pledged that in the future the Bishnois would never again be called upon to provide timber, that no *khejari* tree would be cut and that there would be no hunting permitted around Bishnoi villages.

* * *

The Chipko *andolan* is often cited as being, primarily, a movement of illiterate hill women. A booklet on Chipko, which in reality is a history of the early activities of the Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh and a tribute to its leader Chandi Prasad Bhatt, is subtitled *Uttarkhand women's bid to save forest wealth*, and Sunderlal Bahuguna refers to himself as a "messenger of Chipko women." This perhaps, is a romanticisation of the position. Women are the key to the movement, they suffer most from the deforestation that the movement aims to stop, but perhaps one author was right when she pointed out that "women work only as the limbs of the movement, not as its brains."

In order to bring the Chipko message to isolated villages, the only viable method of communication is still the *padayatra*, or footmarch. Said Sunderlal Bahuguna: "It is our firm conviction that personal contact through *padayatras* would remain the best means of awakening the masses."

The backbone of the hill society is the village woman. She does most of the agricultural work. The planting, weeding and harvesting of crops, as well as the manuring of the soil, is entirely in her hands. The duty of the men is to spend two days in each cropping season preparing the land for sowing by bringing it under the plough. Besides tending the fields, women look after the children and the cattle. Much of the development in hill areas—the building of roads and schools, for instance—has had the side-effect of hastening the migration of the menfolk to the plains in search of work, leaving women to cope with strenuous village life alone. And, as the forests disappear, the hours spent gathering fuel and fodder increase, and as water sources dry up, due to the lack of adequate ground cover, the treks for water also become longer.

A survey of a village in the Chamoli district of Uttarkhand revealed that only the women went out to collect firewood and that they spent an average of over seven hours daily at the task and that the trek involved a steep five km climb.



Women activists of the Chipko movement cling to trees as a mark of protest; (inset) villagers are made aware of the ill-effects of deforestation


Sunil Gosh

fodder. On such days, it is not uncommon for women to set out before daybreak and to return after dark, or even to spend the night in the open.

During the early prohibition campaigns of the 1960s and later relief work following the floods and landslides of the early 1970s there was close contact between the male *sarvodaya* workers and the supporters of prohibition and the chief victims of the consequences of environmental disasters, generally the women. The message of the Chipko workers made a direct appeal to the hill women also. They could most easily see the connection "between their victimization and the denudation of mountain slopes by commercial interests. Thus, sheer survival made women support the movement."

One of the most famous of the early Chipko campaigns, the one to save the Reni forest near the Indo-Tibetan border in 1974, when the men were tricked into leaving the area, was successful due to the efforts of village women. Although circumstances forced the women to play the decisive role at Reni, the campaign itself was male-directed. Most of the other celebrated Chipko actions were similarly, in essence, male-dominated affairs—but not all of them. Many Chipko confrontations occurred spontaneously without any of the "leaders" of the movement being present and often the actions were those of women acting on their own.

In the Bhyunder Valley of Chamoli district, near the famous Valley of Flowers, in January 1978, women prevented the felling of trees to meet the fuel needs of the quarter million pilgrims that annually visit the nearby Badrinath temple. The men of Bhyundar village refused to fell the trees, so the Forest Department gave the contract to a cooperative society from a nearby village. The women "stole" the labourers' axes and refused to give them back until they had agreed to return home.

Following their success in stopping poaching from the Gopeshwar community forest in 1975, the women set up their own cooperative society. Such women's societies *mahila mandals* - are now active in several villages and have become an increasing source of strength for the environmental movement. The Gopeshwar Mahila Mandal, for example, ensures the success of its aim of forest protection by employing a watchwoman. The women supervise and regulate the extraction of forest produce required for day-to-day survival so that the trees are not harmed. Any violation of the rules is proceeded against by way of a fine, the proceeds being placed in a common fund. Further infringements can result in the confiscation of tools.

In 1980, the actions of women in the Chipko movement took a qualitatively different turn and marked a new development in the movement as a whole. Women had previously risen up to protect their last remaining reserves of fodder and fuel from the axemen of industrial concerns or of the Forest Department but at Dungari-Paitoli village they confronted their own development and profit-hungry husbands and sons for the first time.

It is not yet clear what position women will ultimately take in the movement, but to call the Chipko *andolan* a women's movement is only correct in a limited sense


Sanjeet Das

Another survey, by an economics lecturer at Garhwal University in Srinagar, found that the working day of the hill woman is around 17 hours long and that about half this time goes into the collecting of fuel and fodder and fetching water—activities that are closely tied to the proximity of forests. Where the distances are great, collection days are set aside for the gathering of wood and

In 1978, the Government's horticulture department came to an agreement with the all-male village *panchayat* for the acquisition of the nearby community forest so that they could establish a potato seed farm. In return the villagers were to receive employment during the construction phase of the project, and later at the completed farm itself, a motor road would link the village to the outside world, a health centre would be established, the primary school upgraded to a secondary school and electricity would come to Dungari-Paitoli for the first time. An impressive bundle of benefits for the cost of merely a few trees. Or at least so it seemed to the menfolk who hold the power in village society and who do not have to spend long hours searching for the daily necessities that only the forest can provide. The loss of the forest would have meant a walk of seven km as opposed to two, for the collection of fodder and fuel. Bhatt and other DGSS workers tried to explain the implications of development and the importance of conservation to the villagers. Only the women listened. They decided to save the trees and asked the Chipko activists for help. The men were infuriated by the "outrageous" behaviour of their women. They insisted that the women confine themselves to their own business and threatened Bhatt and the Chipko workers with dire consequences if they dared enter the village again.

On 9 February, 1980, without the direction of any Chipko "leaders" a large meeting of village women held a Chipko demonstration and prevented any felling from taking place. Nine days later, the Government ordered felling in the area to be stopped and soon thereafter a ban on further cutting was put into force.



Chipko leaders hold a meeting in a village: spreading the message

It is easy for the hill women to see what is happening around them. The drudgery and their life as quasi-widows while the men work on the plains below are not new to them. Their heavy and increasing workload means that there is often little time left for the care of children. Bharat Dogra even reports cases of women having to lock children in rooms or tying them to cots if there is no one else to look after them when work takes them far from the village. He records the case of a child burnt to death in the family hearth in such circumstances and documents the case of seven women from Punsora village, near Tehri, who committed mass suicide by jumping into a mountain river because they could no longer bear the misery of their lives.

Many attempts at development in hill areas have failed in respect of creating a better life for women because of the inherent position of women in society. Commercial felling has led to an impoverishment of the soil, while better communications and educational opportunities, along with the convenience of roads, have taken increasing numbers of men from the hills. The women have no say, they stay behind and their work increases. Before the action to save the Advani forest, when the Government sent experts in forest science to "teach" forestry to the uneducated women holding up the work, Bahuguna relates, they were welcomed with lanterns in broad daylight.

Loans, subsidies, seeds and fertilisers provided by various schemes are distributed against land holdings—which are always in the name of household heads (the men). The men are often on the plains, and without their authorization, these benefits will not go to the cultivators (the women). New techniques of agricultural production and new energy technologies such as improved wood stoves and biogas plants have not yet caught on, at least in part, because the women have not been consulted. Men have little interest in spending family cash resources on projects which barely concern them.

Development means different things to different people. In the context of Himalayan villages, this becomes increasingly clear. Priorities depend on who is asked, and when village councils and household heads are all male, when the traditional structure discourages women from being forward in expressing their demands, from participating in Chipko meetings and ecodevelopment camps, and when their workload further makes such activities impractical, village priorities will be set by men. Further, the men as leaders are more likely to respect and fear the Government as the national leader. From interactions with officials they know the power of the Government and because of their respect for authority believe it wrong to oppose Government policies. The Chipko workers then are faced not only with conflicts between classes, or between town and rural interests, they must also



come to terms with a gender conflict.

When villagers are asked by Chipko activists what trees they want planted, the common reply from the men is that they desire fruit trees. Where women voice their views, the answer is fuel and fodder trees. They claim that cash crop trees mean little to them: the profits often go into liquor and tobacco for the menfolk. Chipko-organized tree plantation drives regularly show a survival rate for the saplings around the eighty to ninety per cent mark, significantly higher than the twenty-five to fifty per cent that government plantations can boast. The chief cause of this seems to be that where women have a stake in the process, as the Chipko workers try to ensure that they have, they will nurture the trees and ensure their survival. Their cooperation, then, is vital to any reforestation attempt. Generally the Chipko organizers manage to effect a compromise where both fuel/fodder and fruit trees are planted to ensure the retained interest of all sections of the village.

The mobilization of women in the Chipko *andolan* has resulted in a situation of conflict regarding their own status in society. As they increasingly demand a share in decision-making processes, their involvement with the Chipko movement has generated some opposition. A Chipko village leader has claimed that ninety per cent of women and ten per cent of men are with him while ninety per cent of men and ten per cent of women oppose him. For women there is a large paradox involved here—while on the one hand, they are seeking alterations to their position in society, on the other hand, they are supporting a social movement the basis of which in many ways is a resistance to change.

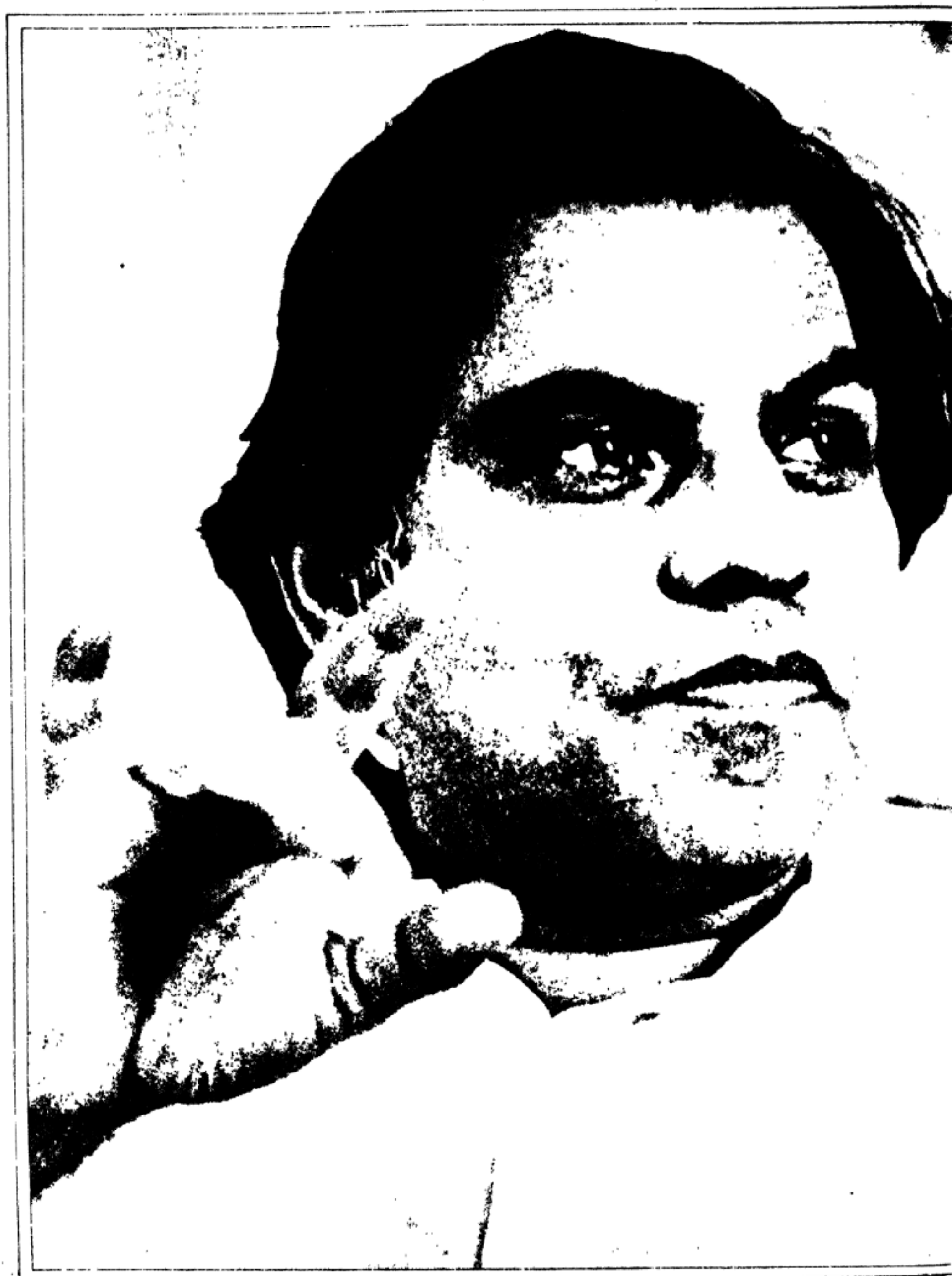
Where this will lead is unclear; however, the women leaders of some Chipko actions have had to pay a high social price. Gaura Devi, of Reni fame, has reportedly had a difficult life since her actions and the resultant publicity challenged vested interests. The victory at Dungari-Paitoli has left horticulture department officials and influencial men of the village bitter against the women and other Chipko activists.

As Shobita Jain, in an article on women's role in the *andolan*, points out, what the movement's leaders say about women's participation in its campaigns and activities is both an idealized and simplified image of reality. "This idealization, has, in turn, led to an unrealistic belief that the participation of women in the development process can be achieved by a mere ideological commitment and a few organizational devices ..The release of spontaneity and creativity on the part of rural women in Garhwal is chiefly a by-product of actions initiated at grass-roots level by the *sarvodaya* workers to increase people's awareness about the environment. At present", she continues, "these workers and their leaders face a problem of handling an unforeseen, release of women power in this area." This power may be vital in order to deal with ecological problems and to ensure the introduction of appropriate technologies; unfortunately existing programmes concerned with women's development tend to use a top-down approach where final control rests with planners and policy makers.

A real change in the social and political situation of women will require alternative approaches that replace the traditional power structure. Much of the work of the Chipko *andolan* is founded on the empowerment of women. However, Jain warns that "even supporters of the Chipko movement and its leaders are not free from traditional constraints." It is not yet exactly clear what position women will ultimately take in the movement as it moves into new areas and takes on new priorities. To call what we have known as the Chipko *andolan* a women's movement is only correct in a restricted sense. It may partly, or even largely, have been a movement of women—but not by women.

The Chipko *andolan* is often cited as being, primarily, a movement of illiterate hill women. Women are the key to the movement, they suffer most from the deforestation that the movement aims to stop, but perhaps one author was right when she pointed out that "women work only as the limbs of the movement, not as its brains"

Hugging the Trees by Thomas Weber. A Viking publication, Penguin Books (India) Ltd. New Delhi. Price Rs 125



Desperately seeking Antulay

Look for megalomania, not corruption

With the return of Abdul Rehman Antulay, 59, to the Congress(I) fold, journalists in Bombay can have the dubious pleasure of attending the former chief minister's unique press conferences. Generally, these follow a set pattern. Hacks are provided with heavy snacks which they wolf down till the great man is ready to speak.

And speak he does. "Friends," he declaims, "we are gathered here today by the grace of the Almighty God—that is, capital 'G' not small 'g'—to discuss a matter that I comma speaking for myself comma again regard as one of vital importance— no, you may say *great* importance —to the polity of our young but also comma in many ways comma quite old country that is, you may like to mention, called India."

This dictation of deathless sentences continues for half an hour, at the end of which those journalists who have not had their brains tied into knots by Antulay's prose are invited to ask questions. Usually, the questions have to do with the great man's future and he gives the same answer to each.

"Oh yes, I think this is a very good question that you have chosen to ask me today. Take down (pause to stab air with stubby finger). The darkest hour is that which precedes, that is, p-r-e-c-e-d-e-s not presides, the dawn as I and my beloved, you may say late, leader comma Shrimati Indira Gandhi have always said, since time immemorial."

That most of Antulay's press conferences consist of hefty doses of this gibberish is often commented on. What the critics usually miss is that this penchant for high-flown nonsense and the irritating tendency to treat journalists as stenographers is only a symptom of a more serious malady: megalomania. Antulay takes himself *very* seriously, indeed. When journalists do as they are told and quote his gibberish verbatim then he, himself, is often angered by how idiotic he sounds. Eight years ago, he proclaimed loftily to journalist Behram Contractor: "We are all passages of birds." Contractor, determined to preserve the cadence of the great man's prose, decided not to correct the cliche. When it appeared in print and diffident minions pointed out to Antulay that, perhaps, he had got it a little wrong, he flew into a rage. "You may," he informed Contractor imperiously, "attack me. But never," and here his voice rose dangerously, "*never* make fun of me."

Those who miss Antulay's megalomania ignore the key to his entire personality. It is now fashionable to regard him as India's most corrupt politician but this is clearly untrue. Antulay probably did take money from builders but then, over the last 20 years, nearly every Maharashtra chief minister (except two: S.B. Chavan who was too upright and Baba saheb Bhosale who was too stupid) has taken as much, if not more.

Antulay's problem was that he thought he could do it openly and get away with it. To this day he sees nothing wrong in making builders pay for favours by donating money to trusts. After all, he argues, he took the money by cheque and intended to use it for worthy causes. Surely, that's a lot better than taking it in cash and spending it on oneself? Nobody can dispute that point but the tragedy of Antulay is that he fails to see that both approaches are wrong.

In a sense, his perspective is shaped by his background. Born to an extremely poor family in Maharashtra's Konkan region, he educated himself and beat the odds by ending up in London at the Inns of Court. When he returned to India as a barrister his world view was circumscribed by the tough and-ready attitude common to many self-made men. Determined to make it in politics, he attached himself to Rajni Patel, then Bombay's Congress chief. Patel sent him to Delhi as AICC general secretary where he switched mentors, trading Patel in for Sanjay Gandhi.

He was Sanjay's candidate for the Maharashtra chief ministership and arrived in Bombay, his mind set on "getting things done". He failed to perceive that this approach was particularly unsuited to a city like Bombay and was bemused when the press told him that he was wrong to summarily transfer any civil servant who disagreed with him. "But it is my prerogative," he would repeat, bewildered.

When it came to collecting money, Antulay's megalomania took over completely. While the Dadas and the Pawars had raised funds discreetly, Antulay was blatant. Like many poor boys who had made good, he was appalled by the kind of money floating around Bombay and thrilled by his power over those who raked it in. He began to think of himself as a kind of Robin Hood who would redistribute this wealth "justly" and "fairly". At no stage did it occur to him that he had no business redistributing anything and that he certainly had no right to sell bags of cement, no matter how lofty his intentions.

It would be nice to think that six years in obscurity have knocked some of the megalomania out of him but his recent statements suggest otherwise. He still sees himself as a feudal overlord than a democratic politician and the slightest joke about his trusts is enough to launch him into a blind rage. (Last year, Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi destroyed him at *The Telegraph* Debate with a single mild jibe.)

All in all, this is a pity because Antulay has his strengths. Despite being a Muslim politician in a Hindu state (a factor which contributed to his fall), he has never played the communal card. As an administrator, he was imaginative. And as a minister, he was straightforward and decisive.

Unfortunately, none of these strengths have helped him re-enter the Congress(I). He has been re-admitted only to show the Muslims that the party still supports their cause: a considerable comedown for a politician whose greatest strength is still his secularism.

Vir Sanghvi

"You may," he proclaimed loftily, "attack me. But never," and here his voice rose dangerously, "*never* make fun of me"

For better or verse

Will Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses *be banned in India?*

"What is truth, said jesting Pilate and would not stop for an answer." Francis Bacon

Nor, it seems, would Syed Shahabuddin, MP. Recently, the irate champion of Islam has come out with a public statement condemning Salman Rushdie's latest novel, *Satanic Verses*, for indulging in "blasphemy against the Prophet and Islam". Not content with expressing his own opinions, he has also urged the government to denounce the novel and impose a ban on its import.

But does this display of fire and brimstone have any basis in knowledge? Has Shahabuddin managed to go through the 500 odd pages of this contentious book? "No, I have not," he told SUNDAY. "It is not necessary to read the book. I've seen the detailed review in *India Today* together with the short excerpt. I've also read what the author himself has said about the book in the interview in SUNDAY. That is enough—it's not necessary to go into a detailed reading of this book."

Shahabuddin's reaction may or may not typify that of the Muslim community in India, but it was certainly anticipated by one man—Khushwant Singh. As an editorial adviser to Penguin Books India, Singh says he was given a copy of the manuscript of Rushdie's book, supposedly for publication/distribution in India. A careful reading left him convinced that was lethal material.

"I read the manuscript very carefully and I was positive it would cause a lot of trouble," said Singh. "There are several derogatory references to the Prophet and the Koran. Muhammad is made out to be a small-time impostor." Naturally, Khushwant Singh is not in the least bit surprised at Shahabuddin's statement. "The Muslims in India can be very touchy."

And what about the potential loss of profit for Penguin India? Doesn't Singh feel any twinges on that count? Not at all. "This book is not likely to sell in India," he asserts. "Chances are that the Indian government will give in to pressure from the Muslims and ban the book. And if we happened to be the publishers we would probably have a mob on our doorsteps."

Obviously, such anticipation of violence seemed quite far-fetched to the nobs of Penguin UK who did finally publish the book. According to Khushwant Singh, Peter Mayer, Chairman of the Penguin Group, was quite appalled at Singh's reaction, and had several long-distance conversations with him on the telephone. But many months after that Khushwant Singh still holds firm that he did the right thing in turning the book down for publication in India. He even anticipates trouble in England from the Indian Muslim residents. And if Salman Rushdie cannot see how a book can cause riots, then he obviously has no idea of the Indian reality!

That, however, is not the end of the matter, even though it may be the heart of it. Both David Davidar, Associate Editor of Penguin India and Zamir Ansari, in charge of marketing, Penguin Overseas, have jumped into the fray. Both assert that the notion of the *Satanic Verses* being offered to Penguin India for publication is an absurd one.

"All our books originate in India—this one originated in England," explains Davidar. "Besides, how could we possibly offer the kind of money Peter Mayer eventually paid for this book?"

As to whether the paperback edition of the *Satanic Verses* will be eventually marketed in India by Penguin, Zamir Ansari of Penguin Overseas absolutely refuses to be pinned down. "How can I say what will happen a year from now?" He also stresses the big financial factors like royalty repatriation, which made it impossible for the book to be published as an original in India. But there are booksellers and distributors all over India who are agents for Viking/Penguin books from abroad. And they may still go ahead and market the current hardcover edition unless the government imposes a ban.

Ansari, however, deplores all the noise and thunder being created by Shahabuddin. "All comments at this stage are premature. There is not a single copy of the book in India," he declares. As for controversy, "Yes sure, any book could contain passages that will create problems if taken out of context." And there is always someone only too ready to do so. "People like Shahabuddin can't even wait to read the book, people like him never wait—they are a breed apart," says Ansari.

Whether the government imposes a ban on the book or not a wide readership of the *Satanic Verses* is probably ensured—given the unresolved questions that surround it. But the truth—whether in terms of religious heresy, or the moves and countermoves of publication—will continue to elude even those who wait patiently for an answer.

Chitrita Banerji



(From left to right) Syed Shahabuddin, Salman Rushdie and Khushwant Singh: differing views

Says Khushwant Singh, "I read the manuscript very carefully and I was positive it would cause a lot of trouble. There are several derogatory references to the Prophet and the Koran. Muhammad is made out to be a small-time impostor"

SUNDAY WEEK

BEGINNING 2 OCTOBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) This is a week of mixed fortunes. Creative artists and writers are likely to gain recognition. Not a favourable period for businessmen to undertake new ventures, financial losses are likely But do not lose heart—pursue your affairs with determination The time is not favourable for matrimonial alliances. Keep an eye on your health and that of your family
Good dates: 4, 5 and 6
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: West



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) You will need to exercise your will power this week Have confidence in yourself and let your common sense be your guide Be cautious of financial deals Do not be disheartened if your ventures do not turn out to be successful Your emotional problems are likely to be solved this week The time is good for matrimonial alliances but do not be in a hurry to complete arrangements
Good dates: 2, 4 and 6
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 8
Favourable direction: South-east



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) The first half of the week will be favourable New opportunities are in the offing although there may be some setbacks later on Do not lose heart—your patience will be ultimately rewarded. Curb your impulsiveness and attend to your responsibilities Businessmen are advised not to undertake a deal in haste Do not get into controversies with your colleagues and superiors
Good dates: 3, 5 and 7
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: North



CANCER (21 June—20 July) For creative artists, the week is very favourable For others too, this will be a successful week Push ahead with new ideas and ventures The domestic front will not be very peaceful You will be required to exercise all your tact and diplomacy at home. Do not give vent to your anger on any account It might have disastrous consequences The health of your family will cause you some anxiety.
Good dates: 4, 6 and 8
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 6
Favourable direction: North east



LEO (21 July—20 August) A very favourable week lies ahead of you. There will be changes. For those in service a promotion is likely New opportunities are in the offing for the unemployed Businessmen are likely to gain financially However, tact will be required to maintain peace on the domestic front The health of your family will need a great deal of attention
Good dates: 2, 4 and 5
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: West



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) Marriage alliances and affairs of the heart are likely to suffer setbacks this week Otherwise this is a fairly good week Your work demands some more initiative on your part The domestic front does not look too good However, do not let it affect the tranquility of your mind A small mistake might cost you dearly. Keep an eye on the health of your family members
Good dates: 3, 5 and 6
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: South



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) Creative artists will gain recognition and respect this week. Those in service will probably have to face a lot of opposition from employers and people of rank Do not be extravagant. A sudden news will trouble you For those in business a legal suit will hamper your prospects Those involved in research and higher studies will get better opportunities Courtship and marriage will progress
Good dates: 4, 6 and 7
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) Get rid of mental worries Try to seize the opportunities that come your way this week A long overdue matter will near its completion Creative artists will be helped by patrons Take care of your health. For unemployed young men jobs will be forthcoming in the very near future A letter or news about a relative or a loved one will trouble you Accept responsibilities.
Good dates: 5, 7 and 8
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South-west



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) There will be steady progress in your career Those in independent professions will be suitably rewarded Those in politics will face some trouble from opponents However, all the troubles will be overcome A promotion or transfer is likely for those in service. Marriage is in the offing for some Take care of your health and that of elders
Good dates: 2, 3 and 6
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: East



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) Your prospects for this week are excellent in every respect Those in service will gain recognition from employers Intellectuals will suffer indignities because of some mistake on their parts Those employed in the sphere of mass communications, especially women writers, will enjoy recognition and prominence This is not the ideal time for pursuing matrimonial negotiations
Good dates: 3, 4 and 7
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: North



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) Curb extravagant and erratic tendencies Try to exercise patience—otherwise your career might suffer setbacks There might be illness in the family, so take adequate precautions Those who are still unemployed might find a job this week Do not antagonise employers and elderly persons Friends will be of help Children will bring joy
Good dates: 4, 5 and 8
Lucky numbers: 1, 4 and 7
Favourable direction: South



PISCES (21 February—20 March) There will be steady progress for some A long overdue matter will come to an end and will be favourable for you Some will gain property and money Exercise caution in all spheres Do not be suspicious—it might be your undoing Those in service will be rewarded with a promotion This week is specially significant for those in the judiciary Affairs of the heart will progress well
Good dates: 3, 6 and 8
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 9
Favourable direction: West

Star Partners: Pisces-Leo

The Leo woman's expectations are unreasonably high A relatively weak man may fail to live up to them and thus become an object of her disdain. They must learn to be more understanding towards each other The Pisces man must deal patiently with his wife's more demanding nature

Bathtub library

Only Sam Pitroda could do it. For quite some time the external affairs ministry has been functioning from the plush ITDC-run Akbar Hotel in the capital. The suave diplomats of the foreign service were more than happy and are known to be unwilling to move back to South Block. But recently, when some offices of the Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT) moved into Akbar Hotel, its staff faced a peculiar problem: they were at a loss as to what to do with so many bathrooms. While a few

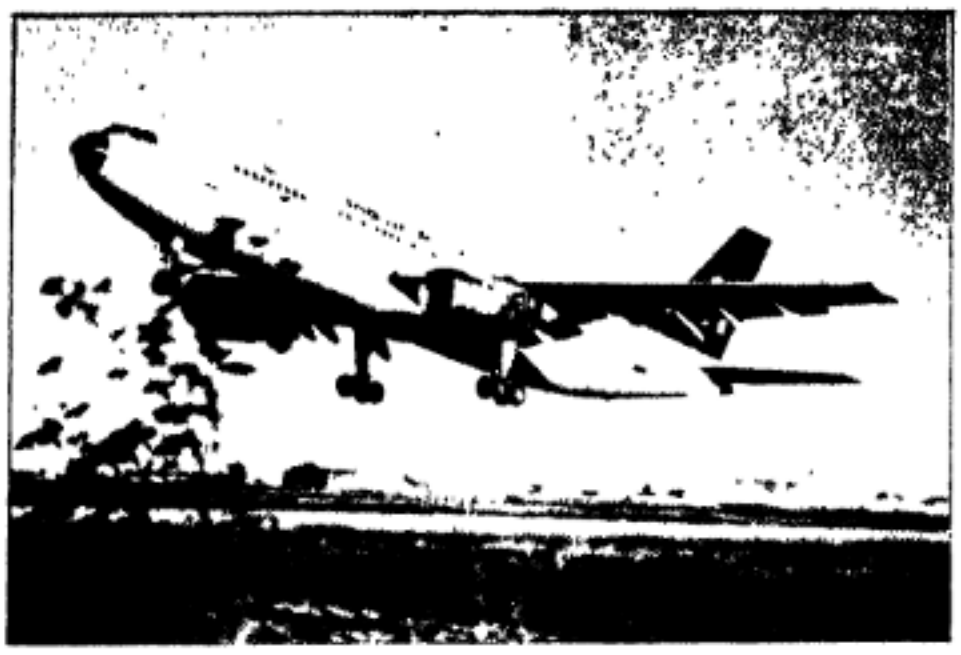


toilets would have sufficed for the C-DoT staff, they found a toilet attached to every office room.

But trust the Prime Minister's technology adviser to come up with a brilliant idea: to use the bathrooms as libraries! The bathtubs, he said, would serve the purpose of holding books and files. And the C-DoT officials who look up to whiz-kid Pitroda, were happy. Talk of ingenuity!

Flying menace

A crashlanding which flattens out the underbelly of an aircraft, poor maintenance, technical snags resulting in cancelled flights—these are the usual reasons for most airlines incurring



An IA jet taking off: feathered menace

fairly hefty losses the world over. But the underbelly of Indian Airlines' bottom line is taking a fair amount of knocking for an altogether different reason: bird hits! In just 75 days—from July to 15 September this year—IA incurred a loss of Rs 1.6 crores as a result of 45 bird hits on its Boeing 737 and Airbus aircraft at airports all over the country, especially during takeoffs.

The planes are struck by the birds mainly in the leading edge, windscreen and the engine blades. Replacement of a damaged blade of an Airbus requires a cool Rs 1 lakh in foreign exchange. Obviously, the mechanical birds and their feathered counterparts are not made for each other.

For a ticket...

It was a missed flight — literally. The lone Indian delegate of the Coffee Board who was to attend the 'Other Milds' international coffee meet in Ecuador on 5-6 September, could not make his presence felt: for want of



an air ticket! The delegate was booked on Swiss Air from Bombay to New York and onwards. Unfortunately, the coffee expert could not get a ticket for the Bangalore-Bombay Indian Airlines flight on 31 August despite running from pillar to post and, as a result, missed the international flight.

According to coffee industry circles, India thus missed an excellent opportunity to gauge the mood of coffee producing heavyweights like Brazil and Colombia. And the blame can only be laid on the commerce ministry bureaucrats who cleared the official's trip just 12 hours before he was due to enplane

THIS INDIA

• NEW DELHI: A woman constable on duty at the Subzi Mandi police station was reportedly drunk. To her misfortune, the assistant commissioner turned up at the police station, only to find her in an inebriated condition. She was suspended immediately. When her colleagues tried to intervene on her behalf, they too were suspended—*Indian Express* (M.K. Koul, Srinagar)

• JALANDHAR A letter from Birmingham in Britain took a record time of 25 years to reach its addressee in a village in this district! The letter posted on 10 September, 1963, at Birmingham was delivered on 1 June this year—*The Tribune* (S.M. Mehta, New Delhi)

• NEW DELHI: A Sarojini Nagar housewife accustomed to paying between Rs 160 and Rs 180 for electricity per month, recently received a computerised bill for Rs 98,802.07 for the month of August! The lady resides in a two-room flat. When the computer billing company was approached, it admitted that the computer had made a mistake—*The Hindustan Times* (O.P Bajaj, Jabalpur)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

A windfall

It was a least expected bonanza. When Buta Maya, a shepherd in drought-hit Gujarat, decided to take his sheep and goats to Aurangabad in Maharashtra in search of water and fodder, little had he realised that his return journey would see him Rs 15,000 and 15 sheep richer.

When Buta Maya was returning to his village in Gujarat on hearing of the onset of monsoon, calamity struck him. Twenty of his cattle died when they consumed water in Aurangabad's in-



dustrial estate. Maya was understandably aggrieved, but only for a while. The 150 owners of the chemical units in the estate contributed a hefty Rs 15,000, together with 12 healthy sheep bought from the local market.

And Maya went back to Aurangabad a richer man.

Illustrations Debashis Deb

In MGR's footsteps

M.G. Ramachandran had a habit of reshuffling party posts and government jobs among his followers. Jayalalitha, the fiery AIADMK leader, has proved that she is not far behind.

Already, she is busy cutting party functionaries to size, who she felt posed a threat to her. For instance, important district secretaries 'Salem' Kannan and Sedapatti Muthiah have suffered 'demotions' by having their wings clipped by Madam. All Jayalalitha has done is give important portfolios to her chosen people.

The ploy was, according to her critics in the AIADMK, to make such key functionaries spend considerable time in Madras, away from their centres, of power in the hometowns, so that her loyalists consolidated their own hold in those territories. But criticism does not seem to bother her for she is convinced that the men around her—as had happened during the good old days of MGR—are nothing without her. And she would not like to leave persons with doubtful loyalties occupy strategic positions in the districts when the tickets for the coming Assembly elections are distributed.

Another complaint one hears these days is that people close to Ms Jayalalitha are collecting hefty prices to dispense party posts. Districts are being bifurcated for the purposes of creating more slots for district secretaries, joint secretaries and other functionaries after collecting suitable amounts from the appointees, it is alleged. Insiders say that the lady is carefully tucking away such collections into a separate fund which will come in handy when the polls arrive and no rich partners are found from Delhi to share the expenses.



Jayalalitha: high-handed?

Arjun Singh does away with protocol

Chief minister Arjun Singh seems to have dispensed with the practice of protocol. Recently when his counterpart in Gujarat, Amarsinh Chaudhary, visited Madhya Pradesh to attend a function in Vidisha district, no minister or official of the state government turned up at the airport to receive him. Nor did the state government provide a car for Chaudhary's visit. In fact, the jeep in which the Gujarat chief minister travelled from Vidisha to Bhopal to take the return flight was provided by Pratap Bhanu Sharma, the MP from Vidisha.



Singh: indifferent?

Normally, a chief minister is supposed to be the state guest while on visits to other states. State hospitality is extended and protocol observed even if a Congress CM visits an Opposition-ruled state or vice versa. Then why Singh's indifferent behaviour towards a fellow Congressman?

An eye on the CM's post?

While the Congress(I) high command is still in two minds about whether or not to replace the chief minister of Gujarat, Amarsinh Chaudhary, Janata leader George Fernandes has made up his mind about who the next incumbent will be. According to Fernandes, the Congress is sure to receive a drubbing at the hustings in the next elections and then the only person who will be able to take over the reins of the state's administrative machinery is Chiman Patel, the president of the state unit of the Janata Party.

Patel, leader of the Opposition in the present Assembly, has been very active recently. He was in the forefront of the farmers' agitation for crop insurance dues and the traders' stir against turnover tax. Are his present efforts directed at wooing the masses with an eye on the CM's chair?

Why Bommai said 'no' to Alexander

Why is Karnataka chief minister S.R. Bommai so much against any settlement on the long standing Cauvery water dispute? Because, he feels, it might lead Congressmen in Tamil Nadu to take the credit for any breakthrough and subsequently use it for their propaganda in the ensuing Assembly elections. These Congressmen have been in the habit of patting their own backs for any good work done by the Governor during President's Rule now on in the state, Bommai is said to have pointed out to a friend during his visit to Madras for the launch of the National Front on 17 September. This is why when Bommai met Tamil Nadu Governor P.C. Alexander on 19 September to discuss the Cauvery water dispute between the two states, he had already made up his mind to say 'no' to any request for release of water to the thirsty ryots across the border. "I shall wait for an elected government to be formed in Tamil Nadu before discussing Cauvery with anybody," Bommai is reported to have said.



Bommai: shrewd tactics

DELHI DIARY

D.E. NIZAMUDDIN

Rama Swaroop cries freedom

Why is the famed double agent Rama Swaroop suddenly crying hoarse about press freedom? Thanks to the Defamation Bill controversy, Swaroop, currently under 'house arrest, thinks that his freedom is as great an issue as the freedom of the press. In a recent circular, Swaroop has appealed to certain journalists in the capital to rescue him in the name of press freedom. In the pathetic appeal, Swaroop has listed the many injustices perpetrated against him by Rajiv's government culminating in his house arrest. He then claims he is suffering for a crime he never committed and hopes that the press will take up his case in a big way. As Swaroop points out in his circular, his freedom and press freedom are two casualties of this government



Rakesh Saha

Swaroop: unfair treatment?

Is Bhagwat Jha Azad going?

Being appointed a Congress(I) CM is easier than staying one. Months after taking over as Bihar CM, Bhagwat Jha Azad is already facing a serious threat to his leadership. Apart from his strained relations with the Assembly Speaker S.C. Jha, who was an aspirant for the CM's post, Azad does not seem to be getting along with the PCC(I) chief, Tariq Anwar, any more. Anwar had resigned from the post of chairman of the 20-point programme implementation committee in protest against the slow progress the state had been making in enforcing the 20-point programme. Earlier, when Anwar had resigned from the post of chairman of Bihar's Small Scale Industries Corporation, the then CM Jagannath Mishra was forced to quit Anwar's resignation from the 20-point programme committee post this time is definitely aimed at giving the CM a jolt. Will Azad have to quit like Mishra, soon?



Azad: rough weather

Now, gossip for the tube

Mandi House will in the near future be resorting to gossip to improve its bland fare. According to director-general Bhaskar Ghosh, Doordarshan will soon be having a 'gossip' programme on its channel two- the *mirch masala* fare is aimed at increasing viewership. The strategy, one believes, is to upstage the print media after all, quips Ghosh, if magazines and newspapers can carry [illegible]



Ghosh: for *mirch masala* fare

snippets like 'did you know what Mr X was doing that evening?' so can Doordarshan. One wonders to what extent the programme can be used against political opponents of the ruling party

On an equal footing

Here's some good news for the spouses of MPs. Under the existing rules as framed by the members' amenities committee, wives of Lok Sabha MPs can travel three times free to and from their husbands' constituencies. Hitherto wives of Rajya Sabha members were in a better position. They could travel back and forth from their husbands' constituencies four times a year. This had always been a sore point with the spouses of the Lok Sabha members. Now the Delhi grapevine has it that the members' amenities committee has decided that both will be equal in the eyes of the government. Not only that but the much cherished "free travel" will not be restricted to trips to and from constituencies but will be from any point to any point.

Raising dust over *sati*

The recent Doordarshan programme on *sati* has created quite a furore in ruling party circles. Even the high command, it is believed, was peeved with information and broadcasting secretary Gopi Arora, who gave the go-ahead for the telecast of the programme. Those who like to create controversies at the highest level are busy wondering how two references criticising the government's stand on the Shah Bano controversy were allowed to go through unedited. Apparently, the real message of the programme - that it was a powerful and much-needed comment on the abhorrent practice of *sati* - seemed to have been buried in the maelstrom.



Arora: facing the music

Jagdish Yadav

Take the world in your stride.



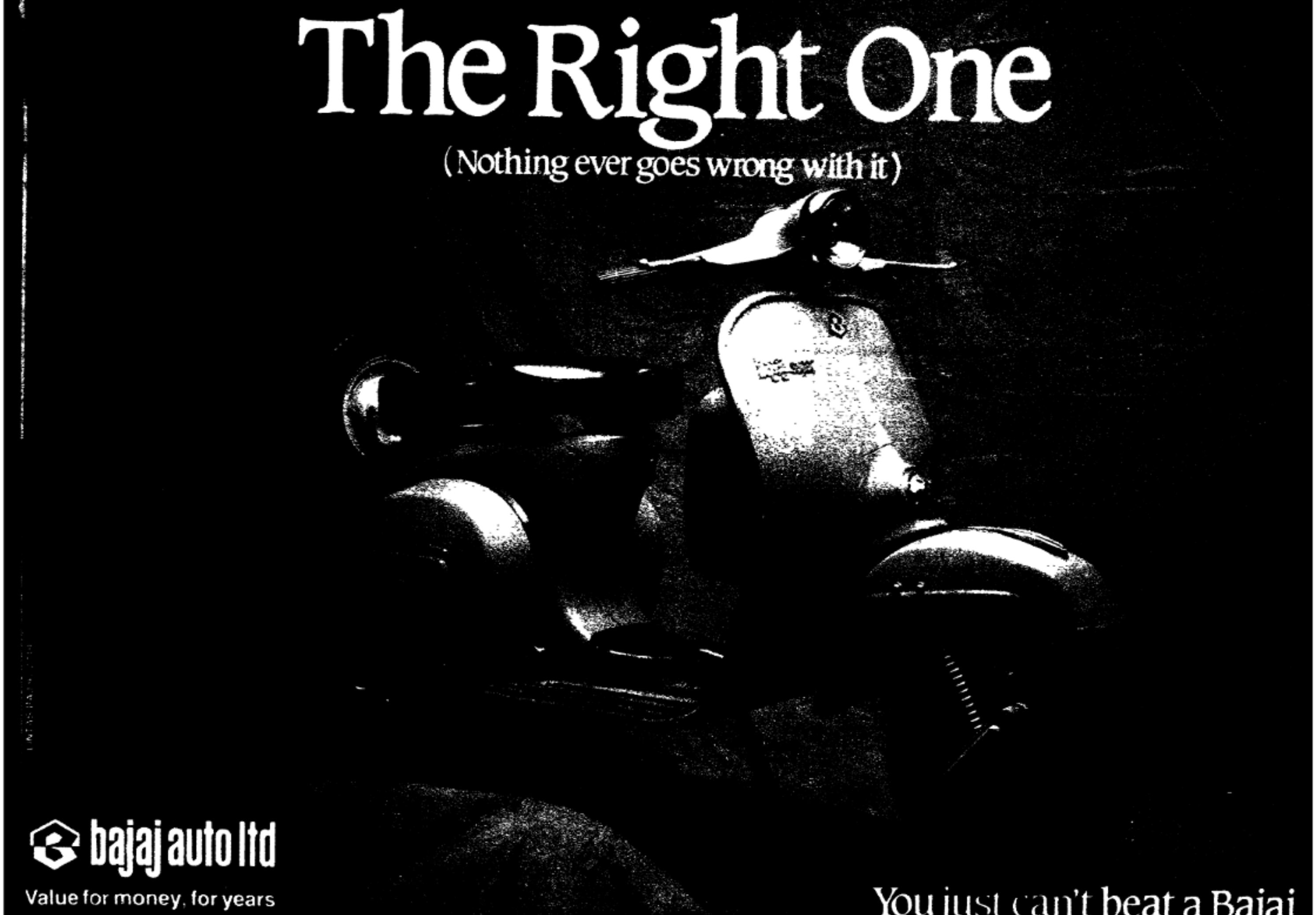
dinesh

Exclusives ▲ Suitings ▲ Co-ordinates ▲ Safaris

The choice of leading fashion houses, internationally.

The Right One

(Nothing ever goes wrong with it)



bajaj auto ltd

Value for money, for years

You just can't beat a Bajaj

9—15 October 1988 | An Ananda Bazar Publication | Rs 6 00

N.D. TEWARI VS VEER BAHADUR SINGH: BATTLE STATIONS IN UP

SUNDAY



P. Shiv Shankar



P.V. Narasimha Rao



P. Chidambaram



Buta Singh

The Gang of Four

The caucus that *really* runs India

The new ONIDA.
Nothing can touch it...except the glance of envy.

When admiration takes on the colour of envy and hands tighten around objects that can be hurled, may be once again there's a new ONIDA on the horizon

Yes, the new ONIDA is here with the bewitching 'Cube' look! Magic of technology captured within a fully moulded, exquisite cabinet, and an exotic black tube Devilish good looks, with features slightly beyond the reach of the times Yes, it has everything poised at your fingertips waiting for action

But before you unleash it all, don't forget, Envy waits at the wings So, heed this old word of wisdom Love thy neighbour, but guard thy ONIDA

ONIDA. Neighbour's envy. Owner's pride.



CONTENTS

VOLUME 15 · ISSUE 46 · RS 6.00

SUNDAY

AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

9—15 OCTOBER 1988

COVER STORY **24**

THE GANG OF FOUR

A new caucus calls the shots in Delhi's corridors of power. The power-brokers in this group are P. Chidambaram, P. Shiv Shankar, Buta Singh and P.V. Narasimha Rao. What accounts for their influence?

SPECIAL REPORT **12**

BATTLE STATIONS IN UP

Former chief minister Veer Bahadur Singh and the present chief minister, Naram Dutt Tiwari, are battling it out for supremacy —and the loser will be the Congress(I)

SUNDAY SPECIAL **42**

ALL THAT GLITTERS



A new breed of Congress women MPs enters Parliament. Do they have more style than substance?

NEWSBEAT **45**

A LOST HERITAGE

The communal riots in Bidar, Karnataka, have driven a wedge between the Hindus and the Sikhs.

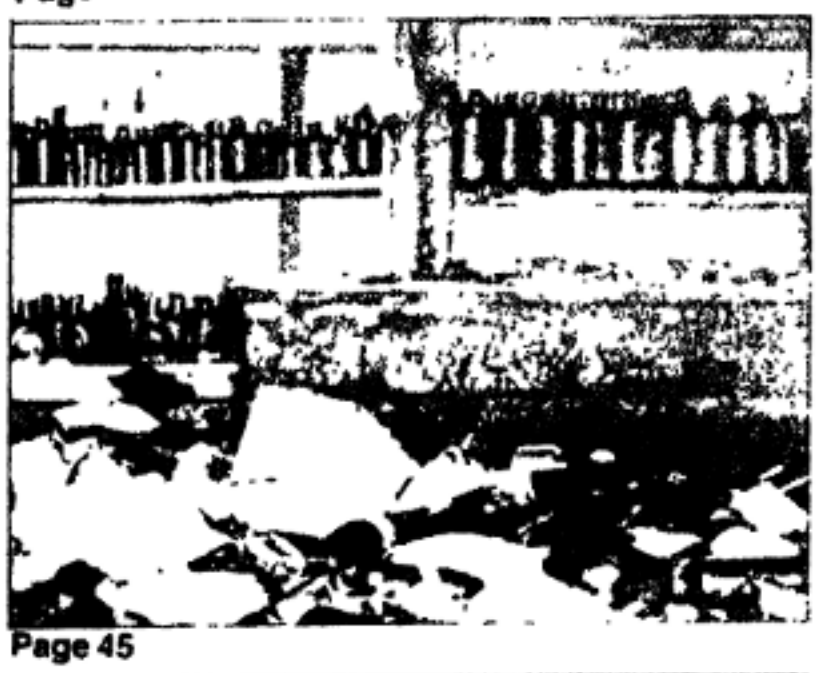
PROFILE **56**

SMART ALYQUE

Alyque Padamsee is a man of many faces, marking his varied worlds with intensity and success. Though critics refer to him as glib and gimmicky, friends swear by his sincerity. A look at the real man behind the scenes.



Page 12



Page 45

COMMENT

Letters 4
Byline M.J. Akbar 6
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 9
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 10
Sight and Sound 11
Business Diary 66

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Random Notes 105
Delhi Diary 106

Cover transparencies of P. Chidambaram by Rakesh Sahai, P. Shiv Shankar by Mukesh Parpiani, Buta Singh by Sondeep Shankar and P.V. Narasimha Rao by Ashok Vahie.

Artwork by Sandip Bhattacharya

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Biplab Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001

Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura 20 paise. North Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts of Assam 30 paise

BUSINESS **62**

TATAS PLAN FOR A BIG LEAP

The country's largest industrial house has chalked out a Rs 6,000 crore expansion programme to remain the No. 1 group

BOOK REVIEW **92**

FUNNY LINES

Though his work is highly acclaimed in the US, Sudhir Dar has not received enough recognition in his own country.

BOOK EXTRACT **94**

THE ACCORD THAT BOOMERANGED



Somasundaram Vanniasingham explains why the India Sri Lanka agreement has run into trouble in this extract from his book, *Sri Lanka: The Conflict Within*

SUNDAY SPORTS **102**

COURTING DEATH

What drove tennis ace Premjit Lall to attempt suicide? An unhappy marriage or chronic depression?

NEWS **32**

Khaas Baat 91
Spotlight 88
Sundayweek 103
Odds and Trends 104



The undercover business

A glance through history shows that many a kingdom crumbled and was reduced to ashes owing to lack of military intelligence. It is vitally important for any country to gain valuable information regarding the military strengths and plans of neighbours, be they hostile or friendly. It was shocking to learn that former PM Morarji Desai spurned the chance of laying hands on the blueprint of the Kahuta nuclear plant of Pakistan. Had we obtained it then, much of our present fears about Pakistan's nuclear ambitions would never have existed.

G.V. Prasad, Mangalore (Karnataka)

■ I wonder how you managed to secure so much information about intelligence agencies at home as well as abroad. Only a magazine of your repute could handle the story so well. You have aptly highlighted the activities of intelligence agencies and the risks undertaken by agents to achieve their targets. Now, even a common man will know how such an agency works.

Arjun Parthasarathy, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

■ Intelligence is one of the main pillars of a country's security. Thus it was really disconcerting to learn about the serious lapses in our intelligence departments. It is time the government took positive steps to improve the intelligence network and make it one of the best in the world.

Satya Ranjan Pattanaik, Cuttack (Orissa)



RAW headquarters in New Delhi: gathering intelligence

We care

The article (*The love that dare not speak its name*, 31 July—6 August) informed us about the existence of a number of youths who are lonely and want to be a part of mainstream society. We are a group of doctors and psychiatrists who are willing to provide free counselling to anyone who desires a cure. Our address is: Aquarius Club, Box No. R 871—K, *The Times of India*, Bombay 400 001.

Neville T., Bombay (Maharashtra)

Paeans for Zia

Kuldip Nayar's write-up (*Time for a peace offensive*, 11 - 17 September) hides more than it reveals about the fallout of Gen Zia's policies. He might as well use research facilities available to him to write a book on how it was Gen Zia who started military training of Sikhs in 1978 in Pakistan within a year of his takeover; how the former Pakistani President ensured the resumption of US arms supplies which were stopped after the 1971 war; and how he allowed the use of Pakistani soil by CIA activists for raids into Afghanistan. Zia's India policy was coloured by a burning desire to avenge the defeat which led to the creation of Bangladesh. Significantly, it was Morarji Desai who was Prime Minister when the first signal of terrorism against India went up. But such was the charm of Zia over our senior journalists, that people like Nayar find it convenient to overlook these aspects.

Padma Waheed, Faridabad (Haryana)

A wordy duel

I was a regular reader of the *Indian Express* till what M.J. Akbar terms blackmail journalism became its forte (*Byline*, 11 - 17 September). What was once responsible opposition has become motivated vitriol at the cost of credibility.

What Arun Shourie fails to realise when he indulges in pamphleteering - instead of reporting and analysing—is that such writing looks good only when flashed in the Lok Sabha but tends to become tedious after some time.

Sunil Gorodia, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ It was more like the pot calling the kettle black. And M.J. Akbar's diatribe against Arun Shourie sounded like Russy Karanjia bantering on journalistic ethics.

Akbar has accused Shourie of running selective campaigns. While this is debatable, what about Akbar himself who is leading the character assassination against V.P. Singh, Ramnath Goenka, and now, Shourie? Another accusation against Shourie is that of furthering the cause of a section of the Opposition.

S.K. Rakesh, Secunderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

Pragmatic retreat

The cover story (*The Bill of wrongs*, 11 - 17 September) was an incisive and informative piece on the contentious Defamation Bill, which has come in for widespread criticism from all sections of society. It goes without saying that the fourth estate as a whole has played a creditable role and succeeded where the Opposition failed in exposing the nefarious deals of our Prime Minister.

When the impugned Bill was at first placed in Parliament, little Rajiv Gandhi realise the outcry it would lead to. If anything, the Defamation Bill has served to demonstrate that the pen is mightier than the sword.

M.V. Ravindran, Ahmedabad (Gujarat)

■ Rajiv Gandhi had actually wanted the Defamation Bill to keep his shady deals away from the glare of the public eye. However, the PM did well to think rationally and withdraw the Bill.

Rajib Das, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

■ The Defamation Bill was an attempt to throttle the freedom of the press and this confrontation with the press could have boomeranged on Rajiv Gandhi and his government in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. Those who were favouring the Bill simply didn't understand that freedom of the press is one of the edifices on which democracy stands. It is quite clear that Rajiv Gandhi has lost his mandate with the Indian masses. If he manages

to form the next government, it will be a big surprise, to say the least. The Bofors and Fairfax scandals have taken their toll of the ruling party.

The impugned Bill was ample proof of the fact that the government wanted to hide something. Being a citizen of India, I welcome the unconditional withdrawal of the Bill which threatened to destroy the democratic fabric of our country.

Amit Mathur, Sindri (Bihar)

the England', 4—10 September). I fail to understand where the strict discipline imparted to a police officer disappears the minute he wears his uniform. It is also amazing how a woman has been a willing accomplice to a crime perpetrated on her helpless sister. What Kalpana's husband Venkatesamurthy has done to help his wife overcome the trauma is indeed commendable.

R. Gurumoorthy, Madras (Tamil Nadu)



Vishnoo Tyagi

Journalists protesting against the Defamation Bill in New Delhi

■ The Defamation Bill had justifiably generated a good deal of heat and passion throughout the the country. Of course, one cannot deny the need for stringent defamation laws in a country like ours where some irresponsible ministers accuse the President of having links with terrorists without even a shred of evidence. These people no doubt deserve to be punished. The proposed Bill was an apparent attempt on the part of the government to stifle the voice of the press. The unnecessary delay in withdrawing the Bill only lowered the government's esteem in the eyes of the people and also proved that the government had an ulterior motive.

Amit Mukherjee, Calcutta (West Bengal)

It's a cruel world

My heart weeps for the unfortunate Kalpana Sumathi (*Big trouble in 'Lit-*

An open issue

The report (*Mining an issue*, 24—30 July) has misrepresented the view of the Purbanchal Welfare Organisation and its chairman S.K. Dutta who has been quoted. The organisation is opposed to open cast mining for two basic reasons: first, the Patkai Ranges are covered by thick vegetation which helps maintain the ecological balance in the region. Second, these coalfields are located in a heavy rainfall area and there is a high sulphur content in the coal which produces sulphuric acid through bacterial reactions. As a result there is a massive erosion of the loose overburdens which causes degradation of the agricultural lands below.

Further, the two-member central committee did not find the allegations mentioned in the article valid. The blastings involved in this type of mining is proving to be a menace for miles around.

S.K. Dutta, chairman, and N. Mahanta, general secretary, Purbanchal Welfare Organisation, Margherita, (Assam)

Radhika Ramaseshan replies. I am at a loss to understand the purpose of Mr Dutta and Mr Mahanta's letter since they have hardly refuted anything I have written. Their annoyance seems to stem from the fact that I incorporated the views of the North Eastern Coalfield (NEC), some of which were valid. The letter points out the ecological and environmental damage being caused by open cast mining in the Patkai Ranges. But that is exactly what the article has tried to point out.

They have attacked the two member committee's report as being "tainted with falsification of truths..." I would like to point out that it was a central panel set up by the department of coal of the energy ministry to probe the charges made by Dutta and Mahanta against NEC. It is the committee which found the charges as being baseless.

Regarding the blastings, I have included the viewpoint of both the NEC's as well as those of the Purbanchal Welfare Organisation. NEC studies have shown that the sound level is within permissible limits.

Peasant leader

Sunday Special (Portrait of a peasant as politician, 18 - 24 September) made interesting reading. Devi Lal is the kind of leader one needs today. A practical man like



Jagdish Yadav

Devi Lal: controversial leader

him, who believes more in action than in theory, is actually a messiah for the Opposition parties in India. He is determined to bring the entire Opposition under one umbrella. Devi Lal's stand on the regional parties is true because it is only such a regional coordination that will bring about collective responsibility in Indian politics.

Atul Ahuja, New Delhi

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to.

The Circulation Manager(U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta 700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

Olympic depression



P.T. Usha hurdling her way to the loser's place

One wonders between tears and anger, and then succumbs to both. Did you know that there was a country called the US Virgin Islands? Or another called Neth Antilles? At least that is how *The Guardian* writes the name: perhaps the full name is Netherlands Antilles -- who knows? One may not know the name of the country -- but one is now forced to care. Both the Virgin Islands and the Antilles have a medal each in the Seoul Olympics, and silvers too. Little nations, dots on the globe, islands isolated by vast stretches of water; little parcels of land identified by not much more than a flag in the lobby of the United Nation; but still containing enough reserves of ability, discipline, and - most of all - commitment to take a place in the chart of medal-winners at Seoul. Forget the giants who have made the medals a gesture of international prestige, the Soviet Union and the great Socialist sportspersons from East Germany and Hungary and even Bulgaria; the scintillating Americans, gorgeously plumed by individual glamour and idiosyncracies, and so touchingly patriotic as they hear their national anthem from the podium and burst into tears; the calmer West Europeans, decked with the natural reserve of older civilisations. Forget also the individual geniuses, who would have triumphed irrespective of nationality: the flamboyant Flo Joyner who burst into a victory smile both in the 100 and 200 metres, long before reaching the tape or the cool and trifle-too-glib Carl Lewis picking up gold in his second successive Olympics; or the great Daley Thompson, finally defeated but only by age. Look at the list of Olympic champions from nations such as these: Surinam, Senegal, Mongolia, Costa Rica, Philippines, Jamaica. The African nations, even lower than us on the world's poverty rankings, have made such extraordinary strides in long-distance racing that even the television commentators have got used to the twisting syllables in the names of the superb African champions. Even Pakistan has won a bronze, and since it was not in hockey, it must be notched up as a special achievement.

India did not exist. As one watched the BBC Television screen producing such brilliant and continuous coverage of the Games (far better really than actually being in Seoul itself), a quiet depression overtook one. After 40 years of freedom, we have reduced ourselves to the margins. Other countries were no better than us four decades ago: many were much, much worse. Look at the host country itself, South Korea. What a fascinating, remarkable achievement, lifting itself up into the stratosphere of prosperity and international respect. It con-



India battles it out in hockey: dismal performance

ducted the Olympics with style, panache, and tough confidence. Superb organisation, excellent environment and the ability to set up a drug-testing laboratory that is so sophisticated that it lays low the most clever of cheats. Ben Johnson may be only the most famous of the athletes hyped up by artificial drugs, and the Bulgarian weightlifters the most comic, but there are others—even as I write, news comes of two Britons with drugs in their urine samples (much to the embarrassment of the BBC commentators who have spent a lifetime equating Britain with fairplay). But look at the way the small country, South Korea, has been inspired into sheer sporting achievement (14 medals already at the moment of writing, 10th in the world, above France, China, Poland, Australia and Japan. The advantage over Japan must be especially sweet to the Koreans).

But where is India? Down to first-round loser; down to absolute scratch. Even the little balloons of hope in hockey and hurdles, pricked with contemptuous means by a world which barely deigns to glance at us. We simply do not matter. All we have is the pathetic pleasure of legend. We can content ourselves with stories of Dhyan Chand: once, the American defenders got so frustrated and desperate that they hit Dhyan Chand on the legs. He went into a huddle with his colleagues, and then, during the rest of the game, he dribbled the ball 18 times through the defence, went up to the goal line, left the ball there and walked back without scoring a goal. The ultimate humiliation. Is the story true? No idea. But I heard it, believed it, and consoled myself with it while I watched Korean women play hockey the way Indian men once did. I watched Kenyan Julius Kariuki proudly loping through his lap of honour, the flag of his country fluttering in his hand, the colours of Kenya resplendent on millions of television screens all over the world, and all I can do is wonder when I will see the tricolour flutter so proudly. I see Ivory Coast's name among the finalists of the relay and wonder while every country improves each day, we regress. P.T. Usha misses a medal by a half-breadth in Los Angeles, but in Seoul

India did not exist. As one watched the coverage of the Olympic Games on television, a quiet depression overtook one

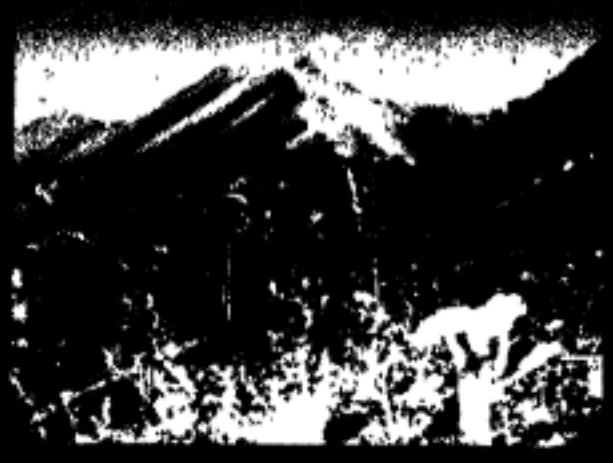
Even the little balloons of hope in hockey and hurdles are pricked with contemptuous means by a world which barely deigns to glance at us. We simply do not matter. All we have is the pathetic pleasure of legend

there is no one even remotely near the podium. So many national anthems filled stadium after stadium, swirled through living rooms through television and radio but we do not have the faintest hope of ever hearing *Jana, Gana, Mana...* And yet our people do very well in other environments. The Anglo-Indian boys and girls we ignored or patronised have gone to Australia and taken its hockey into the realms of gold and silver; Imam Sherwani scored two superb goals for Britain in the finals, but we on the subcontinent scratch around hoping for a look-in. Why ? Why!

Is there an answer? I wonder if it is because we do not have any sense of national achievement, of that great spirit of patriotism, of selflessness and endeavour and trust in common achievement which builds team and national spirit. We seem to be victims of a complacent patriotism, devoid of the gut motivation that lifts the quality of any effort. As a nation we keep reducing ourselves to the lowest common denominator rather than the highest common factor—and, conditioned by a petty vision- - sneer at anyone who even hints at achievement and hard work. Just 40 years into this great and historic task of nation-building, we have become little more than the spectators who once filled the Colosseum in the dying days of the Roman Empire. The only thing that enthuses us now is the sight of two gladiators trying to kill each other purely for the sake of the individual survival and our collective venality. Let anyone try to rise above pettiness, and we become jeering, sneering chorus. No one cares about us because we do not care about ourselves. Maybe we should hand over our next Olympic contingent to the Indian Army: they are the only ones I can think of with all the qualities necessary—patriotism, commitment to victory and the iron discipline that must lie at the core of any great achievement.

P.S. : A thought. Would we have done any better in the Olympics if there was a way by which we could negotiate a medal for ourselves? We are not winners. We are negotiators.

Get high in Ooty.



And have a great time in between.

This season take a break in the lush cool hills of Ooty. Discover the quiet charm of princely Mysore. And relax at the luxurious yet affordable, Quality Inn Southern Star hotels.

Quality Inn™

We'll make your holiday memorable, your honeymoon a dream. And, if it's business, we'll organise for you a conference that's efficient and enchantingly different.



- Downtown location
- 108 spacious, elegant rooms & suites. Centrally airconditioned
- 3 acres of landscaped gardens • Restaurant, coffee shop and cocktail lounge
- Swimming pool and health club
- Meeting and Banquet facilities
- In room movies.

Southern Star

Mysore Ooty

ASK FOR OUR SPECIAL VALUE PACKAGES.



- 2 kms from city centre, on wooded hillside • 67 extra large luxurious rooms & suites • Multi-cuisine restaurant, cocktail & tea lounge • Health club, billiards, card-room, indoor games
- Meeting and Banquet facilities • In-room movies • Special panorama guest room floor.



Go regal in Mysore.

QUALITY INN SOUTHERN STAR MYSORE, VINOBHA ROAD, PIN 570008, PH [illegible], TLX [illegible]
QUALITY INN SOUTHERN STAR OOTY, HAVELOCK ROAD, PIN 643001, PH [illegible], TLX [illegible]
FOR INFORMATION AND RESERVATIONS:

Quality Inns India

[illegible]

KHUSHWANT SINGH

T.S. Eliot's Indian connection



September-end being T.S. Eliot's 100th birth anniversary, I found myself re-reading his works and the tributes being paid to him. In England the project to rename the London Library after him has run into difficulties because of the refusal of the local Jewry to co-operate: Eliot like his mentor, Ezra Pound, has many uncomplimentary references to the Jews. I was more interested in rediscovering whether India had in any way influenced Eliot's thinking. Two Indian names appear in his anthology: of Mirza Murad Ali Beg and Cornelia Sorabji. To Beg is dedicated a trivial little self-caricature.

How unpleasant to meet Mr Eliot!
With his features of clerical cut,
And his brow so grim
And his mouth so prim
And his conversation, so nicely
Restricted to What precisely
And if and Perhaps and But.
How unpleasant to meet Mr Eliot!
With a bobtail cur
In a coat of fur
And a porpentine cat
And a wopsical hat:
How unpleasant to meet Mr Eliot!

Cornelia Sorabji persuaded Eliot to write the poem entitled *To The Indians who Died in Africa* for inclusion in her anthology *Queen Mary's Book For India*. In this short poem of his later years Eliot has flashes of his earlier brilliance. He recreates scenes of an Indian villager dying on alien soil for a cause he is dimly aware of:

A man's destination is his own village,
His own fire, and his wife's cooking;
To sit in front of his own door at sunset
And see his grandson, and his neighbour's grandson
Playing in the dust together
Scarred but secure, he has many memories
Which return at the hour of conversation,
(The warm or the cool hour, according to the climate)
Of foreign men, who fought in foreign places,
Foreign to each other.

A man's destination is not his destiny,
Every country is home to one man
And exile to another. Where a man dies bravely
At one with his destiny, that soil is his
Let his village remember.

I am not sure whether Eliot ever visited India but it is evident that he had more than a passing knowledge of the *Upanishads*. In his most celebrated poem *The Waste Land* (I heard Dr Karan Singh recite it from memory), the finale *What the Thunder Said* is based on a vision of an Indian landscape:

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.
Then spoke the thunder
DA
Datta: What have we given?

After an interruption the theme is taken up:

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
Only at nighttall, aethereal rumours
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus
And the final summing up:
Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih.

I was interested in rediscovering whether India had in any way influenced Eliot's thinking...I am not sure whether Eliot ever visited India but it is evident that he had more than a passing knowledge of the *Upanishads*. In his most celebrated poem *The Waste Land*, the finale *What the Thunder Said* is based on a vision of an Indian landscape

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

Nirad Babu's first contribution to *The Spectator's Diary* will sadden his innumerable Indian admirers. He writes, "Although I have now lived for 18 years in England and have not revisited India even once, I totally reject the status of immigrant. So when those whom I consider to be genuine immigrants ask me why, I say: Because in the first instance I did not come here of my own will as you did of yours, but was brought over; next, a true Indian immigrant became wealthy in Britain whereas I have become almost a pauper."

Further down the same dairy he adds, "I have lived in England on what even the English working class calls the poverty level."

Isn't there anyone who could arrange for the Chaudhuris now in their 90s to return home and spend the years remaining to them in comfort and dignity due to the country's most distinghished intellectual?

ROMANCE ON A CYCLE

A young lady still unfamiliar with the art of cycling ran her cycle into an old Sardarji's legs. The Sardarji turned round and asked angrily, "These are my legs, not a bicycle stand."

By sheer coincidence the next day it was the Sardarji who by accident ran his cycle into the young lady. It was the turn of the lady to reprimand him. "At your age and with your long beard, aren't you ashamed of coming on me on your cycle?"

"Bibi," replied the Sardarji, "my beard is not a brake."

(Contributed by Harjeet Kaur, New Delhi)



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

When intentions are suspect

The only positive outcome of Rajiv Gandhi's recent visit to Punjab is an all party meeting for a fresh bid to solve the Punjab problem. Otherwise, there is nothing else to bite on. The release of 140 Jodhpur detenus is a belated step. Moreover, why weren't all of them released?

An all-party meeting is fine but Rajiv Gandhi has to first make up his mind about how far he is actually willing to go. My feeling is that he holds such exercises to give the impression that he is trying his best. In fact, he wants to keep the problem alive till the next elections when he can exploit it to his party's advantage, as he did in 1984

A few months ago, I thought that Rajiv Gandhi was willing to turn over a new leaf. With me at a breakfast meeting hosted by Rajiv Gandhi were persons like I.K. Gujral, Girilal Jain, P.N. Haksar and Dr Attar Singh, and we discussed Punjab. Though there was no consensus, what came out loud and clear was that Rajiv Gandhi wanted to take some immediate steps to mollify the Sikhs.

I pleaded that the government should go out of its way to win back the confidence of the Sikhs. They were an emotional lot, and perhaps quick to take offence, but they were also quick to respond to any friendly gesture. My suggestion was that even if it was difficult to find a political solution straightaway, the government should start creating a climate for it. That itself would help the majority of Sikhs to come back into the mainstream. The steps I suggested were not new. They have been made again and again and even the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which otherwise wants stringent steps in Punjab, has suggested these more than once.

The first step I proposed was that those guilty of the killings in November 1984, whoever they were, should be brought to book. Rajiv Gandhi said that H.K.L. Bhagat was not to blame. I told him that I did not know who was to blame but the fact remained that 3,000 innocents were killed in Delhi and elsewhere.

My suggestion was that a series of open courts should be established so that all those who had anything to do with the Delhi riots could be tried. "Justice should not only be done but also seen to be done," I told the Prime Minister. Someone in the gathering pointed out that no action had been taken on the one person, Sajjan Kumar, named by the Jain Commission having led the rioting.

The second step I suggested was that all those persons who were detained, whether in Jodhpur or elsewhere, including Prakash Singh Badal, G.S. Tohra, Sukhjinder Singh and Simranjit Singh Mann, should be released if there were no provable cases against them. Those the government wanted to try should be charged in open court and evidence against them produced. "It is unfair that they have been kept in detention without trial for so long a period," I pointed out.

In his reply, the Prime Minister said that 40 to 60 detenus from Jodhpur had already been released. It appeared that others who had no charges against them would also be released. All that has happened, and 140 detenus have now been released. There are still a 100-odd detenus in Jodhpur Jail alone.

The third point which I placed before Rajiv Gandhi was that allegations of false "encounters" were numerous and there should be a commission headed by a judge of a High Court in the south or a Supreme Court Justice. Anyone who had any complaint or proof could go before the commission to present his case. And the commission should not only give a verdict in each case but also submit a report on encounters in Punjab. After the breakfast, the Prime Minister assured me that he would take appropriate steps on the lines proposed at the meeting.

I do not know what made him change his mind. There was another breakfast meeting at which Punjab was discussed. Some of us who had spoken in terms of a reconciliation were not invited to this meeting, but some others who wanted more stringent action, were. Apparently their advice prevailed. The government is sending more paramilitary men to the state and the killings by the terrorists continue. Sometimes I wonder whether the two really want any solution at all.

An all-party meeting is fine but Rajiv Gandhi has to first make up his mind about how far he is actually willing to go. My feeling is that he holds such exercises to give the impression that he is trying his best. In fact, he wants to keep the problem alive till the next elections when he can exploit it to his party's advantage, as he did in 1984

The two recent incidents underline the importance of creating a climate for a political solution—and without further loss of time. The incidents I refer to are the killing of Hit Abilashi, president of the Punjab BJP, in Chandigarh, and the Hindu-Sikh riot in Bidar town in Karnataka.

The first incident is part of the series of murderous attacks that the terrorists have unleashed on BJP leaders, who have asked for more stringent measures, including the calling in of the army to curb terrorism, and on the communists who, though they have not asked for reprisals have been trying to maintain Hindu-Sikh unity. The other incident in Bidar began as an agitation against the Shiv Sena's extortion of money for Ganesh Puja, but turned into an anti-Sikh riot.

I do not know how many such incidents would have to take place before Rajiv Gandhi realised that the policy which he has followed in Punjab is wrong. By all means, no concession should be shown to the terrorists, nor should the demand for 'Khalistan' or even autonomy be entertained. But moderate Sikh opinion must be won over.

The Prime Minister's policy, if he has any policy at all, is—if one went by Buta Singh's statements—to employ more force and take more stringent steps. I am not arguing for any soft line towards the killers of the innocent. All that I am suggesting is that steps be taken to win back the Sikh community's confidence and this can be done easily if the steps I have suggested are taken. And soon.



R. K. Laxman: *The Times of India*

"

Today, in the name of corruption there is a lot of hue and cry going on in the country... Until we are able to control the parallel economy (of black money) it will be futile to talk about corruption.

VASANT SATHE, *Union energy minister, in his letter to MPs*

It is rather strange that such a comment should come from Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, whose party has recently picked from the garbage people like Mr A.R. Antulay.

RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE, *commenting on Azad's description of Opposition leaders as "junk"*

Reasonings have no place in the political life of independent India. The government here pays heed only to such demands which are sufficiently backed by muscle power.

BUOY HRANGKHAWL, *TNV leader, on the killings carried out by his men*

We can no more go about with a begging bowl entreating the Centre for the project's clearance.

JYOTI BASU, *West Bengal chief minister, while laying the foundation stone of the Bakreshwar power project*

We are convinced that the interests of India and Pakistan are complementary—not conflicting or competitive.

PRESIDENT R. VENKATARAMAN, *while receiving the credentials of Pakistani ambassador Niaz A. Naik*

Biharis are laborious, honest, simple and sincere people, though they are illiterate to a large extent. It has become fashionable not only for the media but people in high places to say, *'Arre, Bihar'*, and then dismiss us.

BHAGWAT JHA AZAD, *Bihar chief minister, in reply to a journalist's question whether corruption was a way of life in Bihar*

As in *Animal Farm*, all are equal but some are more equal than others.

K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN, *general secretary of the Congress(S), on the unequal representation of parties in the steering committee of the Opposition*

We have to prove to the rest of the world that traditional techniques help solve modern problems.

SAM PITRODA, *technology adviser, on the need to popularise* ayurveda

We will not accept the imposition of Hindi, whether Gandhi or even God himself speaks for it.

M. KARUNANIDHI, *DMK president*

For the first time a minister in the cabinet publicly exposed the nepotism of the chief minister.

PRIYA RANJAN DAS MUNSHI, *WBPCC(I) chief, on the leakage of confidential notes relating to the Bengal Lamps issue*

"

UP's warring politicians

Former chief minister Veer Bahadur Singh and the present chief minister, Narain Dutt Tiwari, are battling it out for supremacy—and the loser will be the Congress(I)

Uttar Pradesh has long been the Congress(I)'s favourite electoral ground. The state has provided a succession of Prime Ministers, a great number of leaders and an enormous votebank. But it might not stay that way, now that the two principal overlords of the Uttar Pradesh Congress(I), Narain Dutt Tiwari and Veer Bahadur Singh, are busy trying to pull each other into the mud pit.

The battle between Tiwari and Singh, or NDT and VB as the two stalwarts are referred to, is out in the open. Both men profess deep unhappiness at their present positions and a determination to see the other humbled. Tiwari's supporters claim that Veer Bahadur is openly fostering dissidence in the Uttar Pradesh Congress(I) by regularly summoning MLAs loyal to him to Delhi. At Sanchar Bhavan, the Union communication ministry headquarters, Veer Bahadur is said to hold *darbars* where he openly criticises Tiwari and boasts that he will return to UP as chief minister.

Curiously, Tiwari is not really interested in holding on to his present office, the Uttar Pradesh chief ministership. He too wants to get his own back with Veer Bahadur and is said to be using, among other Congressmen, the Union power minister, Kalpnath Rai, to snipe at Veer Bahadur. The supporters of Veer Bahadur claim that Kalpnath Rai openly abuses their boss and is doing his best to undermine him in the party's highest circles.

How these two great assets of the cow-belt fell out is a long, sordid story of power play. But the latest chapter of this inglorious saga begins from the time of the 1988 June Allahabad Lok Sabha byelection. A little before the poll, the Congress(I) grapevine in Uttar Pradesh was infected with rumours that Veer Bahadur would not be able to bring victory to the party candidate, Sunil Shastri, and that he should be removed from his post as chief minister. The rumours, it was widely believed, were circulated by Tiwari, who was plotting to install his own man at the helm of power in the state.

Veer Bahadur survived the rumours but not the outcome of the Allahabad byelection and Tiwari, the schemer, eventually fell victim to his own conspiracy. How this happened is an episode in itself. While Veer Bahadur's stock was plummeting in Uttar Pradesh, Tiwari's was rising in New Delhi. As Union finance minister, Tiwari was making friends and influencing people with remarkable success and his 1988 Budget was being hailed as a paradigm of populism. Other ambitious Central leaders, like P.V. Narasimha Rao and P. Shiv Shankar, were becoming particularly concerned at Tiwari's rise, especially with the stories that made out the finance minister as the number-two man in Rajiv Gandhi's government.

These worried Central leaders began circulating rumours in Delhi about how NDT was scrupulously avoiding making any statements against Vishwanath Pratap Singh and company. At the same time, several Union ministers began urging Tiwari's reposting to Uttar Pradesh. Veer Bahadur, these Central ministers argued, had badly let the side down at Allahabad and only a heavyweight like Tiwari could possibly retrieve the situation. Tiwari, on learning of these moves, got the shakes and immediately began promoting several alternative candidates for the job. He first suggested that Union petroleum minister Brahm Dutt be crowned in Uttar Pradesh. When that was turned

Says N.D. Tiwari: "People can spread any rumours but on my part I have not got any grievance against Veer Bahadurji. I feel if anybody in the Congress goes for infighting, he will cause damage to the party, so we should not confront each other"

down, he lobbied for Mohsina Kidwai. That too did not work out and a desperate Tiwari finally began campaigning for Lokpati Tripathi, the son of veteran Congressman Kamalapathi Tripathi.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in the meanwhile, summoned senior UP leaders like Dinesh Singh, Z.R Ansari, Rajendra Kumari Bajpayi and Mohsina Kidwai, and asked for their opinion. Almost all of them spoke in favour of change. But later, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Mrs Sheila Dixit succeeded in convincing the Prime Minister that any immediate change in Uttar Pradesh would not show the party in a favourable light and that he should wait for some time. Makhan Lal Fotedar piped in by refuting the argument against change, saying that if no change was brought in UP, it would be tantamount to ignoring the lessons and warnings of the Congress(I)'s Allahabad defeat. Fotedar and his supporters are said to have advocated the candidature of Lokpati Tripathi. A relieved Tiwari, at this stage, flew to London to attend some trade conference. And that is when the blow fell.

Tiwari was interrupted in the middle of the conference and was told to take the first Air-India flight back to India and Lucknow. Rajiv Gandhi, Tiwari later found out, had wanted to make a change once and for all in UP and it was he who felt that Tiwari was the best bet. VeerBahadur, in a simultaneous move, was hauled out of Lucknow and placed at Sanchar Bahavan as Union communications minister.

It was a big blow for both men.Veer Bahadur felt he had been humiliated and that the communication ministry was not worthy of a full-fledged Cabinet minister. He wanted to be given charge of either the commerce or the industries ministry.Veer Bahadur's supporters immediately began saying that the party high command had erred grievously by removing a loyalist like him from Uttar Pradesh and that Tiwari, who allegedly has a soft spot for the Jan Morcha, would not do his best in UP. As for Tiwari, he felt dismayed at having been shunted out of Delhi and national politics.

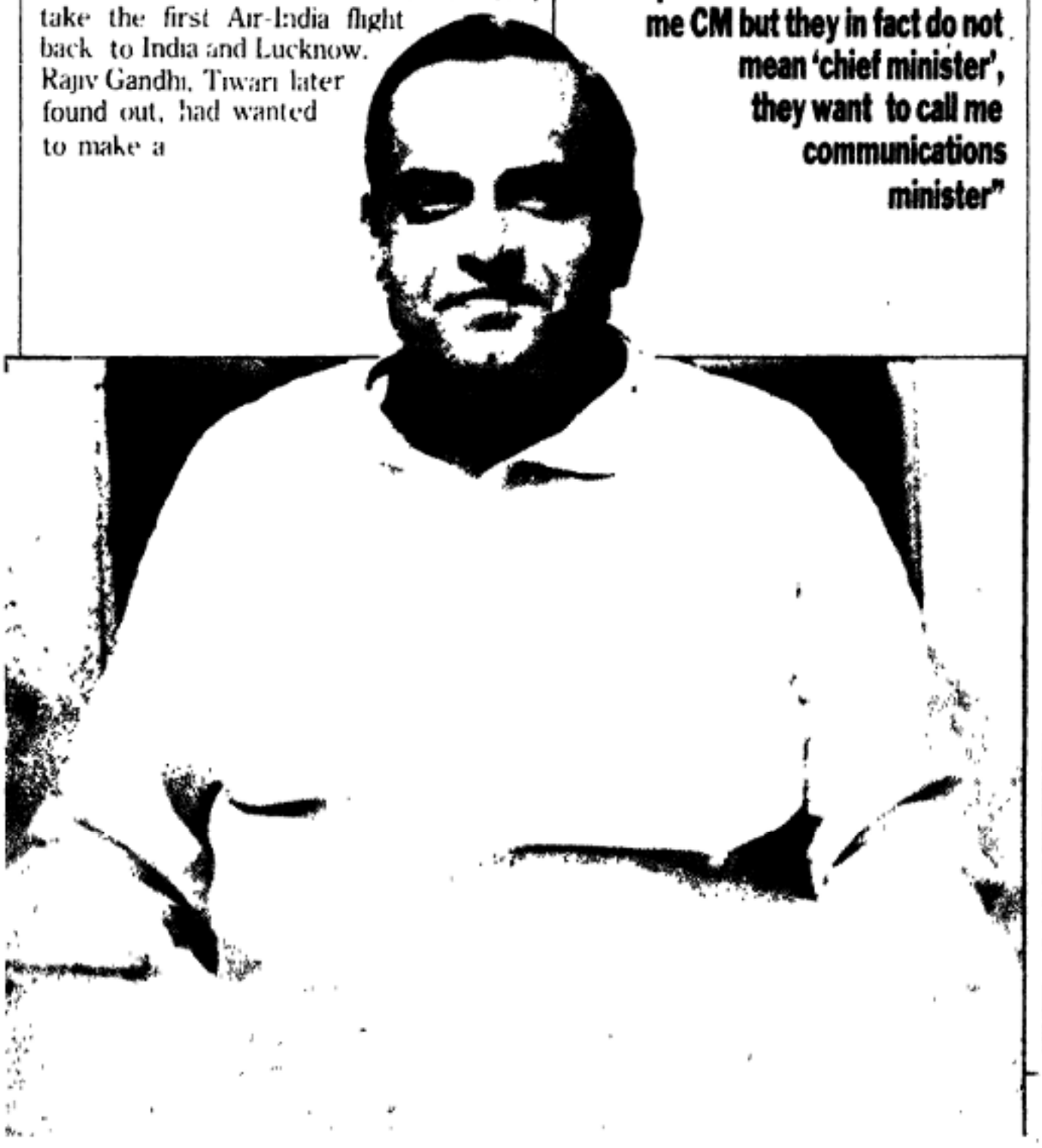
While Tiwari moped about in Lucknow,VeerBahadur got busy drumming up support for himself. He first succeeded in roping in AICC(I) general secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad and Mrs Sheila Dixit. He had made up his mind and his first aim was to score over Tiwari in the matter of choosing UP ministers and the leaders of the UP Pradesh Congress(I) committee. And in both the battles,Veer Bahadur came out on top.

When state PCC(I) chief Mahabir Prasad was inducted in the Union government as deputy railway minister, both NDT and VB put their lobbying machines to work. Tiwari submitted a panel of names for the post. The list included K.N. Singh (AICC-I general secretary), Shyam Lal Yadav (Union minister of state for agriculture), Ram Chandra Vikal, MP, Narendra Singh (UP energy minister) and Mrs Mohsina Kidwai Veer Bahadur Singh, on the other hand, plugged strongly for Balaram Singh Yadav, who was being touted as the only man capable of countering the powerful UP Opposition leader Mulayam Singh Yadav. Ghulam Nabi Azad and Mrs Sheila Dixit too, spoke up for Balaram Singh Yadav, arguing that a chief minister and a PCC(I) chief should not belong to the same group. Rajiv Gandhi fell for the 'balance theory' and VeerBahadur'scandidate triumphed. The very next day VeerBahadur scored again. He had proposed the inclusion of ten persons in the UP ministry and Tiwari had opposed all of them. But when the final list was approved by the Prime Minister's office, it was found that as many as nineVeerBahadur candidates had got through.

For Tiwari, worse was still to come. At the time of the reconstitution of the new Pradesh Congress(I) Committee, Tiwari submitted the names of about half-a-dozen people he wanted accommodated. Rajiv Gandhi took the decision with the help of a computer and the assistance of Sheila Dixit, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Balaram Singh Yadav. Tiwari was not consulted. Predictably, only two of Tiwari's candidates—Gulab Sehara and Ram Singh Saini—found their way to the committee. The other 17 office-bearers were taken in on the basis ofVeerBahadur and Balaram Singh Yadav's recommendations.

When nothing seemed to work, Tiwari took to complaining—he could do little else. He first expressed his chagrin at not being included in the coordination committee formed by the party high command to foster better relations between the government and the party organisation. He was similarly pained when the party high command turned down his request to induct Sunil Shastri and K.N. Joshi into the UP ministry. These two men were pipped at the post—their inclusion had been announced—by a last-minute call from New Delhi. What appears to have

About the UP MLAs still calling him 'CM',Veer Bahadur Singh explains: "A few MLAs still call me CM but they in fact do not mean 'chief minister', they want to call me communications minister"



DIABETICS!



All along you have been saying 'NO' to sugar

NOW!
Say YES! to
Sugar free

It's not sugar. It tastes just like sugar.

What is SUGAR FREE?

SUGAR FREE is derived from Aspartame – a methylated dipeptide formed of two amino acids. It made its debut in U.S.A. in 1981. It was approved by FDA (Food & Drug Administration) in U.S.A. and in over 60 countries worldwide for use as a tabletop sweetener. Now it comes to India.

How is SUGAR FREE different?

- Unlike other artificial sweeteners, SUGAR FREE is formulated from two amino acids. It is therefore safe.
- No bitter after-taste like saccharin and other artificial sweeteners. It tastes just like sugar.
- It reduces calorie intake and avoids the risk of obesity.

All your diabetic life, you've been saying 'NO' to sugar. Now you can SAY YES! to SUGAR FREE. Ask your doctor.

SUGAR FREE. Brought to you by Cadila – India's 3rd largest pharmaceutical group.

We have an instructive and practical guidebook, prepared by an eminent diabetologist and a nutrition-expert. Subsidized copies have been exhausted but you can get a FREE reprint. Fill in the coupon and post it to us, enclosing Rs.2/- postage stamps.

Please send me my free copy of the guidebook.
I am enclosing Rs 2/- postage stamps.

NAME Shri/Smt./Kumari _____

AGE _____ OCCUPATION _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

Tick language preferred.
Eng/Hin/Guj/Beng/Kan/Tam/Tel

Cut the coupon and post it today to:

Cadila Chemicals Pvt. Ltd.,
P.O. Box No. 9004, 244, Ghodasar,
Maninagar, Ahmedabad-380 008.

Multimedia Aquarius/CC/1/88

The Tiwari factor

Ask N.D. Tiwari about rumours that the Congress party is considering him as a compromise Prime Minister after it slumps Rajiv Gandhi and he will respond with outrage: "I am a loyal soldier," he will proclaim, "I don't know how these stories get started. I could never dream of doing anything against my leader."

The outrage is studied and already people are beginning to ask questions about Tiwari's real motives. It is well-known that he did not want to go to UP. After the Allahabad byelection defeat, Tiwari was one of those invited for consultations by Rajiv Gandhi. The veteran leader was emphatic: the chief minister had to be changed. But, he suggested, he could serve Rajiv and party better by continuing as finance minister and assisting the new chief minister from Delhi. As is now customary with Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister listened intently but did not betray his own feelings. Tiwari then went to London on a brief official visit (to drum up British investment in India). Hardly had he landed, when he was told that Rajiv wanted him back in Delhi to discuss a change of leadership in UP.

He boarded the next day's Air-India flight, assuming that he would be asked to nominate Veer Bahadur's successor. However, while he was airborne, Rajiv announced that Tiwari himself would go to Lucknow, after all, and the UP Legislature Party was instructed to elect him 'unanimously'.

Since then, Tiwari has frustrated Rajiv's stratagem by UP's least motivated chief minister. His brief was two-fold: to get the administration moving and to neutralise V.P. Singh. He has claimed that he is unable to do the first because the supporters of former chief minister V.B. Singh are intent on blocking his moves. And as for the record, he has stubbornly refused to say a word against the Raja on the grounds that this would amount to giving him 'too much importance'.

The feeling has grown, therefore, that he is merely keeping his options open should the party decide to give Rajiv the heave-ho. This scenario has two variations. In the first, Rajiv is toppled just before the polls and a compromise candidate is called for. Tiwari, with his administrative record (pre-UP) and non-controversial nature then emerges as the natural choice. The second variation has a post-election scenario in which the Congress is the largest single parliamentary grouping but lacks an over-all majority. Congressmen then ask the Jana Morcha members to rejoin. They are willing to do so but will not accept Rajiv as leader. Tiwari then becomes the Prime Minister as compromise candidate.

Tiwari's friends dismiss this scenario as outrageous and argue that his lack of enthusiasm for the UP job should not be interpreted as disloyalty. All he wants to do is get out of UP, they say.

But will Rajiv shift him? In recent weeks, there has been talk of an alternative assignment: Governor of Punjab is one possibility. It is not known, however, if anything less than a major Cabinet post (home, external affairs, finance or defence) will satisfy him.

wounded Tiwari the most is the Prime Minister's decision to give Veer Bahadur Singh the job of looking after his constituency, Amethi. No small wonder that Tiwari has virtually stopped functioning, and is concentrating on clipping the wings of Veer Bahadur's officers in the state administration. At this rate, the Congress(I)'s favourite electoral ground could well become the killing field.

The two adversaries are, however, wily enough not to put their differences on the record. Says Tiwari: "People can spread any rumours but on my part I have not got any grievance against Veer Bahadurji. I feel if anybody in the Congress goes for infighting, he will cause damage to the party, so we should not confront each other." Veer Bahadur, in the same vein, declares: "I know a few people are trying to create confusion between us and we both should not listen to these kind of people. He is doing his job and I am doing my job." Just to avoid further problems, Veer Bahadur has sworn not to vist UP for the next three months. About the UP MLAs still calling him 'CM', Veer Bahadur explains: "A few MLAs still call me CM but they in fact do not mean 'chief minister', they want to call me 'communication minister' ". The unspoken tensions, however, remain despite their strenuous assertions to the contrary.

Rajiv Shukla/*Lucknow* and *Delhi*



Sunil Shastri signs his nomination papers: Congress(I)'s Allahabad defeat precipitated the Tiwari-V.B. Singh squabble

Living down the past

Surrenders by notorious dacoits may have helped establish political reputations but have they been given a raw deal by the government?

The dark ravines of Chambal are quiet today. Apparently, peace prevails. Mohan Singh and Madho Singh, legendary *bagis* (dacoits), have taken to farming after their surrender in 1972. Phoolan Devi and Malkhan Singh are lodged in the special open-air jail for dacoits in Gwalior. Seventy-year-old Lukka alias Lokman Pandit, one of the first outlaws to surrender, way back in 1960, is now a venerable elder of Bhind town.

Former dacoits have their uses. They are 'proof' of the Madhya Pradesh government's 'success' in tackling the dacoity menace. Recently, the state government sponsored a trip to Chambal, and SUNDAY was among those escorted to Lukka's house in Bhind. Chief minister Arjun Singh was expected to attend the inaugural function of the Chambal Development Authority (CDA) that day and the town was all decked up. On our way we passed by many a welcome arch and banner.

Lukka lives in a simple, single-storeyed house. He had surrendered arms before Acharya Vinoba Bhave, thirty years ago. He does not look the popular image of the *bagi*. But his conversation reveals him a man with a violent past. He relates how a judge once asked him how many men he had killed. He had shot back, "Can you recollect how many *rotis* you have eaten? If I sit quietly in one place for six months, maybe I can make a guess."

But Lukka does not regret having taken to dacoity. He is only remorseful about the killing of "Netram's son", a ten-year-old child. The killing was due to gang rivalry. "The boy looked back at those who had shot him," he recalls, his eyes momentarily misting with tears. But a *bagi* never cries and recovering fast, he resumes recounting tales of bravery, courage and vendetta.

"Why did you become a dacoit?" asks a reporter. Lukka snaps impatiently, "So much injustice has been done to us. Have you seen the ravines? Have you spoken to the villagers? Then you would not ask me this question." But slowly he opens up to relate his story. Lukka's family land in village Madhusala (in Agra district) had been forcibly tilled by others. Injustice was the order of the day so Lukka decided to pick up the gun. A dacoit is not a criminal, he repeatedly asserts: "A *bagi* must have character. He never kills a woman. In my time we did not allow women to become dacoits. Puthli could not enter this area. But look at Phoolan. She is a disgrace to *bagis*."

How does he spend his time now? According to Sapna, his sixteen-year-old granddaughter, he tends his farm, looks after his buffaloes and reads the *Ramayana*. But politics obviously interests him. A large picture of Arjun Singh adorns the wall and neighbours testify to Lukka's skill in election-canvassing. For them, the sometime outlaw is a 'hero' and what he says, goes in the area. Despite hobnobbing with the *khadi* brigade, he speaks derisively of politicians: "Earlier the dacoits lived in the *khadar* (the local term for ravines). Now they are in *khaddar (khadi)*." Will the newly-constituted CDA help? Lukka is pessimistic: "I am too old to ensure



Lokman Pandit (Lukka)



Malkhan Singh surrenders arms in the presence of Arjun Singh (right): unfulfilled promises ▶

Lukka lives in a simple, one-storeyed house. He does not look the popular image of the *bagi*. But his conversation reveals his violent past. The only thing that fills him with remorse is the killing of "Netram's son", a ten-year-old child

social justice. It is educated people who should make the effort. But they are busy taking bribes." Though disillusioned with life he is not willing to pass up a chance to appear on television.

Meeting Malkhan was easier. On hearing that a group of journalists was in Gwalior, the long haired, celebrity-dacoit decided to call. (His surrender with ten others in 1982 had earned accolades for the Arjun Singh government.)

Malkhan Singh the stuff of many a Bombay potboiler. On parole, he arrived at the hotel, near midnight, six gunmen in tow. Wearing a well-tailored, brown *churidar-kurta, tulsi* beads, a flashy Rolex watch on his wrist, long hair brushed back slickly. The television camera zooms in and platitudes pour out in a gush. Compliments for everybody — the chief minister, the state government. But once the cameras move away, he unwinds. He thinks he has been given a raw deal. He would like to talk but has apparently, been misquoted so often, that he is wary of the press. But a little prodding makes him more communicative. He laid down arms in 1982 on condition that he and his followers would be resettled, all pending cases against them in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan would be transferred to Gwalior. No one would be hanged and all his supporters given land, as were Mohar Singh and Madho Singh in 1972. But after the surrender, the government forgot all about its promises. Malkhan who likes to look upon himself, as do most dacoits, as a product of specific socio-economic circumstances, says he will not pick up the gun again. But the unfulfilled promises hurt. Even Sarvodaya activists, who helped former dacoits have little interest in Malkhan's case, because his surrender was 'organised' by Arjun Singh, instead of being engineered by them.



Malkhan Singh: the stuff of many a Bombay potboiler. He arrived at the hotel at midnight, six gunmen in tow. Wearing a well-tailored, brown *churidar-kurta, tulsi* beads, a flashy Rolex watch on his wrist, long hair brushed slickly back

Surrender-politics have left a bitter aftertaste, but Malkhan is helpless. Like Lukka, he is extremely contemptuous of Phoolan, of the Behmai massacre fame. "She did not need to become a dacoit. All those tales she narrates by way of justification are a pack of lies. She is the worst woman dacoit to have been born. No patch on Puthli." Why did he take to the ravines? Comes the well rehearsed reply: "I had a fight with the *sarpanch* over land. I was about 28 years old. I left home and there could be no return." Malkhan stayed away for almost 15 years. Did he miss his wife and children? Malkhan laughs: "When you have been driven to the jungle, love becomes meaningless. The tag 'dacoit' gets an angry reaction: "Tell me, have not political leaders done more harm to the country than dacoits."

Phoolan Devi: worst woman dacoit?



Politics and politicians have always played a key part in the Chambal. Dramatic surrenders by dacoits have helped establish political reputations. But the problem of dacoity is far from solved. Arjun Singh during whose tenure as chief minister of Madhya Pradesh in 1982, Malkhan and his gang had surrendered, points out that the slow pace of reclamation of the ravines and development in the region has led to new socio-economic tensions. People in the Chambal region admit that unless the root of the dacoity problem -socio-economic injustice- is tackled head on, dacoity will always rear its head. The CDA is a step towards improving the lot of the people in that area. Money is a crucial problem, as is politics. Some 3.10 lakh hectares of land in the Chambal comprises uncultivable and inhospitable ravines. This constitutes about 20 per cent of the entire area. Reclamation work, which has been initiated, is an extremely expensive affair. The irrigation schemes initiated with World Bank assistance have failed to achieve targets and the World Bank is threatening to pull out of these projects. The state government does not have enough funds and has been lobbying for a 'national approach' to tackling problems of the ravine land. This would considerably reduce the financial burden of the state.

The CDA could, become the victim of regional politics. Arjun Singh's arch-rival Madhavrao Scindia's name has been proposed for the vice-chairmanship of the project. Singh, himself, is the chairman. Scindia failed to turn up at the inaugural function and has not signified acceptance as yet. Singh quips that while Scindia, by joining the CDA might have been able to aid Chambal development, his absence will certainly not hamper the working of the project.

Patralekha Chatterjee/*Bhind* and *Gwalior*

An election nobody wants?

Sri Lanka's Tamils fear that the forthcoming elections in the north and the east will result in a bloodbath



IPKF commander A S Kalkat (left), promising "overall security" for the polls

Suppose they held an election and nobody came. A very real possibility in Sri Lanka today as it gears up for the provincial council polls in the Tamil dominated northern and eastern provinces. Nominations for these elections, the holding of which is a vital step towards fulfilling the Indo Sri Lankan accord, is slated to open on 3 October and close on 10 October. But, at the time of writing, none of the Tamil groups have come forward to openly nominate candidates for the polls.

Opposition to the elections by the powerful Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) has put the other Tamil groups in a bind. To take part in the polls without the LTTE's participation (or approval) could mean doing so at the risk of life. Their problem has only been heightened by the immense pressure India is putting on them, through High Commissioner J.N. Dixit, to participate.

Even the non-militant Tamil United Liberation Front has expressed serious reservations about the move to hold elections in the existing violent situation. [illegible] secretary general Appapillai Amirtha[illegible] points out, even the recent [illegible] accord by the Indian Peace-Keeping Force did nothing to convince the LTTE to surrender its arms and support the progress of the accord. "We want the election postponed," he told SUNDAY. "If the governments of Sri Lanka and India go ahead with the polls, there will be a certain bloodbath."

The militant groups have also expressed similar views. Of them, only the pro-LTTE Eelam Revolutionary Organisation (EROS) has declined to register itself as a political party. The other groups like PLOTE, ENDLF, EPDP, EPRLF and TELO—are too scared and too ill-equipped to tackle the Tigers, especially in the northern peninsula, where V. Prabhakaran's writ runs.

Said a senior member of the EPRLF, Varadaraja Perumal, in a recent interview: "We have not been able to function openly for two years. And now we have been given just two weeks to prepare for elections." He went on to claim that his group was being pushed into participating in the polls by Delhi and Colombo.

One strategy that is being worked out for the north—possibly at the behest of Dixit—is to get some of the Tamil groups to informally suggest candidates for the polls. It is reliably learnt that the TULF and the EPRLF are working towards a seat-sharing arrangement in the region. Apparently, the EPRLF has already supplied a list of probable candidates to Dixit on the condition that it is not made public until the last day of nominations. And despite its official opposition to the polls, the TULF has been sending feelers to its members in order to compile a list of willing candidates. "The idea is that if the election is held on schedule, we will be prepared," a senior TULF leader told SUNDAY on condition of anonymity.

Opposition to the elections by the powerful LTTE has put the other Tamil groups in a bind. To take part could be at the risk of life. Their problem has been heightened by the immense pressure from India to participate

Meanwhile, the IPKF has been promising to provide "overall security" for conducting the elections. Says the force's commander Lt Gen. A.S. Kalkat: "Isolated cases of someone trying to coerce or threaten may take place, but the IPKF will be there to reassure the public." The IPKF will be mainly concerned with manning the area in the immediate vicinity of the poll booths and also patrolling the approach roads to them.

As the island prepares itself for what could easily be a bloody election, there is speculation as to why the Indian government is so keen on pressing for it, despite the obvious obstacles. One theory is that New Delhi wants the provincial councils set up before the presidential elections in Lanka. The fear is that a government opposed to the accord may come to power, dishonour the accord and tell the IPKF to go home. This would make the Indian involvement in Lanka over the past year appear futile and ridiculous. Even if the ruling United National Party (UNP) is voted back to power, its presidential candidate, Ranasinghe Premadasa, is unlikely to allow the IPKF to stay on for as long as India would like.

Whatever the truth, the election is not going to be peaceful unless the LTTE is brought around. There is not much time for that now and if New Delhi persists in going ahead without the Tigers' approval, then the ensuing violence may undermine the worth of seeing the north and the east returned to the democratic process.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

A Burst of Colors



Color.
Glowing,
lighting up your life.
The light that
comes with
Fujicolor — Japan's
No. 1 color film.

Finer grain.
Super sharpness.
Choice of speeds.
And true-to-life
colors.

Fujicolor — it
sets your imagination
on fire.



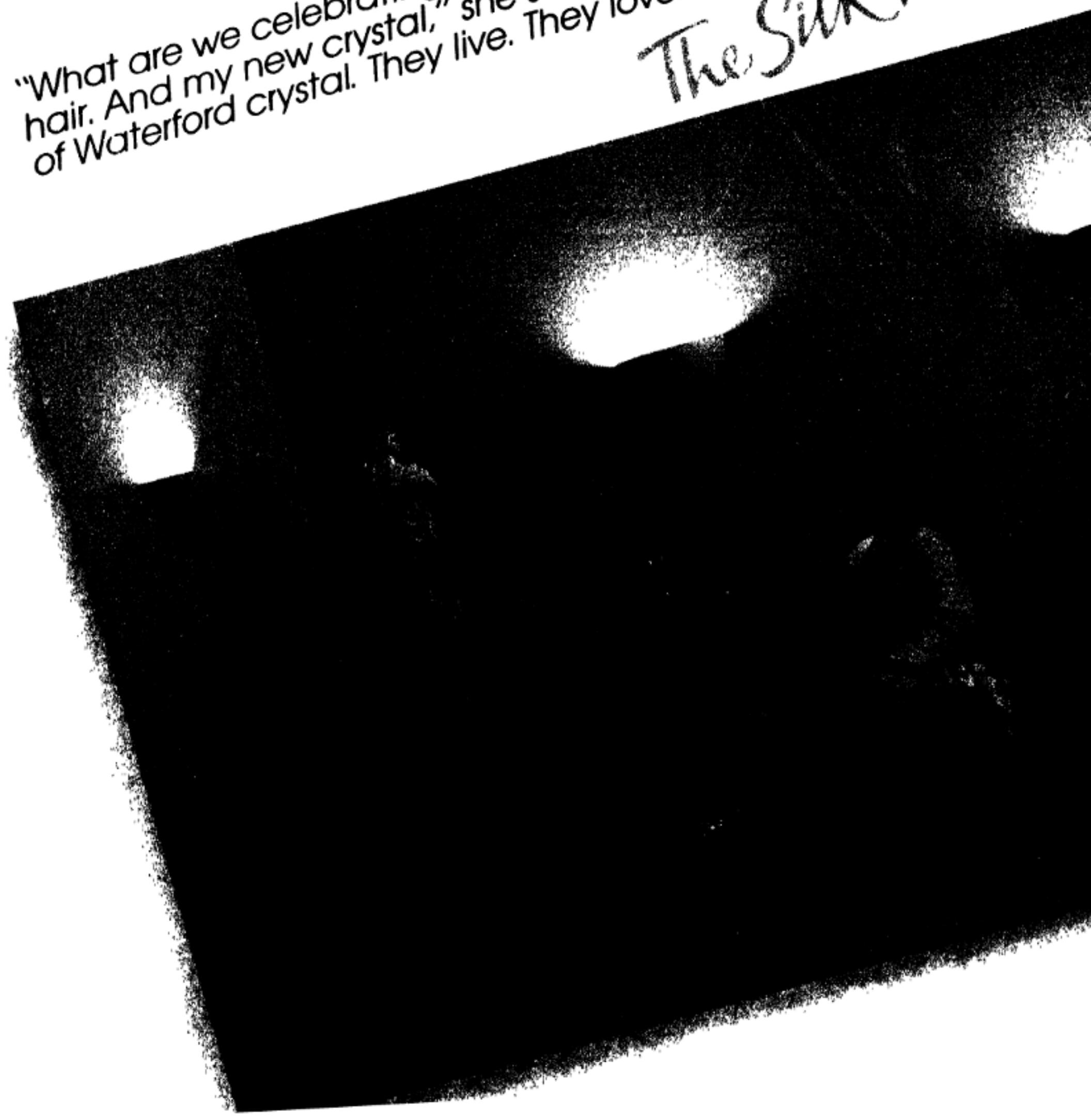
Totally true to life

FUJICOLOR
SUPER HR 100·200·400·1600

Sole Distributors

"What are we celebrating tonight?" he asked. "Your first grey hair. And my new crystal," she smiled. Their laughter, the tinkle of Waterford crystal. They live. They love.

The Silk People





Elegant. Exclusive. Enchanting.
The Silk People.

And the wall finish to
complement their style.

Luxol Silk.

The softest sheen. In shades
of sophistication. With a feel
richer than ever before.

Luxol Silk.

For walls that are Silk to the
touch.

***Drape your walls with Luxol Silk
— the richest emulsion in the world.***



Luxol Silk

from **BERGER PAINTS**

What are the chances that a flood hit factory will show profits in the same year?



Mudra M UI 3588

Why you should meet the people who know the answers to questions like this.

United India. A company where we are answering such questions all the time.

Seems a rather unusual way to keep busy, doesn't it?

The truth is, it is precisely this that keeps us at the forefront of the insurance business.

Let's explain. We at United India are forever trying to settle claims faster. So that our clients are back on their feet as quickly as possible.

With the result that today we are geared to assess and settle any loss incurred by a client in double quick time. Be it due to flood or fire. Riot or breakdown. Theft or earthquake.

To be able to do this, we must understand risks. Completely. So we ask ourselves all sorts of questions. And find answers to them.

This attitude of carefully studying our clients' risks before covering them, is a deeply entrenched habit at UI. Which is why, we know so much about risks. And how to manage them. Which is why, you will benefit by meeting us.

Call us, at United India. At any one of our 983 offices. We'll share our experience and innovative expertise with you. We'll analyse the risks that your business faces (believe us, you'll be surprised how many there are).

We'll help you control and minimise them.

Our team of top-notch underwriters (we have Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants and Veterinarians!) will custom-design a comprehensive cover for your business. Competently and efficiently.

Call us, at United India. Together, we'll make risk management work for you.

UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.
(A Subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India)
24, Whites Road, Madras - 600 014.

RISK MANAGERS TO THE NATION

स्वतन्त्रता के चालीस वर्ष
FORTY YEARS OF FREEDOM
1947 1987

The Gang of Four

Narasimha Rao, Shiv Shankar, Chidambaram and Buta Singh are Rajiv Gandhi's most important advisers









(Clockwise from top left) P. Shiv Shankar, Buta Singh, P.V. Narasimha Rao and P. Chidambaram

They are the best of friends; they are the worst of enemies. They understand the politics of India, none of them has a political base. They have Rajiv's best interests at heart; their advice has damaged him more than anything else. They are all good liberals; their decisions reveal a sharply authoritarian streak.

The Gang of Four is full of contradictions. And yet it counts. These days, Rajiv Gandhi makes few major decisions without first checking with human resources minister P. Shiv Shankar, foreign minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, minister of state for personnel P. Chidambaram, or home minister Buta Singh. The group is not yet a caucus: too many of its members hate each other too much for it to function as a cohesive whole. But it has emerged as the inner circle when it comes to formulating policy.

Its influence was felt most recently over the Defamation Bill (*see Sunday, 18 October*). Shiv Shankar and Narasimha Rao first thought of the Bill. Chidambaram volunteered to pilot it through the Lok Sabha and Buta Singh opposed its withdrawal. But over the last two years, there have been many other such instances when Rajiv Gandhi has entrusted his political future to members of this group. Shiv Shankar evolved the strategies for dealing with Fairfax and Bofors. P. Chidambaram was used as the hatchet man to finish off Arun Nehru. Buta Singh handled Giani Zail Singh and helped avert the threat of a coup. And Narasimha Rao has emerged as the *eminence grise* of the Cabinet: as the man whose opinion is sought on every issue from the announcement of elections in Sri Lanka to the release of the Jodhpur detenus.

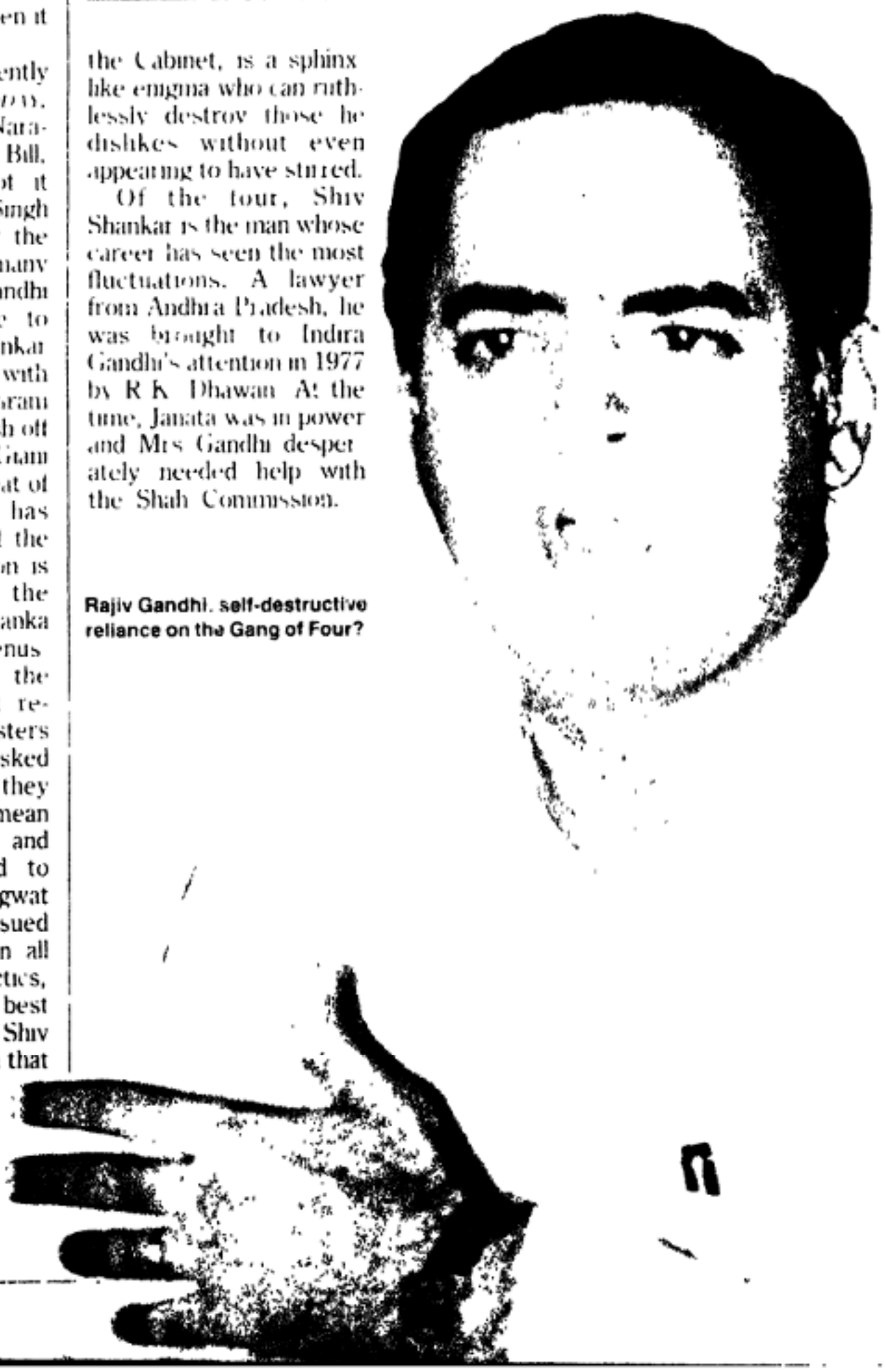
Within the Congress party, the Gang's influence is feared, if not respected. When Congress chief ministers tell reporters that they have been asked to resign by the 'high command', they don't mean Rajiv Gandhi: they mean Buta Singh. When Motilal Vora and Bindeswari Dubey were ordered to make way for Arjun Singh and Bhagwat Jha Azad, it was Buta Singh who issued the instructions on the phone. On all matters pertaining to the law and tactics, Congress MPs know that they had best go and offer their suggestions to Shiv Shankar: ultimately, it is his opinion that Rajiv Gandhi will heed.

Chidambaram is the rising star, the man with the Prime Minister's ear, whose views on administrative affairs are always heeded. And Narasimha Rao, the number two man in the Cabinet, is a sphinx like enigma who can ruthlessly destroy those he dislikes without even appearing to have stirred.

The fiasco of the Defamation Bill showed the Gang of Four in action. Narasimha Rao and Shiv Shankar proposed the Bill; Chidambaram piloted it and Buta Singh opposed its withdrawal. Had it not been for them, the Bill would never have been introduced

Of the four, Shiv Shankar is the man whose career has seen the most fluctuations. A lawyer from Andhra Pradesh, he was brought to Indira Gandhi's attention in 1977 by R.K. Dhawan. At the time, Janata was in power and Mrs Gandhi desperately needed help with the Shah Commission. Shiv Shankar happily obliged and performed other odd jobs for the family, such as persuading Raju Patel to withdraw a libel suit against Menaka Gandhi's *Surya*.

He was rewarded with a ministry in 1980 and put in loyal, if undistinguished, service in such portfolios as law. Unfortunately for him, his career suffered a major setback when he lost the 1984 election and could not be included in the Cabinet. He recovered quickly from this reverse and used his considerable lobbying skills with politicians and the press to present himself to Rajiv as the ideal special envoy and odd-job man. The Prime Minister agreed to assign him various responsibilities, including preparing the government's brief for the Sarkaria Commission, helping with the Indo-Bangladesh water negotiations and



Rajiv Gandhi, self-destructive reliance on the Gang of Four?



Buta Singh with Rajiv Gandhi: grasp of *realpolitik*

When chief ministers tell the press that they have been asked to step down by the high command, they mean by Buta Singh. Over the last year, he has emerged as Rajiv's chief adviser on party matters and enjoys his complete confidence

considering ways of improving relations with China

Obviously, Rajiv was pleased with his achievements because a Rajya Sabha seat was found for him from Gujarat and he made a triumphant return to the Cabinet. His performance as a minister, however, failed to please Rajiv. As foreign minister during the Harare Non-Aligned Summit, he found himself overshadowed by another member of the party, Natwar Singh, who was then minister for fertilisers. Recalls one foreign ministry official: "Rajiv elbowed Shiv Shankar aside all the time. And the only time Shiv Shankar showed any sign of animation was when he heard that his friend Lalit Thapar had been raided. Even then, he lacked the guts to approach Rajiv directly but lobbied with the PM's aides to put in a word for Thapar."

His performance in two other ministries was also undistinguished. His stint as commerce minister was marked by allegations of favouritism and of closeness to Dhirubhai Ambani. And as law minister, he earned the ire of his civil servants.

Fortunately for Shiv Shankar, in early 1987, just as his position was weakening, the Fairfax scandal broke. The hawks in the government and the party wanted Rajiv to use the hiring of Fairfax to finish off V.P. Singh before he emerged as a national alternative. Shiv Shankar, however, proposed another approach. He suggested that Brahm Dutt, the minister of state in the finance ministry, claim in Parliament that Fairfax had never been hired at all! This reasoning was based on a narrow legalistic interpretation of the terms under which the detective agency had been retained. According to Shiv Shankar, this gave it the status of 'informer' whatever that meant.

Accordingly, Brahm Dutt parroted this line in Parliament and was heckled for his trouble. The government was in worse trouble when V.P. Singh's supporters leaked documents proving that Fairfax had been hired, after all. Oddly enough, Rajiv Gandhi did not regard this a repudiation of Shiv Shankar's strategy.

When the Bofors allegations first surfaced, Shiv Shankar was sent for once again. This time, too, he recommended unequivocal denials. It was his idea that Rajiv Gandhi announce that there were no middlemen, at all, in the deal. And he overruled those who suggested that, since the allegations were about bribes and not agents, Rajiv should simply deny that bribes were paid.

After the Swedish Audit Bureau report showed that middlemen had, in fact, been paid, Rajiv turned to Shiv Shankar again. This time he recommended that the Prime Minister treat the report as vindication of his stand! After all, he argued, only winding-up charges were paid. Once again, others (Arun Singh among them) who felt that Rajiv should get indignant about Bofors' breach of faith were ignored.

The net result was that Rajiv came across as a liar who tried to take refuge behind mere technicalities. Despite this, the Prime Minister continued to turn to Shiv Shankar and has agreed to many of his suggestions, including the distancing of his best friend, Amitabh Bachchan. Says a member of the Prime Minister's office (PMO): "The trouble is that the PM regards the fellow as a legal wizard!"

In fact, Shiv Shankar's legal achievements have been dubious. His brief for the government before the Sarkaria Commission was such that most of the Commission's recommendations went against the Centre and for the states. His work on the Indo-Bangladesh border dispute succeeded in worsening the disagreement and finally, he was told to stop formulating China policy.

Buta Singh cannot claim to share Shiv Shankar's alleged legal wizardry. His specialty is, apparently, his grasp of *realpolitik*. He emerged as a major figure

Rajiv Gandhi and Shiv Shankar (centre) with the 1986 Cabinet: a special relationship



halfway through Rajiv's term largely because of the access he enjoyed to the Prime Minister, thanks to Punjab. In the post-accord period, Rajiv's meetings with Buta went on for days on end and the latter used this proximity to impress the Prime Minister with his understanding of politics. He also cultivated M.L. Fotedar, then Rajiv's political adviser, who, obligingly, boosted his prospects with their leader.

Rajiv had been impressed with Buta during the Asian Games period and hoped that, as home minister, he would function as a man of action. Buta realised that this meant keeping the Prime Minister posted with snippets of information and fell to the task with gusto. It helped that Intelligence Bureau (IB) chief B.J. Barai was his friend and together, the two told Rajiv what he wanted to hear.

Impressed, the Prime Minister assigned him the task of keeping a watch on Zail Singh and on any conspiracy that the President may have been hatching. Buta managed this by using the IB's electronic surveillance methods and by cultivating, and ultimately, winning over Tarlochan Singh, nominally deputy press secretary to the President but effectively, his key adviser. Once Tarlochan began warning Zail Singh of the folly of dismissing the Prime Minister, the Giani began to waver.

At the same time, Buta assured Rajiv that there was enough evidence to destroy Zail Singh should the need arise. For instance, he said, Rashtrapati Bhavan had become a terrorist hideout. Even the killers of Lalit Maken took shelter there. This was exactly what Rajiv wanted to hear and he gleefully repeated the allegation. But when the time came for Buta to substantiate it, the proof was lacking. Nevertheless, the fact that Zail Singh went quietly became a considerable triumph for Buta and cemented his position within Rajiv's inner circle.



P.V. Narasimha Rao with Rajiv: the voice of experience

Narasimha Rao is the *eminence grise* of the Cabinet. He rarely expresses a strong opinion but gently nudges things his way. He was the Defamation Bill's biggest supporter and it was his idea to send N.D. Tiwari to UP as chief minister



Since then, he has been frequently consulted on Punjab (even though he is an MP from Rajasthan) and till recently, the government's policy bore his unmistakable imprint. He recommended the dismissal of the Barnala government, has suggested raising a vigilance groupof scheduled caste Sikhs and attempted to create a pro-government faction within the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC). Nearly everybody else involved with Punjab has fought with Buta. Ghulam Nabi Azad is no longer asked for suggestions after he fell out with him, Ribeiro's influence has waned for the same reason, Barnala is now regarded as ineffectual because of Buta's opposition, and Sushil Muni is thought to be well-meaning but misguided, thanks to Buta. Only S.S. Ray has stood up to him and Rajiv's visit to Punjab last month is regarded as the only sign that the home minister is not entirely omnipotent when it comes to Punjab.

Buta's political influence, however, remains unaffected. Though he is not a Congress(I) office-bearer, Rajiv uses him to keep a watch on the states. When chief ministers find that they cannot see the Prime Minister, they turn up on Buta's doorstep instead. Most are quite content to do as he instructs. Only one has ever complained. After Buta tried to force S.B. Chavan to make some MLAs ministers, the former Maharashtra chief minister protested to Rajiv. The Prime Minister took his side but, within a few weeks, he was replaced.

In many ways, P. Chidambaram is the baby of the Gang of Four. Originally, he entered politics as a protege of Moopanar, once a mainstay of the Congress organisation and the boss of the Tamil Nadu unit of the party. By the time he came to national prominence, however, he had shed his Moopanar link and repackaged himself as a twenty-first century man in the Rajiv Gandhi mould. Says a leading member of the Congress(I): "The PM has a weakness for articulate, Westernised young men who tell him that they share his vision of India and his disdain of politics." And in fact.

WHO RUNS INDIA?

Domestic affairs



P. Shiv Shankar



P. Chidambaram



Buta Singh



P.V. Narasimha Rao

Foreign policy



P.V. Narasimha Rao



Ronen Sen

K.P.S. Menon

P. Chidambaram

the word that Rajiv uses most often while describing Chidambaram is "articulate".

For all the gloss and polish, Chidambaram is no slouch when it comes to digging the knife in. In 1986, he kept warning Rajiv about Arun Nehru's alleged evil designs. When Nehru had his heart attack in Kashmir, the Prime Minister assigned his [illegible] internal security responsibilities to Chidambaram. Those who did not know the Tamil technocrat well, assumed that this was a show, and that Nehru would run the department from his hospital bed in Kashmir. In fact, Chidambaram knew exactly why Rajiv had given him the job and went about methodically destroying Nehru.

When Nehru returned from Srinagar and attempted to resume his work Chidambaram indicated that he would continue in the post till Rajiv told him to hand over charge. Nehru rushed to Rajiv who told him that he was worried that he might overwork and so, Chidambaram would keep most of the departments. Nehru then tried to browbeat his successor but Chidambaram held firm. Eventually, of course, Nehru was unceremoniously dropped.

This experience convinced Rajiv that Chidambaram had great potential. He allowed him to remain in the home ministry but urged him, as minister for personnel, to find ways of motivating the bureaucracy. Chidambaram's solution was to send administrators abroad for training. It was his idea also to get the National Security Guard (NSG) and the Special Protection Group (SPG) trained in Italy. When others pointed out to Rajiv that this could lead to embarrassing criticism, the scheme was scrapped. (However, Arun Nehru, who knows that the proposal is on file, tried to turn it into a controversy, last year.)

As minister for personnel, Chidambaram has succeeded in alienating the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) which feels that he plays favourites and is—in any case—biased against its members.

A frequently levelled criticism is that he has overseen the appointment of several South Indians to all the key posts. Presently, most major secretaries are all South Indians: K.P.S. Menon (external affairs), T.N. Seshan (defence), S. Venkitaramanan (finance), J.A. Kalyana Krishnan (home), S. Varadan (coal and petroleum), S. Rajagopal (energy), Vijay Shekharan (food and civil supplies), K.C. Sivaramakrishnan (urban development), R. Srinivasan (health), 'Bob' Murari (food processing), P.B. Krishnaswamy (special secretary, Planning Commission), S. Vardarajan (culture and sports), M.K. Narayanan (director, IB), P.K. Harlankar (director-general, Border Security Force), M.B.W. Rao (chairman, Customs and Central Excise), Chandra Shekhar (science and technology) and K.P.P. Nambiar (electronics). Clearly all 17 appointments cannot have been Chidambaram's doing. And yet, the feeling persists that he is moving his own men—all South Indians—into positions of influence.



Rajiv with P. Chidambaram: a weakness for articulate, Westernised young men

The IAS is also unhappy about his stand on its promotions. The service's 1970 batch was due for promotion to joint secretary level in 1987. According to civil service procedure, a committee of secretaries had to approve the promotions which would then go to the Cabinet Secretariat Board and then to the ministry of personnel. The file was delayed for eight months. According to the IAS, Chidambaram engineered the delay so that in the absence of newly-promoted joint secretaries, he could fill vacant posts with non-IAS officers. Chidambaram says that the committee of secretaries caused the delay.

Chidambaram's enemies in the IAS, however, are not as vociferous as his enemies in the party. They claim that many of Rajiv's miscalculations—Sri Lanka, for instance—stem from Chidambaram's advice. They offer the example of the 1987 judgment against a clerk in Rashtrapati Bhavan. Chidambaram wanted to use it as the basis of a campaign against Zail Singh. This move was supported by Shiv Shankar and Narasimha Rao and would have gone ahead but for the last-minute intervention of Bhagwat Jha Azad and Dinesh Singh who pointed out that firstly, the clerk had been recruited by the home ministry and secondly, Rajiv's critics would turn the campaign around to hold him responsible for the 1985 South Block spying scandal in which a member of P.C. Alexander's staff was arrested.

They point also to the unnecessary confrontation with Vice-President Shank-



ar Dayal Sharma, a few months ago. Sharma is a Gandhi-family loyalist of longstanding and was horrified when Chidambaram used bad language against him in the Rajya Sabha. He walked out and refused to return to the House till Rajiv personally called on him. Since then, Chidambaram's friends have tried to paint Sharma a Zail Singh style conspirator in an effort to justify the bad language.

The most consummate player in the Gang of Four is P.V. Narasimha Rao. Mrs Gandhi raised him to national pre-eminence during her second term but she never let him become part of her inner circle. Rajiv Gandhi, too, regarded him as a solid old-school politician but one best-suited to such ministries as external affairs and human resources.

Rao, obviously, did not agree with this assessment of his talents and after he was landed with the newly-created human resources ministry (basically, a tarted-up version of the old education ministry) in 1985, even allowed an expression of displeasure to break through his sphinx-like visage. When he was given additional charge of health, he fought with all three of his ministers of state: Margaret Alva, Krishna Sahi and Saroj Khaparde.

But by 1987 when the decline in Rajiv Gandhi's fortunes began, his position grew stronger. Rajiv now began to feel that he had erred in ignoring the voices of experience and turned more and more to Rao for advice. Meanwhile dissent within the party had grown to such levels that MPs were seriously considering dumping Rajiv. At that stage, Arun Nehru, V.P. Singh and the rest were still in the Congress(I) and President Zail Singh needed an alternative Prime Minister in case he dismissed Rajiv. V.P. Singh made it clear that he would not take the job and Arun Nehru was unacceptable to nearly everybody.

There were now two obvious compromise choices: N.D. Tiwari or Narasimha Rao. Neither Nehru nor the Raja would agree to Tiwari because of their opposition to him in UP. That left only Rao, and V.P. Singh began suggesting his name privately. At the same time, Chandra Swami, with whom Rao has clearly-established links, went to see Zail Singh (according to the Giani's own account), and offered him all the help he needed to topple Rajiv if only he would agree to make Rao Prime Minister.

Rao has since denied to Rajiv that he had any knowledge of this conspiracy and the Prime Minister clearly believes him; but others are not so sure. They feel that he has been careful not to defend Rajiv in public so that he remains an acceptable compromise candidate should the Prime Minister be dumped by the party.

Since mid-1987, however, Rao has been consulted on nearly everything from the timing of the China trip to the clearance of the Pepsi project. Rajiv believes that his sober, restrained style indicates a thoughtful, cautious mind that can act as a brake on his own impetuosity. However, it is possible to read other motives into Rao's actions. It was he (and Buta Singh) who urged Rajiv to send Arjun Singh to Madhya Pradesh. Rao's stated grounds were that Arjun Singh could win the election for the Congress(I). His detractors say that, in fact, he perceived Singh as a threat and wanted him out of Delhi. Similarly, Rao backed the move to send N.D. Tiwari to Uttar Pradesh. His critics say that thus he not only got the only other possible alternative PM out of the way, but also had a fighting chance to get the finance ministry once Tiwari vacated it. (He didn't. It went to S.B. Chavan.)

Such allegations of duplicity are routinely levelled against Rao. When he refused to say anything in favour of the Defamation Bill in public, despite having lobbied for it in private, this was taken as another instance of his artful nature. Rajiv, however, rejects this interpretation and continues to trust Rao.

Will the Gang of Four last? Probably not. In a sense, its emergence displays the sad state the government has come to. In recent months, Rajiv has begun to feel that he lacks sound political counsel; these four ministers are, apparently, the ones to fill that vacuum.

WHO RUNS INDIA?

Party/politics



P. Shiv Shankar



P. Chidambaram



Buta Singh



P V. Narasimha Rao

Administration



P. Chidambaram



Gopi Arora



B.G. Deshmukh



Serla Grewal

But of them, Chidambaram is a political novice (if not a nonentity). Shiv Shankar was defeated in his native Andhra and had to sneak into Parliament from Gujarat. Buta Singh dare not face the voters of Punjab and has been accommodated in a safe seat in Rajasthan, and P.V. Narasimha Rao counts for nothing in Andhra Pradesh politics. If this is the best Rajiv can do for 'political' advisers,

What your mother couldn't tell you about making your marriage work.



Remember the day before your wedding? Your mother and you talked into the small hours of the morning. She told you the meaning of marriage, those little compromises you would have to make, how to fit into his life and how to please him. However, like most women, your mother shied away from one sensitive topic — the right contraceptive method to use.

The contraceptive confusion

There is a bewildering choice of contraceptives today. And making the right choice is not easy. Some methods involve the tension of counting days (you could go wrong so easily), while others carry the risk of side or after effects. Or worse, the embarrassment of a clinical examination. Some depend upon the temperature for effectiveness. Surely there is a contraceptive method that's absolutely safe without the mess, the accompanying side effects or one that involves a lot of preparation? What you need is a safe, simple, sure method that is right for both of you.

The safe, sure condom

The condom is one of the safest, simplest and surest of contraceptives. It does not involve a visit to the doctor or a clinical examination. Nor does it mean surgery, pain or discomfort to your body. Now thinner and finer than ever before, the condom protects without interfering with the pleasure.

Kohinoor confidence

Ask for Kohinoor by name at your nearest chemist. One of India's largest selling condoms, Kohinoor gives you the confidence of knowing you are absolutely safe. It is lubricated and made from the finest latex to give you a near natural feeling. Each condom is electronically tested for total safety. That's the Kohinoor confidence. Is it any wonder that millions of couples all over India are choosing Kohinoor as the safest, most practical method of contraception?

Kohinoor is from the people who understand your need for privacy, protection and pleasure, for a contraceptive that is absolutely safe. And your wish to make your marriage the best thing that ever happened to both of you.

KOHINOOR

Plan your family with Kohinoor confidence.

A Product

MAA COMMUNICATIONS LRCF 388

then it might explain why the government seems constantly to be shooting itself in the leg.

However, Rajiv's style has been to flirt with a group of advisers and to then discard them. When he entered politics, it was first Vijay Dhar and then, Siddhartha Reddy, he counted on. Later it was the two Aruns. After they departed, he turned to M.L. Fotedar till the Congress(I) complained about him. Then briefly, Gopi Arora assumed great importance before being sidelined. Next, it was cronies like Satish Sharma who became his eyes and ears till they embroiled themselves in too many scandals. Now, it is the Gang of Four. But already, Delhi insiders are betting that after the fiasco of the Defamation Bill, this grouping, too, will fall out of favour.

As of now, however, they rule the roost when it comes to domestic policy and party matters. Some of them also contribute to foreign policy discussions, though the key man in that field remains Ronen Sen, a joint secretary in the PMO. On economic affairs, the Gang of Four has yet to contribute significantly to policy making (though Shiv Shankar tries), but then, Rajiv has no cohesive economic policy. Shiv Shankar and Narasimha Rao are also trying to extend their influence into media management and have campaigned against information secretary Gopi Arora, who is no longer the force he used to be.

One view is that the Gang of Four owes its success to its ability to play up to the dark side of Rajiv's nature. Says an MP: "How long can you keep making excuses for the Prime Minister? It can't always be Shiv Shankar's fault or Chidambaram's fault. The Defamation Bill may have been their idea but it was Rajiv who made the decision." Apparently, one side of Rajiv is fed up with the criticism he has encountered. The Gang appeals to this side by telling him how he must sock it to his critics. Says the MP: "They appeal to his macho side."

So far, Rajiv has played along with this grouping. But the Gang of Four has sown the seeds of its own eventual downfall by fighting within itself. Shiv Shankar and Narasimha Rao, for instance, dislike each other because of old Andhra rivalries. Consequently, each is always putting the other down.

Similarly, Buta Singh and Chidambaram are also fighting over the home ministry. Buta regards his minister of state as too clever by half; Chidambaram regards his Cabinet minister as the kind of politician he is struggling against. The battle between the two has severely damaged the home ministry and the government itself. In an effort to ingratiate himself with Rajiv, Chidambaram promised to uncover details of the Czech pistol deal that would clearly implicate Arun Nehru. Accordingly, the government leaked to the press that such disclosures were on their way. Since then, however, Buta has got in on the act and attempted to prevent his junior from taking all the credit. The net result is that no revelations have been forthcoming and the regime's credibility has been dented. Much the same has happened in the Syed Modi murder case. Again, the two ministers pushed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into leaking sensational details that seemed to implicate Sanjay Singh. In its rush to smear Singh and Amita Modi, however, the ministry neglected to prepare a cast-iron case and has been greatly embarrassed by recent reverses in the courts. Chidambaram, in particular, has also been only too willing to pass the blame for his mistakes to his officers. After making a misleading statement in Parliament on the lathi-charge on Andhra legislators near the Prime Minister's house, he issued an apology but blamed his mis-statement on the Delhi police.

Opposition to the Gang of Four is building in New Delhi. Chidambaram, especially, finds himself the focus of a concerted attack. The IAS (and particularly, the non-South Indian secretaries) is extremely upset. So are many ministers who accuse his personnel ministry of refusing them the special assistants they want. Within the party, he is regarded as an arrogant upstart (he is now also rowing with Moopanar) and after piloting the Defamation Bill, he has become the target of the press' anger. He will probably be the first to go.

Shiv Shankar has always bounced back after reverses and has already begun a studied process of disinformation to recover from the Defamation Bill disaster. It was his idea to blame the Bill on S.S. Ray to divert attention from his own role and he is already buttonholing journalists and declaring: "*Bhaiyya*, I was never for the Bill." Even if he goes into temporary decline, he will probably survive in the long run.

Buta Singh's position is strong. While Ray may win the battle to keep him out of Punjab policy-formulation (such recent reverses as Tohra's victory in the SGPC elections will help), Buta's role as an adviser on party affairs seems set to remain. After all, he does have the Zail Singh triumph behind him and there have been few real disasters attached to his name. Moreover, he softened his stand on the Defamation Bill shortly before it was withdrawn.

What happens to Narasimha Rao depends largely on how Rajiv reacts to the stories currently sweeping Delhi. According to these, Rao and Shiv Shankar have realised that a Congress party with Rajiv Gandhi at its head will find it difficult to win the next election. On the other hand, though Rajiv is clearly not a vote getter, he is not an obvious vote-loser either. If the Congress is to dump him, then his position must be substantially weakened over the next few months so that he is perceived as a liability.

Therefore, goes the story, the sustained opposition to the withdrawal of the Defamation Bill from the Gang of Four, even after it was clear that it was a major political miscalculation, was prompted only by a desire to damage Rajiv. A few more such self-destructive moves, and replacing him will seem like the obvious course of action.

Naturally, every single member of the Gang of Four rejects this hypothesis out of hand and swears undying loyalty to Rajiv. But the stories are spreading and it is inevitable that somebody will bring them to Rajiv's attention. Should he believe them as he did the stories about Arun Nehru—then it is only a matter of time before India's Gang of Four meets the same fate as its Chinese counterpart.

Rajiv Shukla/*New Delhi*

WHO RUNS INDIA?

Economy



S.B. Chavan



M.S. Ahluwalia

Media/image



Gopi Arora



Suman Dubey



A flash of fury

The Yamuna overflows its banks: Delhi was lucky Jagdish Yadav



Submerged hutments: serious damage

Large parts of northern India reel under the worst-ever flood of the century

FLOODS

Last year north India was devastated by drought. This year it experienced the fury of the floods. For four precarious days, the situation in Delhi resembled the 1978 floods as the entire Trans Yamuna area was inundated. The extent of the damage was limited, however, because the bunds across the river, constructed decades ago, stemmed the tide. The administration was all set to press the panic button when 1.7 cusecs of water had to be released from the Tejwala water works. Fortunately, though, the situation improved and the water level receded below the 204 metres danger mark.

Explained Prem Singh, the executive councillor (development): "The damage to Delhi was not due to heavy rains but the seepage through breaches along the river." But that was not the only cause. Many colonies of the city were waterlogged, not by river water, but due to the backflow from the city sewers, their outflow into the Yamuna being restricted.

At the Inter State Bus Terminus (ISBT), for instance, water entered due to the backflow of sewerage. The water level was about two or three feet high, while at some places it stood at six feet. There was a serious danger that Old Delhi bridges would be submerged, which forced the authorities to close them to traffic. Army boats were pressed into service to rescue 35 marooned people in Majnu-ka-Tila in north Delhi.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited the flood-affected areas of Delhi, accompanied by Sonia Gandhi, the Lt Governor of Delhi, Romesh Bhandari and the chief executive councillor, Jag Pravesh Chandra. He met displaced persons at the relief camps and enquired about their welfare. Rupees ten lakhs has been sanctioned from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for flood relief work, undertaken by the Delhi administration.

Delhi was lucky. The situation in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh was far worse. The recent flash floods were the worst in the century and thousands of villagers were swept away by their fury. Punjab, whose economy had been limping back to normalcy, was gravely affected. Over 15,000 villages were swept away and by 25 September the situation had so worsened that full-fledged rescue operations had to be launched. A Punjab government spokesman disclosed that, with army assistance, they had evacuated more than one lakh people from Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Ropar.

In Ropar district alone, helicopters

dropped 4,000 food packets and rescued more than 6,000 people from the flood-affected areas. In Ludhiana, the situation became critical when a breach developed in the Dhussi bund near Kasabad. In some areas, people spent nights perched on trees to protect themselves from the swirling waters below. At Phillaur, all the townsfolk evacuated to seek shelter in relief camps situated on the Grand Trunk Road.

The Tavi and the Chenab also overflowed their banks, marooning 10,000 people. The army rescue teams worked in the submerged Pargwal and Makwal areas of the Akhnoor section. In Himachal Pradesh, with the blocking of the Rohtang and Bara Lacha passes, Lahaul and Spiti districts and Kulu and Manali were cut off from the rest of the state.



Jagdish Yadav

The government, both at the state and the Union level, geared up to face the fast-deteriorating situation. A crisis management group was set up at the Centre and initially, the Cabinet secretary, B.G. Deshmukh, reviewed the situation. In the states, the chief ministers and Governors supervised the relief operations. But the system worked better in Delhi than elsewhere. The Delhi administration continued holding meetings to discuss relief measures even after the danger level of the Yamuna receded below the danger mark on 29 September.

The fierce floods ripped through government budgets. It was ironic that the government had barely completed its flood-relief operations in Bangladesh when faced with the worst-ever flood in the country, in many decades.

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*

Murder, movie-style

Inspired by a scene from a Tamil film, members of the Vanniar community club a Harijan to death

TAMIL NADU

It was a scene straight from a movie. On 23 September, a group of men from the Vanniar community clubbed a 70-year-old Harijan to death in Soorapattu village, just 25 kilometres north of Madras. The manner in which he was murdered clearly showed that the killers had been inspired by a scene from a Tamil film *Irandil Onru*. In this a group of angry villagers attack and kill an errant police officer after breaking into his house by using the trunk of a tree as a ramrod.

The violence had its genesis in a ban ordered by the Vanniar Sangham (an organisation demanding reservations and other concessions for their community), forbidding all political parties and organisations from hoisting flags in Vanniar-dominated areas. On 19 September, some Harijan youths from Soorapattu decided to defy the ban and hoisted a flag of their outfit—the Ambedkar Peravai—in the village centre. Only just before, the Vanniars had uprooted flags of the DMK and AIADMK parties from the same place.

The following day, members of the Peravai complained to the police that their flag had been desecrated and sought action against the offenders. A non-Harijan member of the AIADMK (Jayalalitha faction) called Suryanathan had allegedly instigated the Peravai to lodge the complaint. A few days later, a 100-strong mob of the Vanniars, armed with staffs and knives, marched to Suryanathan's house. The inmates, who had locked themselves inside, pleaded for mercy. But the mob was unforgiving and while deciding how to break into the house, one of them arrived at the idea from the film *Irandil Onru*. The men began chopping down a palm tree that grew near the house and used its trunk to break open the door. Suryanathan's father, a former village official called Viswanathan, quickly succumbed to blows and Suryanathan himself was struck unconscious and badly injured. Another man in the house was attacked but the mob left the womenfolk alone.

After the police restored some measure of law and order, the Ambedkar Peravai went on procession on 25 September in the neighbouring town of Ambattur and reportedly stoned buses and trains. A police constable posted at Soorapattu was stabbed the same day. On 26 September, merchants of Ambattur and Soorapattu demanded police action against the violent processionists. In all, the police arrested 25 people for the murder of Viswanathan. Later, an all-party meeting demanded an inquiry into the incident but both the Vanniar Sangham and the Ambedkar Peravai stayed out of the meeting. The visit of the Vanniar Sangham leader, Dr Ramadas, to the village didn't help to assuage feelings either.



Courtesy *The Hindu*

Trunk used to break into house: emulating films

The Vanniar Sangham believes that the community has been neglected by successive governments in the state. In the recent past, members of the community have engaged in pitched battles with DMK party workers and Harijans, whom they see as their main rivals. Despite being a backward caste themselves, the Vanniars view the Harijans as untouchables. With elections expected in January next year, political parties have already started making moves to woo the electorate. If the Vanniars persist with imposing their ban on political activity in the areas they dominate, there is a real possibility of other such instances of violence in the days to come.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

A game of one-upmanship

Uncertainty prevails over the formation of the SJD as the Hegde-Chandra Shekhar truce threatens to fall apart

KARNATAKA

The Janata Party has played out yet another suspense-filled round of "will Chandra Shekhar come, will he not?" With the confirmation of the former Janata president's participation in the 11 October event at Bangalore from the two vital sources, Chandra Shekhar himself and rival Ramakrishna Hegde, the stage is truly set to bring the unity drama of the national Opposition to a climax. But given the Opposition's record of false starts, the proposed four party merger on Jayaprakash Narayan's birth anniversary, continues to strike an unreal note.



Hegde (left) and Chandra Shekhar: a temporary truce

Said Karnataka CM S.R. Bommai, "All uncertainty is now over. The four parties have now agreed to ratify the Janata Parliamentary Board's decision (of 22 September) to form the Samajwadi Janata Dal." According to him even the Bahuguna faction of the Lok Dal and the Congress(S) would agree to the ratification well before the meet. Janatamen in Bangalore were already making preparations for the foundation day function at the grounds of the Bangalore Palace.

In the midst of an unprecedented crisis resulting from the Sikh-Hindu communal clashes in Bidar it was with weariness that state Janata leaders greeted the controversy over Chandra Shekhar's participation in the function. On 22 September Chandra Shekhar, who had proposed the JPB resolution, agreed to hold the foundation day function on 11 October. Former Karnataka chief minister, Ramakrishna Hegde, seconded it. A split had been averted, miraculously it seemed, considering the extreme positions that the sides had adopted. But the game of one-upmanship was far from over.

On 26 September Hegde summoned a press conference in Bangalore and indicated that Chandra Shekhar might not find it convenient to attend the 11 October meet. Hegde had apparently gathered from a "mutual friend" of his and Chandra Shekhar's that the former party president had a '*padavatra* commitment' in Bihar on that day. The "mutual friend" also indicated that an advanced date would be convenient for Chandra Shekhar. The 11 October date, Hegde asserted, stood.

The very next day Chandra Shekhar denied having told the mysterious mutual friend anything about prior engagements. Talking to newsmen at New Delhi, Chandra Shekhar wondered why Hegde had begun airing such messages to the press without checking with him.

Moreover, Chandra Shekhar's reservations about Jan Morcha leader V.P. Singh are still unresolved. Recently, his clarification that he accepted Singh's 'presidentship', not 'leadership', came as a surprise to Ramakrishna Hegde who said: "I don't know what he means by that." The name of the merged party is also another issue of contention. 'Rashtriya' Janata Dal, says Chandra Shekhar; 'Samajwadi' Janata Dal, says the Hegde group.

Meanwhile, in Bangalore, a reception committee under state Janata Party president, M.P. Prakash, is going ahead with preparations for the great day. Prakash expects "around 4000 delegates to attend the merger function". He confirms the participation of Lok Dal leader Bahuguna and Jan Morcha leader Ram Dhan apart from leaders who are sympathetic to Ramakrishna Hegde, led by V.P. Singh and Devi Lal. Despite the bickering the 11 October meeting promises to change the future of the nation's Opposition politics.

Prakash Belawadi/*Bangalore*



Harnessing farm power

Sharad Joshi fights for the rights of sugarcane and cotton farmers with renewed vigour

MAHARASHTRA

Sharad Joshi, the Shetkari Sanghatana leader, is once again on the warpath. And this time he has declared war on the powerful sugar barons of Maharashtra. Joshi, who is fighting for the rights of the sugarcane and cotton farmers in Vidarbha, has also challenged chief minister Sharad Pawar to keep the promise that he had made way back in 1978 when he had been at the helm of the Progressive Democratic Front-run government.

Joshi told SUNDAY that during his first tenure as the chief minister, Pawar had agreed to fix the prices of cotton 20 per cent above the all-India support price under the Cotton Monopoly Procurement Scheme. However, the central government has always maintained that the support price and the guarantee price should be the same. "Now we hope that the leaders of Maharashtra take a decision as to whether they are with the farmers of Maharashtra or with Rajiv Gandhi's government," Joshi said. "Loyalty to farmers and loyalty to Rajiv Gandhi are two different things and they do not meet. The local leadership will have to understand this."



Sharad Joshi with his supporters: a messiah for the poor farmer

The Sanghatana's post-harvest rally on 2 October was the first to be organised since Pawar took over as the chief minister. As Joshi said, "The sugarcane farmers' grievances deal more with the sugar barons of the cooperative sector, who only have personal goals in mind, than with the central government which controls the sugar prices." Citing instances of "illegal deductions" by the sugar barons, Joshi pointed out that factories run by the cooperatives in Maharashtra impose something called the non-refundable deposit. Growers have thus to part with Rs 10 for every tonne of produce every year and also have to contribute a sum of Rs 5-10 towards funds such as modernisation of the plant, chief minister's housing project, small savings, etc.

Besides, there is a purchase tax of Rs 16.60 which a grower has to pay for every tonne of crop that he produces, if he decides not to sell it to the cooperatives. Yet again, the cost of cutting and transporting the sugarcane amounts to Rs 52 per tonne and this is not included in the cost of production calculated either by the commission for agricultural costs and prices or the bureau of industrial costs and prices. Similarly, the cost of transporting it to the railway station, stacking it in the wagons (approximately Rs 4.50 per quintal) and storing in godowns (Rs 5 per quintal) have not been taken into account. And after all these deductions, Joshi points out, the farmer stands to lose as much as Rs 135 on every tonne of sugarcane.

Meanwhile, a piquant situation has been created following the insolvency petitions filed by as many as two lakh farmers, and the claims total a staggering Rs 12 crores. Already 50,000 of these petitions have been admitted in the insolvency registers under Section 18 of the Provincial Insolvency Act. These petitions are for amounts ranging between Rs 5,000 and Rs 6,000 and deal with overdue interests on loans taken for crops, construction of bunds, etc.

While the insolvency courts have pleaded that they are unable to cope with the heavy rush of petitions, the Sanghatana is demanding protection for petitioners from creditors who are moving in to collect their debts. Joshi speculates that by 2 October next year, nearly one crore farmers would have filed insolvency petitions and, "this will ensure that the focal point of the next elections will be the insolvency petitions". And unless Sharad Pawar is able to reach a compromise with the Sanghatana and the farmers, he will be facing a very hostile electorate in the future.



Sharad Pawar: will he keep his promise?

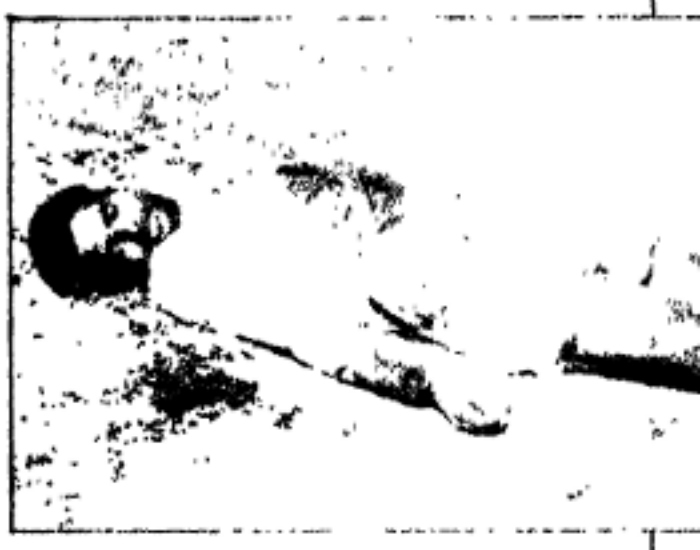
Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

A battle of attrition

The police and Naxalites engage in a bitter battle in which many innocent lives are lost

ANDHRA PRADESH

Andhra Pradesh's home minister may rave, rant and vow to wipe out the "Naxalite menace" by end-1989 but if recent events are anything to go by, the battle between the Naxalites and the police has just begun. While the police continue to quote figures of extremists nabbed by them, the Naxalites have charted buses, government offices and railway stations



Ravinder Naik who was killed by Naxalites: violence escalates

to show for their success. The attacks on policemen too have steadily increased and Naxalites allege that the police too are guilty of killing their men.

Only two years ago, the militant cadres of the most prominent Naxalite group, the CPI-ML (Peoples War Group) led by the legendary Kondapally Seetharamiah, reacted to the "fake encounters" by organising *bandhs* in Karimnagar and Warangal, in the Naxalite-infested Telengana region. But there has been a dramatic shift in their methods during recent times and they have more often than not resorted to violence and destruction.

But perhaps the worst fallout of the Naxalite-police showdown is the loss of lives on both sides. Recently when the police claimed that the PWG leader, Vijayakumar, who had been arrested on 10 September, had "escaped", the PWG members suspected foul play. The PWG reacted by burning down the Saroorna-

gar Mandal Revenue office and the Moula Ali railway station.

Soon after Vijayakumar's controversial "escape", a constable, Ravinder Naik of Metapalli police station in Karimnagar district, went to Atmakur village to "gather information". But he was spotted by a group of PWG cadres who shot him dead. The Karimnagar police too retaliated by killing three PWG members.

The Ravinder Naik killing and its aftermath is not an isolated incident. In fact, aspersions have often been cast on police operations. According to the general secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC), Dr K. Balagopal, the police have killed 30 persons in so-called encounters during the past eight months, of whom at least 20 were "innocent victims of official barbarism". The APCLC has even detailed the cases of nine such persons killed by the police in the three districts of Karimnagar, Warangal and Adilabad and appealed to the London-based Amnesty International to probe them.

Chief minister N.T. Rama Rao, home minister Siva Prasad Rao and senior police officials however claim that the sudden spurt in Naxalite activity is a result of their growing desperation. But the truth is that the Naxalites are still very much in control in the Telengana region and assured of its large base among the masses. In fact, so successful has their drive against the feudal landlords been that most of the landlords have fled to the cities. And even though the Disturbed Areas Act has been promulgated in many districts of Telengana, the landlords refuse to come back.

The state IGP of the Special Force, that is handling anti-Naxalite operations, V.P.B. Nair, even admitted that "since the landlords and feudal elements migrated to towns, the Naxalites no more have an issue to fight for". But Nair charges that the "common people" have become targets of the Naxalites' bullets.

Recently, the police recovered sophisticated weapons from a Naxalite hideout including an AK-47 rifle causing a minor sensation as so far, the Naxalite armoury only consisted of 8 mm rifles, 0.38 and 0.45 revolvers, .303 rifles and 9 mm carbines. However, PWG cadres charge that the AK-47 rifle was planted on Puli Ramulu, from whom it was recovered, so that the police could ask for more sophisticated weapons and funds from the government to counter the "Naxalite menace". Whatever the truth, it is hardly likely that the extremists will give up their fight against the police in a hurry.

Mukundan C. Menon/*Hyderabad*

Arjun Singh strikes back

The CM inducts ten new ministers to neutralise his opponents within the party

MADHYA PRADESH

Chief minister Arjun Singh has turned out to be a survivor. Many of his critics who had all but written him off as a has-been were in for a surprise when the wily chief minister refurbished his sagging image by inducting several of his men in the Cabinet on 19 September. This, despite the fact that he has had to face opposition at every step from the two Congress(I) heavyweights Motilal Vora and Madhavrao Scindia.

Singh's reputation as a favourite in the Delhi *durbar* had taken a beating in the recent past, especially as many of the Centre's decisions went against him. First, his critics, Dilip Singh Bhuria and Rameshwar Neekhara, were appointed AICC joint secretary and Sewa Dal chief respectively, despite all his protests. Then, his lieutenant, Harbans Singh, was removed from the state Sewa Dal Board and his arch-rival, Shyama Charan Shukla, was accorded a grand welcome. All this had made the political pundits suspect that probably Arjun Singh too was on his way out.

But Singh soon turned the tables on his detractors when he announced that a Cabinet expansion would take place before the Assembly session commenced on 26 September. So confident was he of getting his way—despite Scindia and Vora's best efforts to prevent it—that he even asked the probable candidates to be present in Bhopal between 13 and 20 September.

Though the new members of Arjun Singh's team are not spectacular performers, they have been chosen for their affiliations by the chief minister, who has undoubtedly played his cards very cautiously. And even though, at first appearance, it may seem as if Singh has followed the high command's directive of appeasing all factions, the fact remains that the inclusion of the new ministers suits no one but Arjun Singh himself. Of the ten entrants, two appear to be close to Vora, one is a Scindia supporter, two others belong to the Kamalnath camp and three seem to have got their berths due to the efforts of MP Shivendra Bahadur Singh.





Scindia (left) and Vora: Singh's strident critics

However, on close scrutiny, Ms Vimla Verma, who is known to be a Motilal Vora supporter, seems to have got the portfolio of labour and manpower planning because of her links with Sheila Dixit. Similarly, deputy minister Prakash Jain, considered to be Vora's confidant, was also inducted into the Cabinet as he is close to the Prime Minister. On the other hand, deputy forest minister Chandra Mohan, minister for women and child development, Anusuiya Uike—though both proteges of Kamalnath—have the added qualification of having

Arjun Singh: shrewd manipulator



conducted anti-Vora activities.

Similarly, by inducting five ministers from the Chhatisgarh region, Arjun Singh has tried to counter the growing influence of the Shukla brothers. With Mahendra Bahadur Singh's induction, the chief minister probably hopes to weaken the V.C. Shukla base as Mahendra Bahadur Singh has been a Shukla loyalist for quite some time. Also, by inducting Laxmi Narayan Induriah—whose political mentor is V.C. Shukla—Arjun Singh is trying to wedge a rift between the two. Another MLA who has found a place in the Cabinet is Charan Das Mahant whose antagonism for the Shukla brothers is no secret.

Though Arjun Singh has been trying to neutralise his opponents within the party, his choice of ministers dissatisfied many of his supporters. And yet again, the chief minister's manoeuvres encouraged many of his supporters to tackle Shyama Charan Shukla. The first salvo was fired by health minister Mahesh Joshi and convener of the *kisan* cell of the PCC(I), Kaptan Singh Thakur, who cautioned the party workers against some of the new entrants who had stabbed Indira Gandhi in the back.

S.C. Shukla too seems to be digging his own grave. At Raipur, where he received a tumultuous welcome, he retaliated by saying, *"Kaun asli hai kaun naqli, jaldi hi iski pehchan ho jayegi* (It will soon become clear who is a genuine Congressman and who is not)." He even accused his successor of neglecting the Chhatisgarh region, a charge which is bound to antagonise Arjun Singh. Also his remark that Arjun Singh would not have remained chief minister had he been consulted by his brother Vidya Charan in 1980 too promises to have repercussions.

All these political developments do not imply that Arjun Singh is in full control of the situation. His so-called friends have landed him in more trouble than that created by the machinations of his old foes. The Bhopal airport incident is a case in point. One of Singh's Youth Congress lieutenants, Mukesh Nayak, went on the rampage at the airport on the day that Mukul Wasnik, the Youth Congress president, was supposed to reach Bhopal on his way to Indore. The incident only helped in ruining Arjun Singh's chances of sorting out his differences with Suresh Pachauri, the Youth Congress heavyweight who is rabidly opposed to the chief minister. Now perhaps, Arjun Singh will be a bit more careful in choosing his friends.

Swami Trivedi/*Bhopal*



(L to r) Sting, Springsteen, Human Rights Foundation president Jack Healey, Gabriel and Chapman at press conference: critical of organisers

Dancing in the dark

Amnesty's roadies beat up a photographer but Springsteen and Gabriel rock Delhi

DELHI

For a while, it seemed as though the backstage shenanigans would overshadow the performances onstage. The first hint of trouble came when Amnesty International's press officer for India resigned over the advertising for the Human Rights concert held in New Delhi on 30 September. As far as Amnesty was concerned, the New Delhi gig was just one stop in a Human Rights world tour undertaken by rock stars Bruce Springsteen, Peter Gabriel, Sting and others to drum up support for Amnesty. But *The Times of India*, which had sponsored the New Delhi concert, did not mention Amnesty even once in its advertising, leading supporters of the organisation to argue that the show was being turned into a mere celebration of the *Times'* 150th anniversary.

In fact, the problem was slightly more complex. The *Times* had wangled permission for the concert from the Government of India by claiming that this was a Human Rights show, the benefits of which would go to a government-sponsored charity. Had they mentioned Amnesty—which is critical of India's human rights record—the government would almost certainly have refused permission. Moreover, because of the promise of a charitable donation, ticket prices were kept high.

According to the *Times*, its contract for the show made no mention of Amnesty and it had only agreed to mention Human Rights in the advertising, which it did. Amnesty International officials disputed this and the visit of the rock stars got off to a stormy start when Bill Graham, the veteran promoter who is the tour's director, told *The Indian Post*: "We are not a house band hired to perform at somebody's birthday bash." His sentiments were echoed at a press conference on the evening before the show. Peter Gabriel complained that the show's human rights message was being lost, Springsteen repeated the 'birthday bash' analogy and Sting actually mentioned India's appalling human rights record. Amnesty officials also complained about the high ticket prices.

In the process, the *Times'* contribution was needlessly belittled, leading one journalist to accuse the Amnesty officials of denigrating those who had helped them come to India.

Till half an hour before the performers

went on on Friday, 30 September, Graham kept *Times'* executives hanging, even threatening to cancel the performance. But at exactly 7 pm, the show began—much to the *Times'* relief—with an acappella rendition of *Get Up, Stand Up* by all of the concert's stars: Sting, Springsteen, Gabriel, India's L. Shankar, Senegal's Youssou N'Dour and American folkie Tracy Chapman.

From then on, the music took over. The first full set was N'Dour's which, because of language problems, drew a relatively muted, but still enthusiastic, response from the Delhi crowd. He was followed by the concert's biggest surprise: L. Shankar and the Epidemics. Their set successfully fused rock vocals (from Shankar's wife Caroline), jazz licks, and Indian rhythms (from a low-key Zakir Hussain on tabla) to get the crowd swaying. But familiarity breeds contempt and the Epidemics never got the response they deserved till Bruce Springsteen guested on the set-closer. Shankar's band was followed by Tracy Chapman whose acoustic set (she accompanied herself on the guitar), though full of well-crafted songs, could have done with a duet with one of the show's other stars.

At this stage, the confrontation between the show's organisers and the *Times* grew physical. Bill Graham, a rock and roll thug of the old school, had laid down crippling regulations for photographers. When the *Times'* photo editor Sondeep Shankar attempted to take a few pictures, he was assaulted by Graham's security men who accused him of disobeying regulations. The attack on Shankar led all photographers covering the concert to put down their cameras in protest. Graham did not apologise—making this a human rights show in which the organisers beat up people. The following day, Shankar filed a police complaint and the *Times* held a press conference at which it demanded an apology.

None of this, however, was known to the 40,000 fans who were swaying to the music. They got their first mega-set of the evening when Peter Gabriel came on. His brilliant performance was highlighted by a theatrical duet with Sting on *Games Without Frontiers*, a moving *Don't Give Up* (in which he sang the Kate Bush part himself), and a dazzling *Shock The Monkey*. By the time he went into *Sledgehammer*, not one member of the audience could remain seated. Gabriel is clearly the most articulate member of the touring band, had taken the trouble to learn a few words of Hindi and spoke eloquently about human freedoms before the inevitable encore of *Biko*.

The most disappointing set was Sting's. In many ways, he was the most talented performer of the tour but his performance was caught in the tension between his Police-past and his jazz-tinged present. The standout songs were the new ones: *If You Love Somebody* from *Blue Turtles* and a stunning segue from *Fragile* to *They Dance Alone* (with Gabriel guesting on vocals) from *Nothing Like The Sun*. The trouble was with the Police material. Two old songs worked well, a revamped *Bring On The Night* and a slightly plodding remake of *Driven To Tears* (first premiered by the Police in Bombay in 1980), but there were eccentric choices: the mediocre *King Of Pain*, the banal *One World* and the tiresome *When The World Is Running Down*. The great Police hits—*Roxanne*, *Walking On The Moon*, etc.—were not performed as part of Sting's effort to live down his past. He would have been better-off just doing such new songs as *Englishman In New York* and *We Work The Black Seams*. An encore duet of *Every Breath You Take* was spoiled slightly by Springsteen whose gravelly tenor never quite grasped the complexities of Sting's rhythms.

But Springsteen made up for this by what must be—even by his standards—one of his best performances. Choosing wisely to leave out the *Tunnel Of Love* material which the audience was unfamiliar with, he played all the *Born In The USA* hits, starting with a dynamite version of the title track, and performing a rocking *Cover Me*, a moving *My Hometown* and an electrifying *I'm On Fire*. *Dancing In The Dark* was clearly the performance of the evening and saw grown men clambering on to their chairs and dancing in the VIP enclosure. At the end, Springsteen even acted out the video by picking up a girl from the audience and dancing with her. This was followed by an extended version of his 1975 hit, *Born To Run*. And finally, for the traditional rock and roll encore he served up a double helping of *Twist And Shout* and *La Bamba*. By the time he somersaulted off stage, he had performed for an hour and forty-five minutes, three quarters of an hour longer than he was scheduled to. Clearly, both performer and audience had enjoyed themselves. Two group encores followed: a disappointing version of Dylan's *Chimes Of Freedom (I Shall Be Released*, the old Amnesty theme makes a better singalong) and a knockout version (with band) of *Get Up, Stand Up*. By then it was 3.20 am and nobody still wanted to go home. It had clearly been the gig of a lifetime for most of the audience.

The next day, the *Times*-Amnesty battle continued but for the concert audience, after Gabriel and Springsteen, everything else was anti-climactic.

Vir Sanghvi/New Delhi

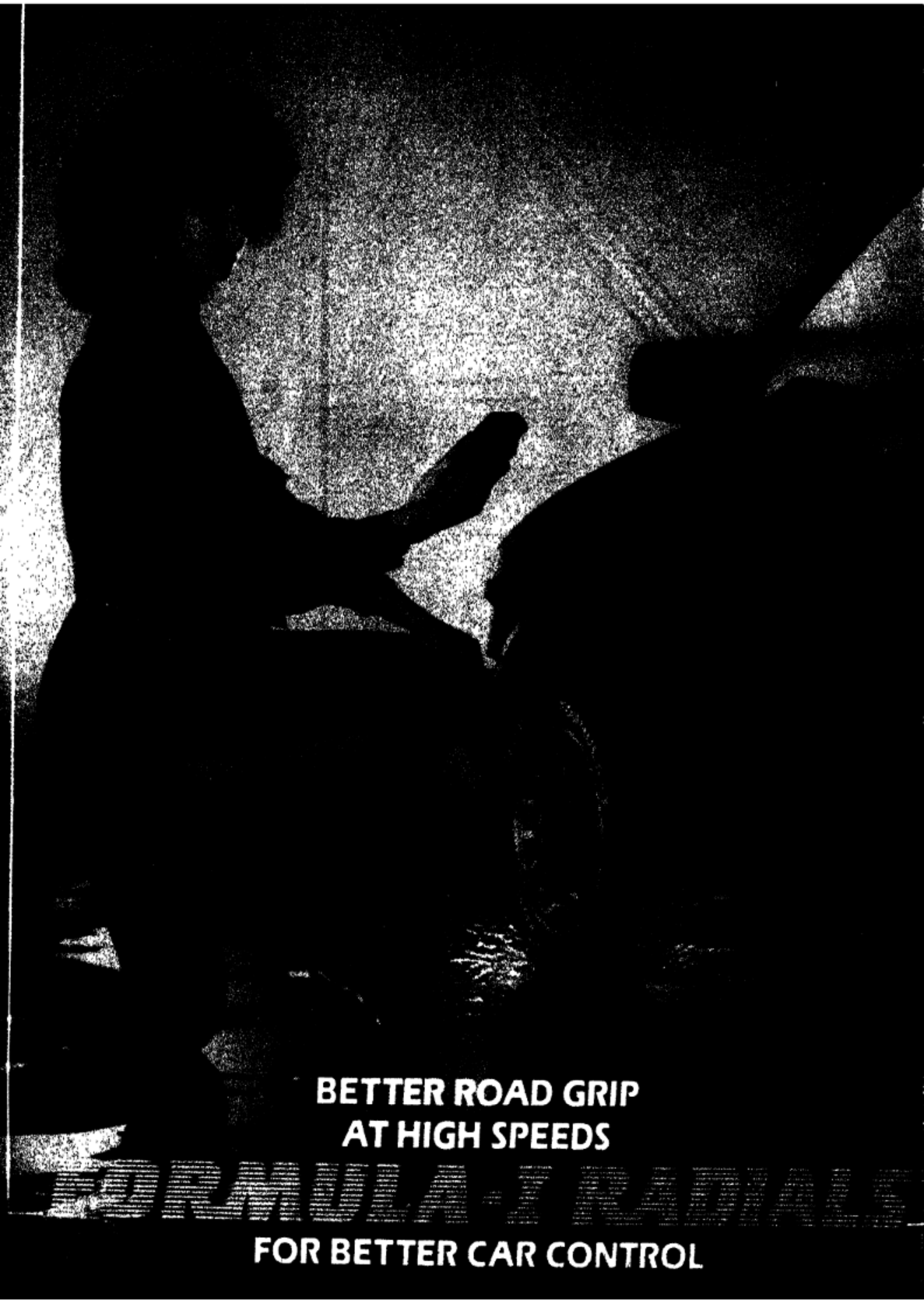


Photographer assaulted by officials: funny conception of human rights



We'll deliver. Wherever on earth. SKYPAK The worldwide couriers.

Skypak House, Cain Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1HL. Telephone: Bracknell (0344) 54545.


BETTER ROAD GRIP
AT HIGH SPEEDS
FOR BETTER CAR CONTROL

GET A FIRM GRIP

0 to 60 in 9.28 seconds. She responds in a flash. The wider, squat tyres bite into the dirt. Her nose lifts. And more than your pulse races.

Get the unrelenting control of CEAT FORMULA-I RADIALS.



CEAT

born tough

All that glitters

The new glamour girls in Parliament: all style and no substance?

The soft swish of silk, the sharp flash of diamonds, a whiff of Parisian perfume, the gentle tinkle of bangles. A high society kitty party? Wrong. The answer is Parliament.

The simple austere look is no longer the in thing in Parliament. Gone are the days when women like Sucheta Kripalani, Renuka Ray and Subhadra Joshi represented the kind of women that one found in the country's legislature. Today, there are more than 60 women in both Houses of Parliament the largest representation since Independence. And the activists among them women like Geeta Mukherjee and Rajendra Kumari Bajpai are less noticeable than the new breed of glamour girls. A breed best exemplified by MPs like Vyjayanthimala Bali, Chandresh Kumari and Jayanti Natarajan. These three and others like them have charmed their way to the front benches and are extremely keen to make an impression -especially when the Prime Minister is in the House. Yesterday's glamour queens like Najma Heptullah and Saroj Khaparde, once the leading lights among the fairer sex, are being eclipsed by the new stars.

The new women are best known for their interventions in Parliament (of debatable substance) and for discussions about pressing matters of state in air-conditioned drawing-rooms. Not for them demonstrations, rallies or active social work -the kind of thing that makes make up melt in the sun. Says one Congress(I) old timer resignedly: "In political terms, their contribution is the lowest."

The ladies room in Parliament reflects this change and is today the debating ground for the latest and best in fashion and jewellery. Says a woman MP who was active during the Quit India movement: "The conversation gets so frivolous." Adds another: "Even if the country is on fire, the major issue that bothers these ladies is the best place to buy saris."

Parliament, of course, has had its share of glamour before- for instance, Maharani Gayatri Devi and Rajmata Vijayeraje Scindia rarely failed to turn heads when they entered Parliament bedecked with jewels. But members remember them as being less aggressive and more modest. Says one Congress leader and former MP: "They rarely made interventions on subjects they did not understand." According to him, the two realised fully well that they were in Parliament mainly because of their royal backgrounds. "There was no obvious effort to catch the high command's attention. They were too sophisticated for that," he recalls.

The new women MPs are quite different. Their induction into Parliament has not always been preceded by an apprenticeship in politics. And some believe that their having become MPs overnight has gone straight to the head. And then, they are close to power even if often found complaining that Rajiv Gandhi does not spend enough time with them. Most of them operate through personal assistants and have their appointments carefully screened. The press is invariably kept at a distance—Vyjayanthimala Bali, for instance, refuses to give interviews.



Jagdish Yadav

(Above) Chandresh Kumari, royal connection; (left) Vyjayanthimala Bali:matinee idol-turned-politician

One of the glamour girls who is creating ripples in the Rajya Sabha is Jayanti Natarajan. Like many of the others, she owes her place in the House to being the wife or daughter of somebody important. Natarajan is the granddaughter of the former chief minister of Tamil Nadu, Bhaktavatsalam. Interestingly, it was her mother, an active social worker, who was first considered for nomination to the House. But Rajiv and the advisers around him, deciding perhaps that it was wisest to pack the House of Elders with youngsters, opted

for the daughter instead. Some hold that the final decision in favour of Jayanti was largely due to minister P. Chidambaram's insistence.

Natarajan, a lawyer, lost no time in making her presence felt in the Rajya Sabha. Clad in heavy silk saris —even in the sweltering heat of Delhi's summer she began taking part in all kinds of debates and not, as anticipated, only on women's issues. To her credit, she emerged an articulate speaker, who makes her point forcefully and with conviction. But her style often tends to overshadow substance, leading to members in the House and the press focusing on not what she says but how she says it.

A joke circulating among reporters covering Parliament goes that when Natarajan is slated to speak in the House, everyone knows beforehand. Reason: she dresses exceptionally well on these occasions (usually very heavy silks), flits around the House appearing to be very busy and makes it a point to be seen talking to Rajiv if he is present.

She has little time for the press, although she is exceptionally polite if a reporter buttonholes her in Parliament. Outside the House though, she is usually unavailable and on the couple of occasions when Sunday made contact with her over the phone, she replied: "You see I am so busy. I have just come back from Greece and have so much to catch up on." (Foreign trips, incidentally, occupy a lot of her time.)

Equal to her in style -though not in substance- is Vyjayanthimala Bali. The matinee idol turned-politician is a regular in the House—silk saris, bangles and full war paint. She does not circulate much and rarely leaves her seat unless it is to speak with a minister or Rajiv Gandhi himself. Bali doesn't participate too often in the debates and although her bio-data boasts of the work she has been doing to uplift weaker sections, she has had little to say on the subject. (Much of the 'accomplishments' listed in her bio-data deal with the Filmfare Awards she has bagged and of dance performances at home and abroad.) On one occasion though, she was persuaded to rise, along with a few other women MPs, to demand action against the Bihar police, members of which were responsible for raping several women in the state. However, she did not bother to wait for the home minister's response to the demand.

Another of the new breed is Chandresh Kumari, who hails from a royal family. Her husband was a hot contender for the seat, but she, apparently, pipped him to it. Chandresh Kumari is not



Maharani Gayatri Devi: the earlier phase of parliamentary glamour

flamboyant and wears her 40 years well, if only from a distance. She is a neat dresser, prefers cotton saris to silks and adorns her nose with a large solitaire.

Unlike Natarajan and Bali, she does not shun publicity and appears more than willing to talk about herself. Dressed immaculately in a chic *salwar kurta*, she apologises for looking a "mess". She describes herself as a "woman struggling against male chauvinism" and the need "to establish contact with the masses".

Asked how she felt on entering the Lok Sabha for the first time, she replies: "It felt like going from school to college. I was a bit shaky." (Incidentally, Chandresh did go to college; she is an undergraduate.) Asked what she most wants to do with her life, she first says

A joke goes that whenever Jayanti Natarajan is slated to speak in the House, everyone knows beforehand. Reason: she dresses exceptionally well (usually heavy silks), flits around the House appearing to be very busy and makes it a point to be seen talking to Rajiv Gandhi



Sudha Newspic Sen



Nirmal Mitra

Amarjit Kaur, who till recently represented Punjab in Parliament, would have been little more than another glamour girl if the Punjab crisis hadn't forced her into playing a more significant role. In the pre-Bluestar days, she had little to contribute by way of debate and discussion

"This is a very difficult question." And then, after some deep thought, reveals that her ambition is to open a nursery school in her native village. She swears to quit Parliament one day to make place for others. For all this, Chandresh Kumari is on several committees of the government and the Congress party. She also has no problem getting an audience with Rajiv and says she finds him very receptive. Like many of the new breed, she is not enamoured of the senior leaders in the party.

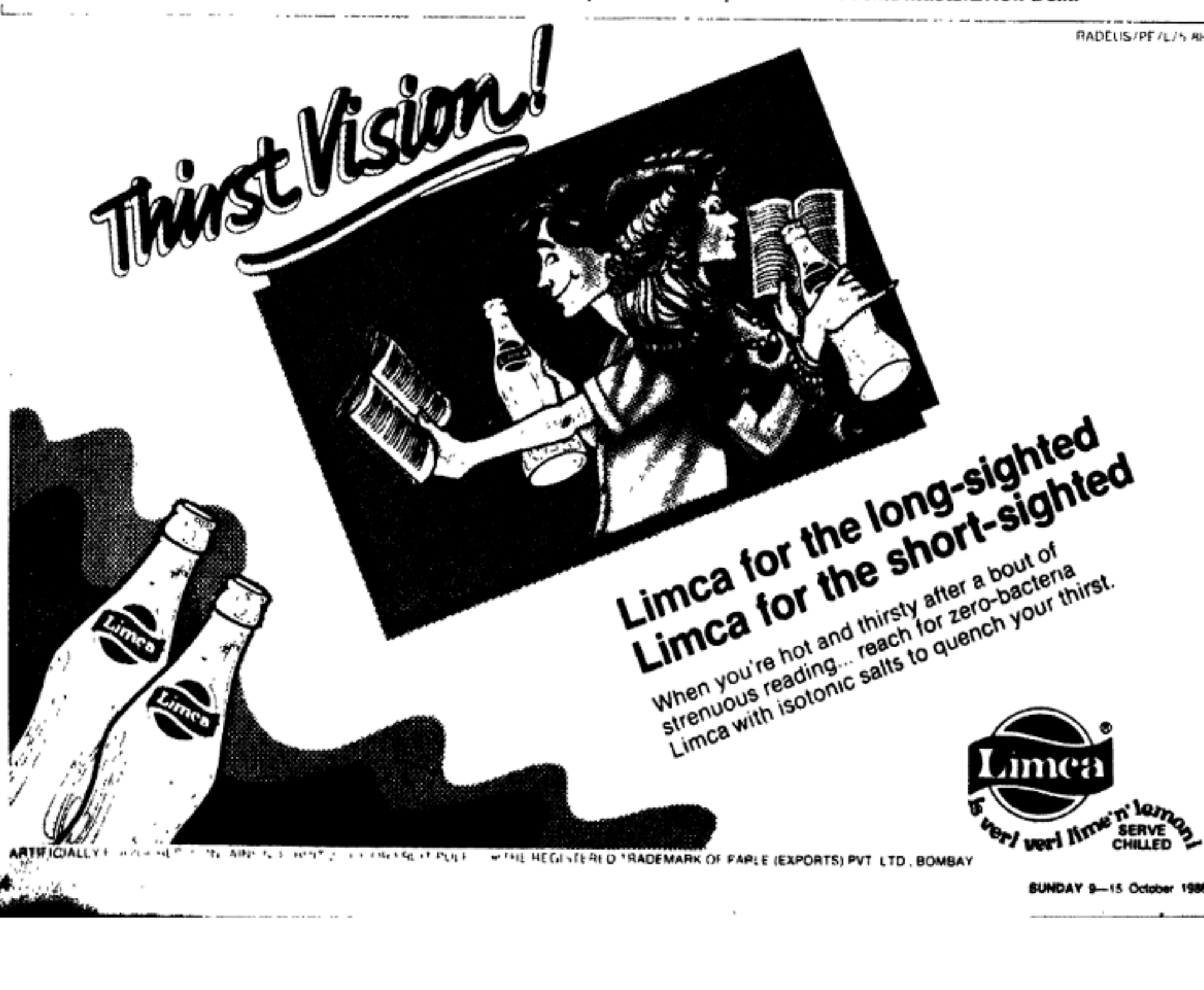
Unlike her, Amarjit Kaur, who till recently represented Punjab in Parliament, denies that a generation gap exists in the party. She claims that senior partymen are "very shrewd and sharp and there is something to learn from their experience". Kaur, who rushed off to apply a dash of lipstick when SUNDAY requested her to pose for photographs, would have been little more than another glamour girl if the Punjab crisis hadn't forced her into playing a significant political role. Punjab is now her first priority and she was among those who strongly defended Operation Bluestar on the floor of the House, which placed her on the terrorists' hit list.

Kaur hails from a feudal family which has always dabbled in politics. She was nominated to the Rajya Sabha, courtesy Zail Singh, in what can be described as the 'women's quota' from Punjab. Kaur did make a show of wearing *khadi* for a while but gave up the pretence soon. Those who remember her in the pre-Bluestar days recall that she had little to contribute by way of debates and discussions; it was the escalation of violence in the state that led to her rise in political prominence.

When it comes to the women in Parliament, style and substance do not go together. Women with the first have little of the second. Likewise, those who are recognised as having made some political contribution have little to boast by way of style. But in the new dispensation, it is clearly style that prevails.

Seema Mustafa/*New Delhi*

RADELIS/PF/L/5 AR



A lost heritage

The communal riots in Bidar, Karnataka, have driven a wedge between the Hindus and the Sikhs

It took just three days to destroy a proud heritage built over three centuries. Bidar, a holy place for Sikhs in Karnataka, has a long tradition of Hindu-Sikh amity. But the 15 September Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations shattered the peace and will be remembered by the residents of Bidar for the brutality and mindless frenzy that took place. In the rampage at least six students lost their lives, 20 of them were reported missing and many more injured in the arson and looting. And in almost all the cases, the target of attack was the Sikh families. Over 1200 Sikh students have already fled their homes in Bidar and a handful of them and the local Sikhs have sought refuge at the Sri Guru Nanak Jhira Sahib Gurdwara complex.

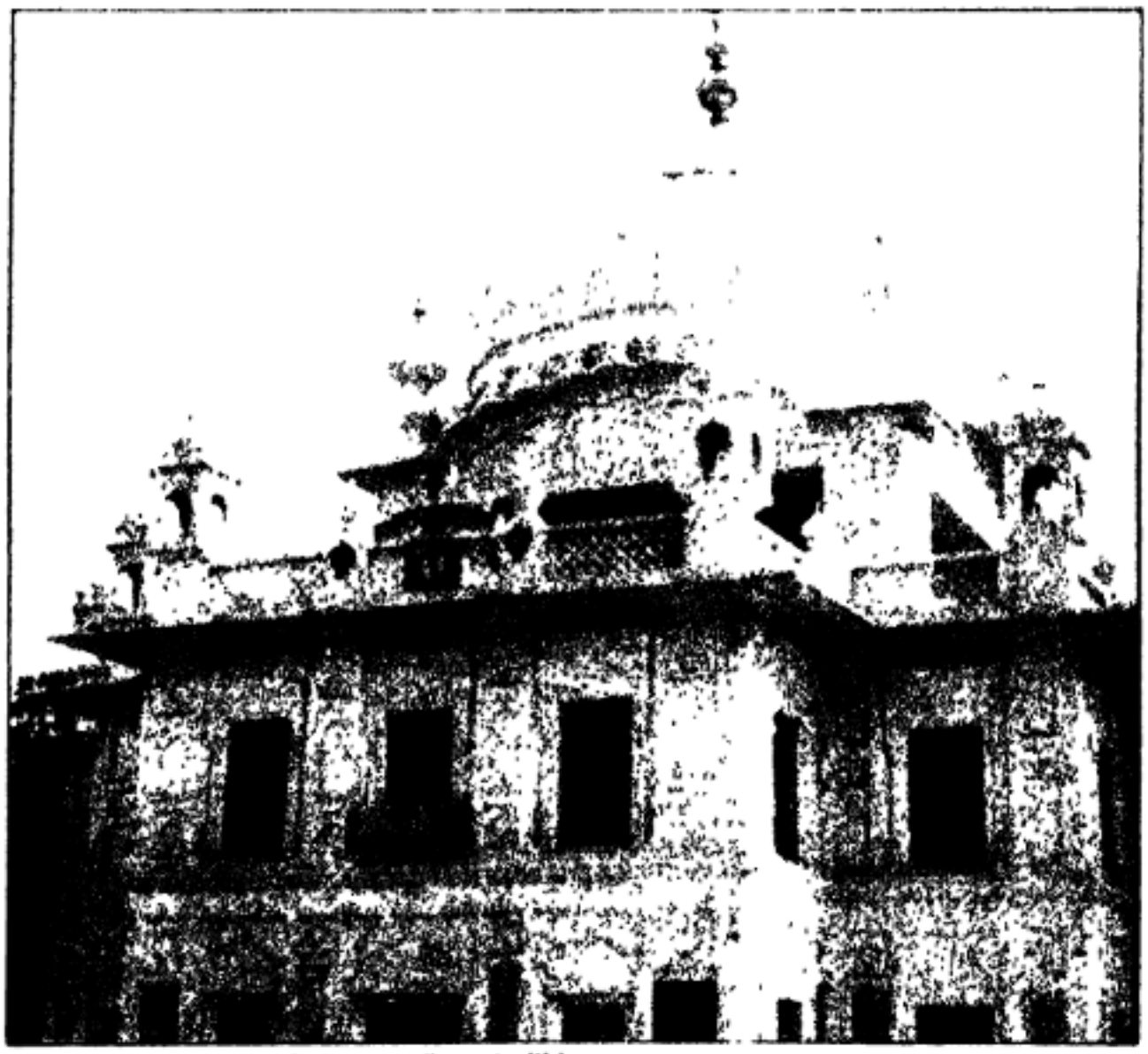
On 23 September, Karnataka Governor P Venkatasubbiah accompanied by chief minister S.R. Bommai and ex-CM Ramakrishna Hegde visited the *gurdwara* to console the victims. A highly agitated Baljit Singh, a student, told them: "We don't want to stay here, we don't want to come back..." However, those who have fled Bidar have to return soon as their examinations are round the corner. Baljit Singh is one of the few students who have stayed back in order to talk to the college authorities and press for a postponement of the examinations. The chief minister has promised to help out the students in the matter.

"An effort is being made to blow up this incident (Bidar's) by certain persons", lamented chief minister S.R. Bommai at a press conference on 29 September in Bangalore. Perhaps the prominent Doordarshan coverage of the Prime Minister's special meeting with Congress(I) MPs and MLAs from Karnataka the previous night marked the first step in the politicisation of the Bidar tragedy. Expressing his anguish over the 15 September incidents, the Prime Minister told a delegation of 100 Congress MPs and legislators that a special team led by the minister of state for home affairs would visit Bidar to "assess the situation".

The high-powered Congress(I) team's visit to the riot-hit town could not have come at a more sensitive time. The state government was mobilising a large posse of policemen, to make arrangements for the three-day *bhog* (funeral) ceremony beginning on 30 September. The town was tense with the news that 5000 Sikhs from all over the country would come to Bidar for the *bhog* ceremony. An organisation calling itself the "Sikh Commando Force" had sent a letter addressed to the Karnataka deputy director for information, T.M. Shirur, threatening that the Karnataka Bhavan and the Karnataka Emporium complex in Delhi the Delh would be bombed and the staff killed, if the Karnataka government did not take action against those guilty for the Bidar riots within ten days. "There is bound to be tension due to the three-day *bhog* ceremony and the large gathering of Sikhs. We have been making requests to the Sikh leaders to keep the number to a minimum. But we understand it is a religious ceremony and we will take steps to ensure its peaceful conduct," said chief minister Bommai.

Meanwhile, chief minister Bommai has ordered a judicial probe into the riots and pledged to provide adequate protection to the Sikhs. Said Baljit Singh: "We first want the superintendent of police (Dr B. Umapathy) suspended. We want all the culprits behind bars. We saw the dead bodies of our brothers, don't talk to us about rules." The students accused the police and the local administration of collaborating with the rioters. Some of them even insisted that the Bidar riots were not very different from the anti-Sikh riots that rocked Delhi after Indira Gandhi's assassination. Quipped Baljit Singh: "Ramakrishna Hegde has a very good reputation in Punjab. He said in the past that there was no problem in Punjab, the problem was in the Congress(I). Now he should show us that the Janata government is different." Another student, Anoop Singh, complained: "The police collaborated actively with the rioters."

The immediate provocation behind the Bidar riots was the Ganesh Chaturthi festival that local organisations set out to celebrate with much fanfare. On



The Nanak Jhira Sahib Gurdwara: dissent within

श्री...

Symbolising the light of prosperity...



Shri denotes wealth, prosperity and well-being.

Shriram strives to bring into depositors' lives the tangible significance of 'Shri'.

By taking tender care of depositors' funds, placing them in sound enterprises, spreading the risk widely, managing it economically. Most importantly, by subjecting the management to rigorous scrutiny by the Board of Directors consisting of eminent professionals with an impeccable record of public service.

The Board of Directors of the Shriram Group Companies include:

- **P.B.Sreenivasan** — Former Chairman & Managing Director, IOB Madras.
- **S. Sankaranarayanan** — Former Executive Director & Secretary, Ashok Leyland Ltd Madras
- **C.P. Verghese** — Former General Manager, United India Insurance Co Ltd Ernakulam
- **P. Vaidyanathan** — Investment & Finance Consultant, Integrated Enterprises, Kumbakonam
- **G.V. Raman** — Partner, M/s Gowrikanthan & Co Auditors, Madras
- **Lalit P. Mehta** — Former General Manager, New India Assurance Co Ltd Bombay

Performance Highlights :
SHRIRAM INVESTMENTS LTD.

		1986 (Rs in lacs)	1987
1	Paid-up Capital & Reserves	41.26	102.93
2	Deposits	388.60	676.46
3	Funds Employed	514.47	1002.94
4	Dividend	20%	21%

SHRIRAM TRANSPORT FINANCE CO. LTD.

		1986 (Rs in lacs)	1987
1	Paid-up Capital & Reserves	41.00	62.18
2	Deposits	189.00	349.00
3	Funds Employed	313.21	558.43
4	Dividend	24%	25%

All this is fully backed by high quality, efficient service characterised by dedication and promptitude at all our 27 branches.

The July '88 Deposit-Mobilisation Campaign helped us cross a milestone.
A record Rs.3 crore deposits!

Thanks to the total faith of our depositors, we have already reached 80% of the target for annual growth this year.

Let the glow of Shri into your life with Shriram.

All India Deposit Mobilisation Campaign till 31.10.88

SHRIRAM GROUP COMPANIES MADRAS

Shriram Investments Ltd.

Admn. Office : Mookambika Complex, III Floor, 4, Lady Desikachari Road, (Entrance : C.P. Ramaswamy Road), Mylapore, Madras - 4. Ph : 74960/77463/73768.

Shriram TRANSPORT FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Admn. Office : Mookambika Complex, 4, Lady Desikachari Road, Mylapore, Madras-4. Ph : 76804/73456.

Corporate Office: 'Shriram House', 10, Kasturi Estate, Madras-86. Ph: 454805/452113.

AHMEDABAD: B-14, I Floor, Capital Commercial Centre, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad Ph: 76326
BANGALORE: 142, K.H Road, Bangalore Ph. 234359
BOMBAY. 811, Tulsiani Chambers, 212, Nariman Point, Bombay Ph. 241113/2043997.
CALCUTTA: 601, Centre Point, 28 2, Shakespeare Sarani, Calcutta Ph: 432725/449733.
NAGPUR: 'Yamunayatan', 225-B, West High Court Road, Gokulpet, Nagpur. Ph: 33815 (P.P.)
NEW DELHI: 401, Pratap Chambers (4th Floor),2376, Gurudwara Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi. Ph: 5729913.
PUNE: 402, White House, (4th Floor), 1482,Tilak Road, Pune. Ph: 436752/434279.
SECUNDERABAD: 4, Sardar Patel Road, Secunderabad. Ph: 75226.

Shriram : Managed by innovative professionals.

ADWAVE/SIL/3619

14 September, on the eve of the festival, Sikh students were reportedly stopped by Hindus demanding 'contributions' for the festival. The students apparently refused to pay up and there was a heated exchange of words followed by a scuffle. This was enough for the simmering tension to surface.

Baljit Singh feels that Hindu-Sikh relations had begun to sour in 1984 when he was a first year student. Leaders of local organisations, however, complained about the "misdeeds" of Sikh students. One of them told SUNDAY that in 1984 "the Sikh students took out a procession protesting against the New Delhi riots. They shouted pro-Bhindranwale slogans and teased local women." But in under developed Bidar it is difficult to ignore the part played by jealousy in driving a wedge between affluent Sikhs and the local youths. Formerly a part of the



(From left to right) Karnataka Governor P. Venkatasubbaiah, Ramakrishna Hegde and chief minister S.R. Bommai: assuaging hurt feelings

erstwhile Hyderabad state, Bidar, though ignored by successive governments, can boast of a number of good educational institutions. And almost all of them are run by the Sikh trust. But, argue local Sikhs, "Only the engineering college and the polytechnic have a large number of Sikh students. The primary and secondary schools are meant only for the benefit of the local population."

In recent years, the president of the local *gurdwara* committee, Joga Singh, has been campaigning for a medical college. The obnoxious capitation fee system in Karnataka makes it profitable to set up such colleges but the Sikh trust should have no problems in getting the green signal as they have already built a 500-bed hospital in the *gurdwara* complex. It is being argued that by frightening the Sikhs away from Bidar, contenders for the medical college have a lot to gain.

The police claim that violence erupted on the afternoon of 15 September but the students insist that tension was running high in Bidar from the night of 14 September itself. Moreover, the additional security forces that were deployed in Bidar were unaware of the communal tension. The security arrangements were clearly inadequate and the cops were not prepared to tackle a riot. Around 350 students were trapped inside the engineering college hostel after mobs surrounded the building and started pelting stones. Police sources maintain that trouble erupted in the afternoon when around 40 Sikh students started marching towards the hostel brandishing swords. But the students claim that they were going to release their trapped colleagues.

The agitated students were stopped near the Gandhi Ganj area where a violent confrontation took place between the locals and the students. According to eyewitness accounts only four policemen were present and in panic, the cops opened fire. By the time the deputy inspector general of police, S.S. Pavate, reached Bidar around 6.30 pm, bodies of Amarjit Singh, a first-year engineering student, Harvinder Singh, Balwinder Singh Bavra and Gurinder Singh, all third-year engineering students, were recovered from a well in a highly decomposed state. Jasbir Singh Anand, another third year student, died in Osmania Hospital in Hyderabad. According to police sources, Pavate had no information of the communal flare-up and had been apparently informed by intelligence sources that the "situation was under control".

Predictably, the students' ire has been directed at the superintendent of police. "Is it possible that the superintendent of police had no knowledge of the tension? Why did he fail to inform the police headquarters in Bangalore regarding the situation?" they ask. The students claim that Joga Singh rang up the inspector general of police, A.R. Nizamuddin, on 15 September and only after that did the police swing into action. It is also significant that the Shiv Sena opened its Bidar unit on the day of the Ganesh festival.

Bidar is considered to be a holy place for the Sikhs as Guru Nanak is said to have visited the famine-hit area in the 15th century. Legend has it that Guru Nanak performed a miracle and water gushed out to quench the thirst of the people. In 1699 AD, when Guru Govind Singh formed the Khalsa and asked for five beloved followers who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the Sikh cause, one of them was Sahib Chand of Bidar. The Sikhs, who have built a magnificent *gurdwara* in Bidar, have lived in harmony with their Hindu brethren till the 15 September riots. Says Baljit Singh, with a feeling of anger and grief, "If our immediate demands are not conceded, we will not be responsible for the consequences."

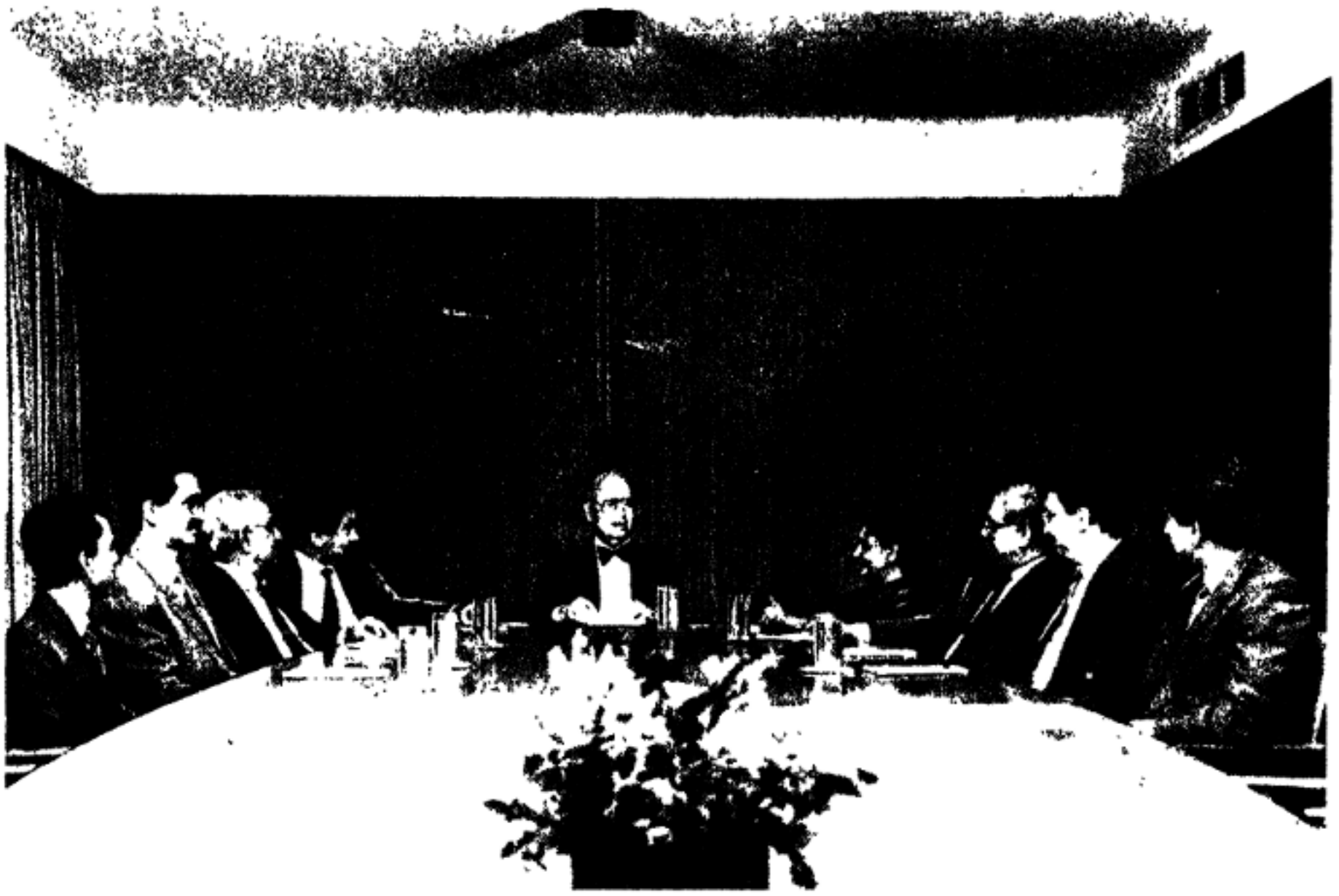
Prakash Belawadi/*Bidar*

Bidar is considered to be a holy place for the Sikhs as Guru Nanak is said to have visited the famine-hit area in the 15th century. The Sikhs who have built a magnificent *gurdwara* in Bidar, have lived in harmony with their Hindu brethren till the 15 September riots.

"You can call me the Chief of the Kirloskar Family, which a hundred years ago consisted of just four people and now comprises over 20,000."

— S.L. KIRLOSKAR

Kirloskar



We the Kirloskar engineers and executives... the workers and managers... together with shareholders, suppliers, dealers and distributors... we are all engaged in employing our national resources of money, men, materials and machines not just for our own benefit, but also for the benefit of our society and country.

From a single unit to a multi-company enterprise, from agriculture to industry, from import substitution to exports to 90 countries of the world... we have proudly seen the name Kirloskar race with time. And we look forward to the challenges of our new Century.

We shall continue to contribute to India's social and economic betterment through engineering excellence — our chosen method.

100

KIRLOSKAR CENTENARY
1888-1988

Together, they fall

The West Bengal Congress(I) is divided over P.R. Das Munshi's obstinate defence of party maverick Subrata Mukherjee

All is fair in politics. At least that is what the Congress(I) leaders in West Bengal believe. Personal differences, petty jealousy, rampant indiscipline and factionalism have reduced a party which ruled the state not very long back into a small group of bickering men. Thus, every time the Congress(I) in West Bengal makes an effort to get its act together and rally against the ruling Left Front government, it invariably ends up getting entangled in its own mesh of intra party dissension.

The recently concluded special session of the West Bengal Assembly was the setting for the latest round of the bizarre Congress (I) drama. On the last day of the brief session, during a crucial debate on the Defamation Bill, Congress-(I) members, who were supposed to join hands in the face of an attack on the Centre by the Treasury benches, ended up hurling abuses at one another. And, predictably, the man at the centre of the storm was Subrata Mukherjee, the maverick Congress(I) legislator.

The incident, which has precipitated a major crisis within the Congress(I) in the state and greatly embarrassed the high command, had a seemingly innocuous beginning. On 8 September, while the Assembly was in session, the Congress-(I) Legislature Party (CLP) held a meeting where it was unanimously decided that Sudip Bandopadhyay, the young party MLA from Bowbazar, would move an amendment during the debate on the Defamation Bill after which Ashok Ghosh, MLA from Howrah, would speak on the issue. But Subrata Mukherjee has the gift of raising tempests in tea cups. On 9 September, a few hours before the debate, Mukherjee returned from Libya and demanded that his name be included in the list of Congress(I) speakers on the subject. The chief whip of the CLP(I), Gyan Singh Sohanpal, complied and Subrata Mukherjee "was informed that he was the third Opposition speaker on the Defamation Bill", claims Sudip Bandopadhyay.

But trouble erupted soon after the Assembly Speaker, Hashim Abdul Halim announced the name of Ashok Ghosh as the first Opposition speaker on the Bill. Ghosh promptly took the floor and started speaking. An amazed Gyan Singh Sohanpal rushed to the Speaker and informed him that he was not honouring the list of Congress(I) speakers submitted by the CLP(I). Halim admitted his fault and asked Ashok Ghosh, who was still lecturing, to take his seat.

Sudip Bandopadhyay initiated the amendment motion and was half-way through his speech when Subrata Mukherjee and Ashok Ghosh left the House in a huff.

The matter did not end there. A



Mukherjee (left) and Das Munshi, teaming up?

Despite Das Munshi's support for Mukherjee, the Congress(I) MLAs are determined to go ahead with the move to censure Mukherjee. Oscar Fernandes too has assured the MLAs that he would attend the meeting

highly agitated Mukherjee and Ghosh, accompanied by three CPI(M) legislators - Niranjan Mukherjee, Sumanta Hira and Manab Mukherjee –entered the Speaker's room and 'sought his protection". Complaining that they were humiliated, the two Congress(I) MLAs even wanted to resign unless "the chief whip was removed".

Subrata Mukherjee's "rash behaviour" inside the House irked a majority of the 40 Congress(I) MLAs. A hurried informal meeting of the CLP(I) was convened, where 19 MLAs, including leaders like Saugata Roy, Sudip Bandopadhyay, Sudipta Roy and Sultan Ahmed, demanded a requisition meeting of the CLP(I) for "disciplining errant party MLAs like Subrata Mukherjee". Another 14 MLAs pledged their support to the move. Abdus Sattar, leader of the CLP(I), brought the matter to the notice of Priya Ranjan Das Munshi, the Union commerce minister and president of the Pradesh Congress(I) Committee, who was in Calcutta. Das Munshi promptly washed his hands off the matter saying that since the issue concerned the CLP(I), it should be tackled by its leader, Abdus Sattar.

But surprise was in store for the determined Congress(I) MLAs. On 13 September, Subrata Mukherjee left for Delhi and returned to Calcutta three days later accompanied by PCC(I) chief Das Munshi. At a press conference that afternoon, Das Munshi said that the affair was "a non-issue and should not be a priority of the Congress(I) in the state".

But despite Das Munshi's stand on the Subrata Mukherjee issue, the 37-odd Congress(I) MLAs are determined to go ahead with the requisition meeting. Said Somen Mitra, a vocal critic of Subrata Mukherjee: "The need of the hour is discipline. No one should be allowed to get away with indiscipline." Agrees Sudip Bandopadhyay: "The Congress(I) would be a much stronger organisation if discipline can be infused at all levels of the party. Our move is not aimed at an any particular individual..."

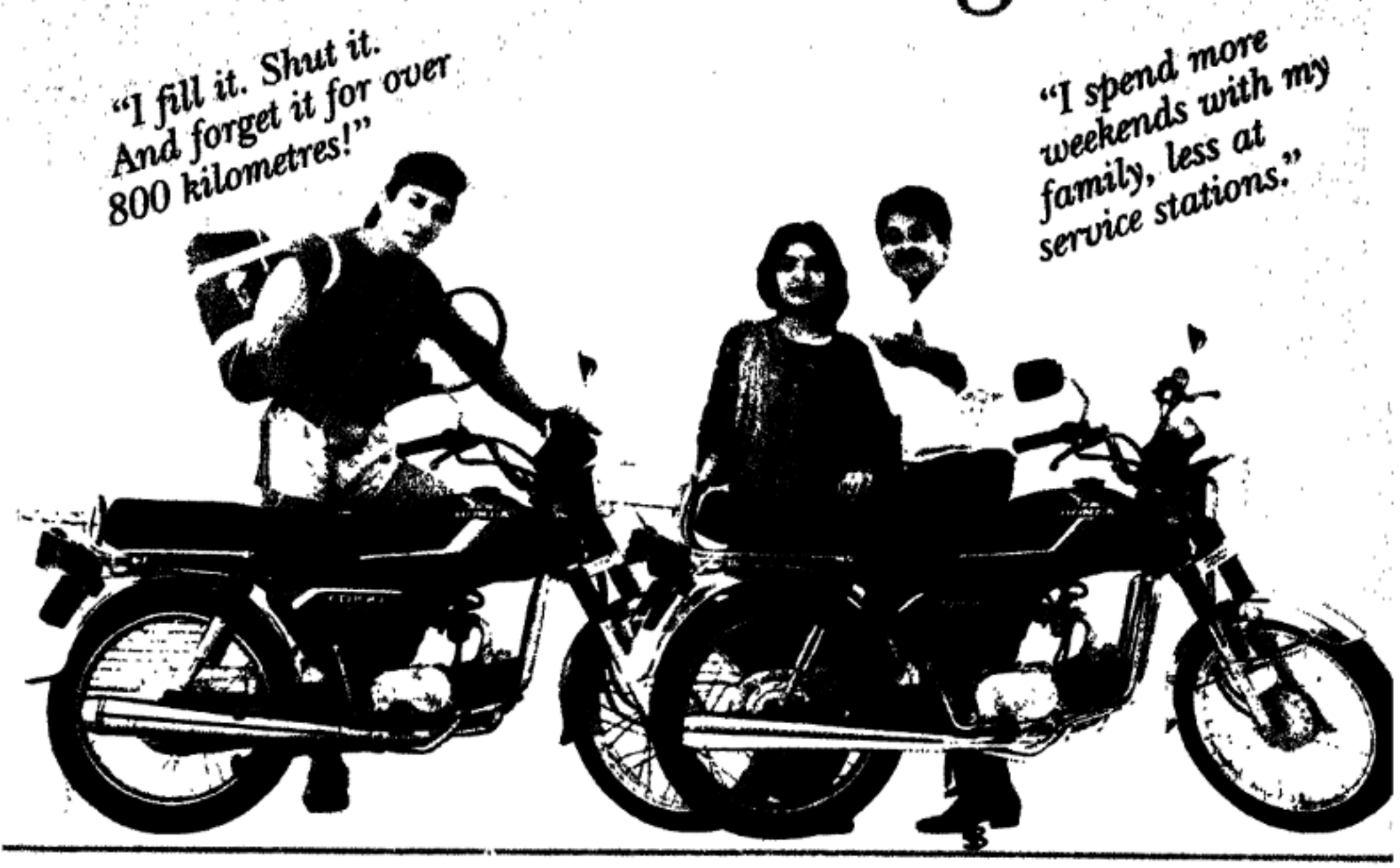
But Subrata Mukherjee is not convinced. He is certain that his detractors are out to get him. However, "I am willing to face the CLP. I will answer all the charges that day," he said defiantly.

Whatever decision the CLP(I) takes is bound to have far-reaching effects on the fate of the Congress(I) in the state. One thing is sure: the party cannot afford to antagonise a leader of the stature of Subrata Mukherjee, who is perhaps the only Congress(I) leader in West Bengal to command a sizeable personal following. Moreover, as state president of the INTUC, Mukherjee has a vast workforce behind him. Perhaps, Syed Bedar Bakht, secretary of the Youth Congress(I) minority cell, summed it up best: "If Subrata Mukherjee is suspended from the CLP(I) or expelled from the party, the Congress(I) organisation will come to a halt in the state."

Rajiv Bagchi/*Calcutta*

You can't stop a man on a Hero Honda.

From talking.



When we launched the Hero Honda CD 100 in 1985, we knew it was a good thing. A fact confirmed by the owners.

Some are moved by the economy (80 km/litre*). Some by the easy maintenance. Others by the name of Honda. And all exult in the riding pleasure of India's only 4-stroke 100 cc bike. Honda engineering—Hero's choice.

In all, 200,000 happy owners, each with his own reason for feeling good. To all of you, we can say one thing. You've got a good thing going

* *At 40 kmph/130 kg*

All said and done...

You've got a Good thing Going!

HERO HONDA

HTA 81

Q *Are you going on a picnic?*

R A Y M O

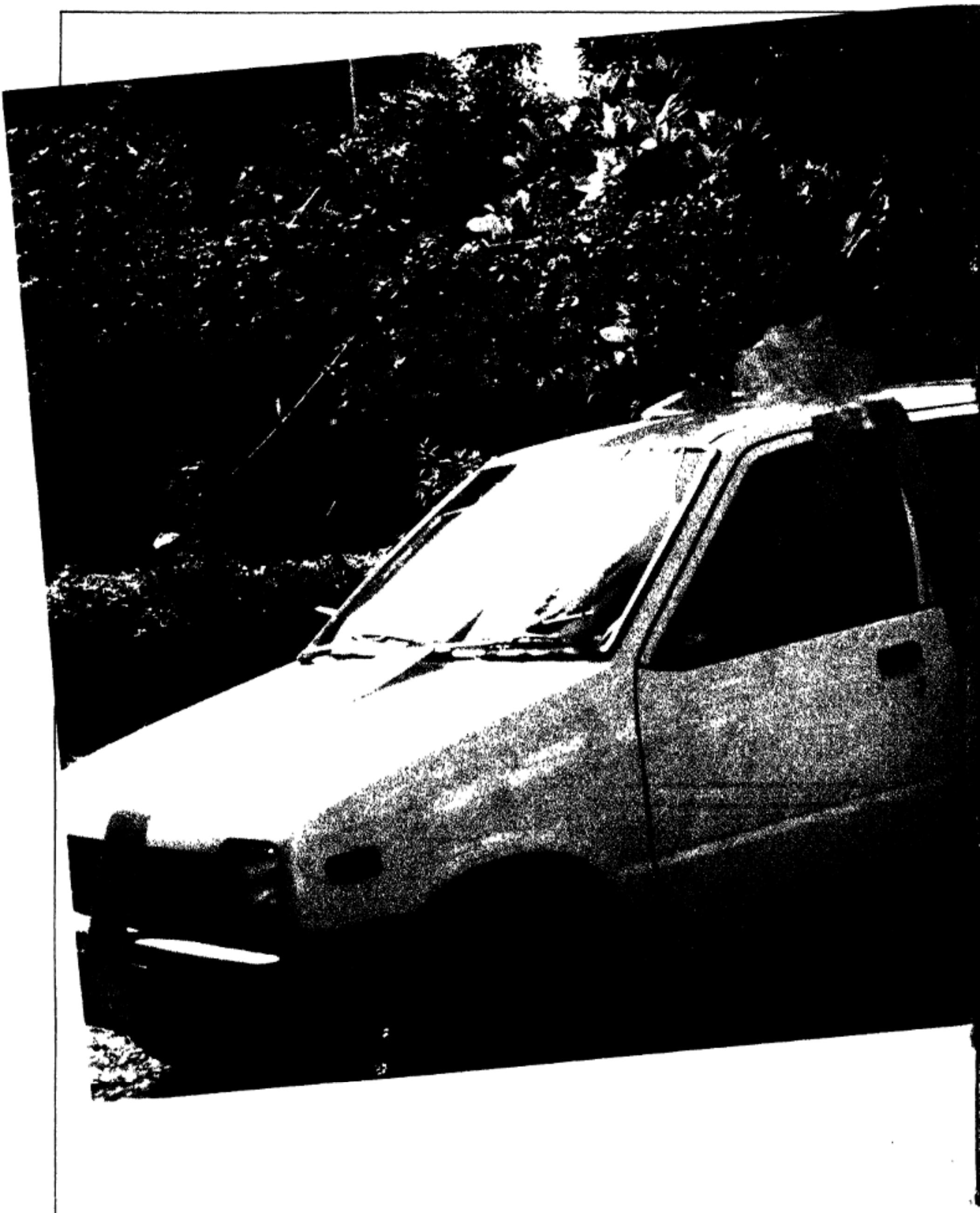


N D 'S P A N T A L O N I



A [illegible] playing
a new game called
Falling Free.

Raymond's
The final word





Grindlays. Such a pleasure!

Banking, Grindlays believes, should be one of life's conveniences.

Which is why, while Grindlays offers every major service the best international banks offer, there are some specialised services only Grindlays offers.

Each designed to make banking a pleasure.

Because by improving the quality of banking, we believe, we could ultimately improve the quality of the way you live.

Grindlays Bank

Contract GH 10688

Smart Alyque

Alyque Padamsee is a man of many faces, marking his varied worlds with intensity and success. Though critics refer to him as glib and gimmicky, friends swear by his sincerity. A look at the real man behind the scenes.



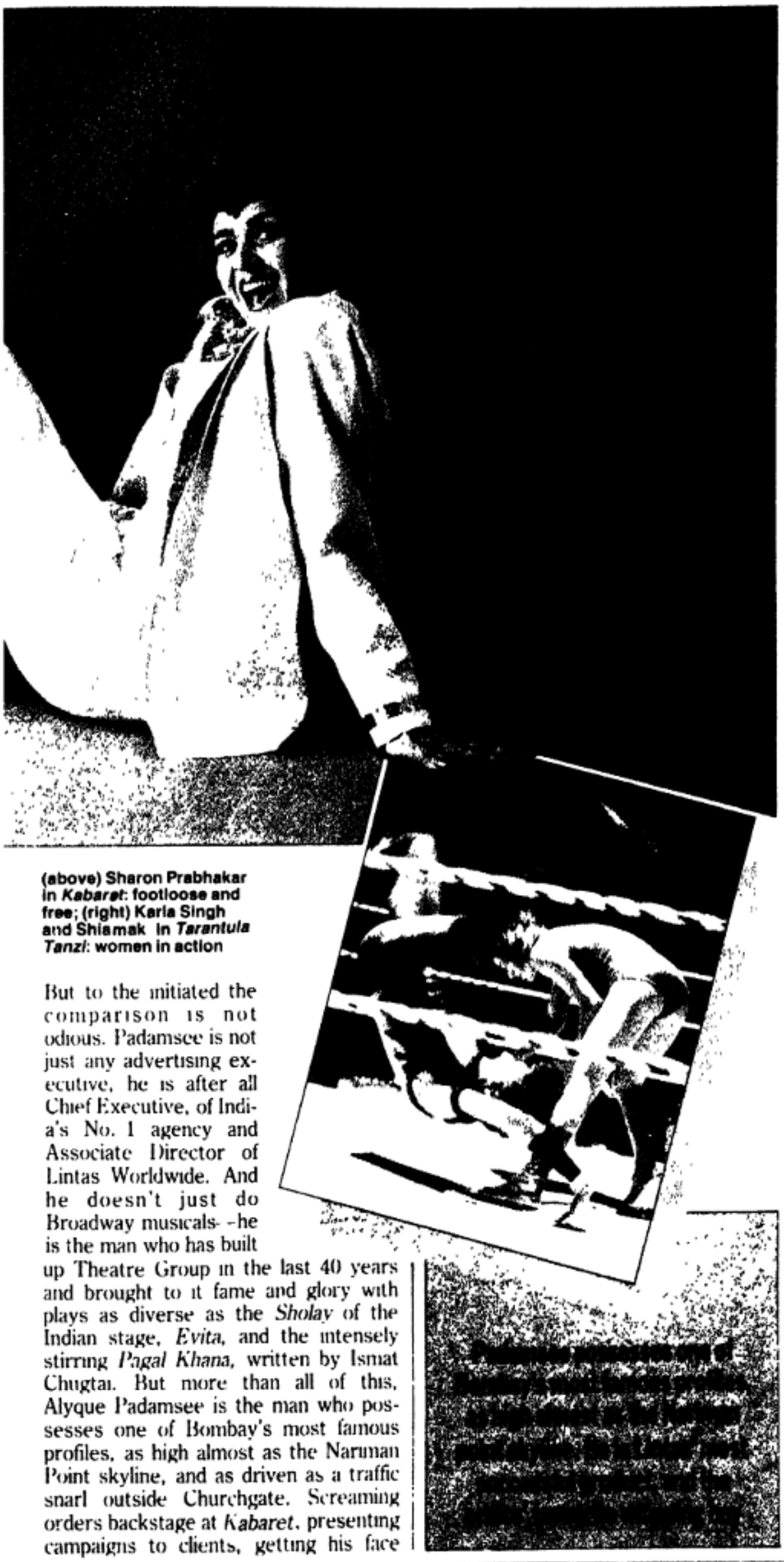
Alyque Padamsee, admman,theatre buff, devoted father, all in one : resting on his laurels ?

Gautam Patole



In Bombay, all stories about Alyque Padamsee being God, seem to generate from Lintas headquarters. No one seems to take more glee in them than Alyque himself. "I'm supposed to be driving down Marine Drive, with one of my employees", says the famous RADA-trained voice, "when a child dashes past, narrowly averting an accident. 'My God!' exclaims my employee. To which I reply chillingly,'Who said you could call me by my first name?' The other one goes: What's the difference between Alyque Padamsee and God? Answer: Well, at least God rested on the seventh day. And of course there's the one about an employee of mine whom I've driven to suicide, who reaches heaven. Up there he finds a tall, gangly, goateed man barking orders at everyone. 'Oh dear', he says, dismayed, 'has Alyque reached here too?' To which St. Peter replies, 'No, that's God. He just thinks he's Alyque Padamsee.'"

Of course, to those who aren't in the know, these stories are nothing short of blasphemous. Why should a 57-year-old advertising executive, and director of re-hashed Broadway musicals from Bombay, assume such lofty proportions?



(above) Sharon Prabhakar in *Kabaret*: footloose and free; (right) Karla Singh and Shiamak in *Tarantula Tanzi*: women in action

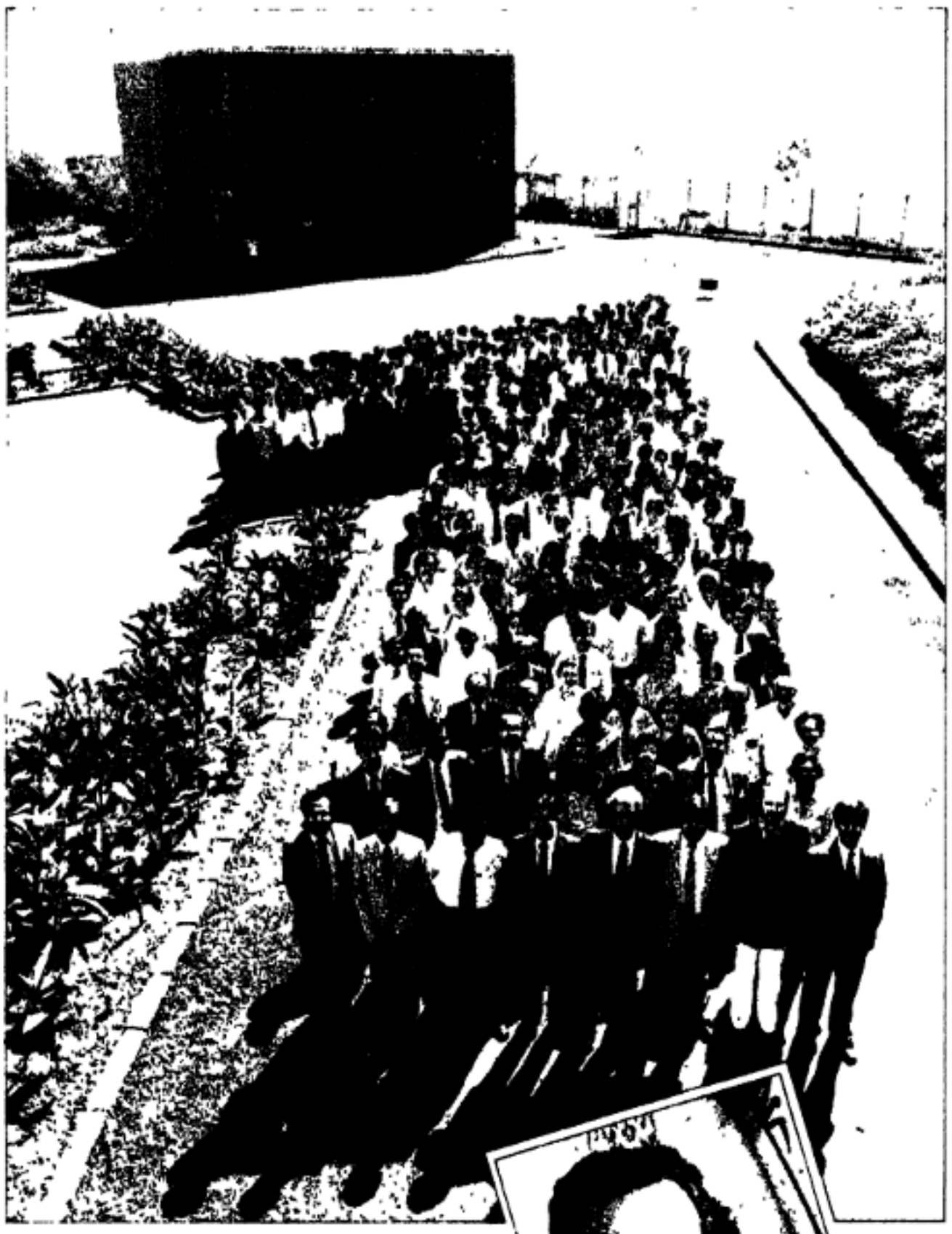
But to the initiated the comparison is not odious. Padamsee is not just any advertising executive, he is after all Chief Executive, of India's No. 1 agency and Associate Director of Lintas Worldwide. And he doesn't just do Broadway musicals--he is the man who has built up Theatre Group in the last 40 years and brought to it fame and glory with plays as diverse as the *Sholay* of the Indian stage, *Evita*, and the intensely stirring *Pagal Khana*, written by Ismat Chugtai. But more than all of this, Alyque Padamsee is the man who possesses one of Bombay's most famous profiles, as high almost as the Nariman Point skyline, and as driven as a traffic snarl outside Churchgate. Screaming orders backstage at *Kabaret*, presenting campaigns to clients, getting his face plastered on the controversial *The Times of India* ads or embroiled in the unseemly fight about being the No 1 agency in India, Alyque is Alyque Theatre Group's most dramatic presentation, Lintas' most successful product; and the critics' favourite whipping boy. No one can brook too much success, and for Alyque, who has been so successful for so long, perhaps the time has come when he may feel he has been a little too successful for his own good In a land where envy and resentment often cloud judgement, Alyque may have reached a point of no return. Which brings us to the story of the crabs.

We are sitting in Alyque's home at Warden Road, eating Alyque's dinner It is after a show of the latest Padamsee extravaganza, *Kabaret* Next door, at the Sophia Hall, the actors have all packed up, the audience long gone home. Alyque's wife, singer-actress Sharon Prabhakar, who has played the lead role of Sally Bowles, has removed her makeup and seems exhausted. The mood is not upbeat. It is introspective. The hall had not been full. And though each actor and each department of the production performed excellently by Bombay theatre standards, Padamsee is not satisfied. For a Padamsee production it is not enough to be good. One must be spectacular. So throughout the play he has sat watching the performance and the audience with eagle eyes. Now, he has returned with a scribble pad bristling with notes. Even a congratulatory message, he finds near the telephone from his mother-in-law, does not placate him. He is driven Concerned about the minutest details. Imagining what his critics must be saying at this very moment.

"Who does Mr Padamsee think he is?" he mimics, "he thinks he is God. I can see a hundred flaws in his production." Or, "He's trying to bring out some obscure political meaning again with this play...". And then, Alyque narrates the story of the Indian crabs.

"It goes something like this There are buckets filled with crabs collected from various countries, lying in a laboratory. Each bucket has been covered with a lid, except for the Indian bucket. A young intern points out that the crabs will escape if not covered. 'Don't worry', says the scientist, 'these are Indian crabs; when one of them reaches the top, the others will pull him down "

To the telling of this anecdote, Alyque brings the pathos that only a trained actor can muster, the visual impact that the maker of all those award-winning public service ads can conjure. As a bit of advertising it is perfect. It weds mes-



The Lintas gang: all smiles



sage with image and words perfectly.

"I admire many things about Alyque," says Titoo Ahluwalia, Chief Executive, MARG, longtime friend of Padamsee's. "And I admire the fact that none of the envy and resentment that he generates because of his high-profile life-style, yes – including his breakfasts with the Prime Minister—can deflect him from whatever it is that he wants to do. He is driven, like some devil of an engine, by his desires and his beliefs."

"I think I get it from my mother", says Padamsee, "I have this inability to settle for less. It drives me all the time. I'm restless. I sleep six hours a night, I'm always revising things. Trying to improve them. This restlessness manifests itself in my personal life too. I need change."

"Has Alyque ever spoken to you about Bobby?" asks Gerson da Cunha, the man whom Alyque succeeded as Chief Executive. Da Cunha himself has moved into new pastures: a stint with UNICEF in Brazil, and presently with the UN in Delhi. "Bobby was Alyque's elder brother, an extraordinary character. By the time he passed away, at the young age of 24, he had changed the face of the way poetry was being written in Bombay, made his mark in the world of art, and founded the Theatre Group. Bobby's death threw a long shadow on the family, and I think it fell to Alyque to take over his mantle. Alyque did what he could. I think Bobby's death has always been a key factor in Alyque's life."

About his own relationship with Padamsee, Gerson says, "It's always been a strange one. He has, in a sense, always been one step behind. You know, for instance, I got him his first job in advertising with J. Walter Thompson. When I left Lintas as Chief Executive, there was no doubt in my mind that Alyque could take over from me—and do a far better job than I—and I have been vindicated. So in a sense, he's always succeeded me. And yet, it is I who draw a lot of strength from the relationship. There is always a need to be one step ahead, to live up to his standards!"

But even Gerson calls Padamsee "ludicrously autocratic" as far back as 1961, I remember, jokes about Alyque being God were doing the rounds in the Theatre Group."

To be sure, it took one meeting with Richard Attenborough, for Alyque to land the role of Jinnah in the movie *Gandhi*. "Why me?" Alyque says he enquired of the director. "Because you are an autocrat", was the alleged succinct reply.

"But a lot of it is an act," says Padamsee. "I enjoy power. But I also act this way often because it gets things done. I see so many young people in Bombay, so much talented energy, so much mindlessness--a certain lack of focus. If these young people," he says, referring to the hormone-driven youth of Bombay and Delhi,"have a leader whom they can look up to—respect—think of how much can be done. Surely there's more meaning to life than having a great time. I mean, there's nothing wrong in having a great time—but everyone has a purpose for being here."

Padamsee's purpose was theatre. As a boy, he recalls peeping through the skylight at his well-furnished ancestral home, Kulsum Terrace in Colaba, at his brother's productions. The cream of Bombay's youth, swathed in his mother's curtains, rehearsing *Macbeth*. No bug bites harder than the theatre

bug. And Padamsee was bitten early on. "I am essentially a theatre man," he says. "And I bring my theatre experience to everything else I do—Lintas, public service advertising, whatever."

Certainly, there is a commitment to work, that only a *theatre-wallah* would recognise. Padamsee does not live like the Chief Executive of India's largest agency. You never see him being wined at the city's five-star watering holes, his manner is decidedly unstuffy, and his house contains none of the trappings of his *boxwallah* success. He seems surprised when you even point this out. "We push around the furniture each evening, for rehearsals," he says of his living room. "I've no time for things like this." Sharon and he seem to lead simple lives, devoted wholly to their work, arduous rehearsals, back-breaking tours, spectacular shows. Everything connected with the staging of plays.

In a way, for Padamsee, theatre is life. Everything else grows out of it. It has supplanted ambition. It has overtaken vocation. It is surrogate family. "I see my life in terms of my plays" he says. "My children, marriages, they're all dated in plays. Shazaan, my daughter, for instance, is a *Tanzi* baby . In *Jesus Christ Superstar* I remember rediscovering my youth. I was in my forties, when into my mother's drawing room where we were rehearsing, swept this whole Seventies hippy movement. Each evening after rehearsals, guitars would be pulled out, someone would start singing, someone would start dancing. It was an incredible time."

And if Padamsee tends to draw around him his entire cast and crew, as family, the reverse has also been true. His family has married and remarried into theatre, so you can't often separate what came first—the Padamsees or theatre. For instance, three of his sisters married celebrated theatre film personalities: Alkazi, the founder of the National School of Drama, Delhi, Derych Jeffries the lighting expert and Hamid Sayani, are all brothers-in-law. Then there's ex-wife Pearl Padamsee, a respected stage and theatre actress and director herself. Recently, daughter Rael has also taken to direction, and of course, there are nieces, nephews, cousins, stepchildren, all involved with the staging of plays.

Frequent breakfast meetings between the first man of Indian showbiz and the Prime Minister have raised eyebrows. People wonder if Padamsee will chuck his *boxwallah* job for the heady thrill of nation building

No one who has met Padamsee's mother, the late Kulsumbai could ever forget the stern, confident woman who presided with complete dignity over the family at Kulsum Terrace. "It was a dramatic family. We were all very theatrical. And I remember my father, a very quiet man, saying to me when I tended to fly off the handle"—and Alyque's features immediately age, his accent takes on a Kutchi note—"Now don't do a drama in my house."

Padamsee himself, as a father, is more theatre-oriented. When his eldest daughter Rael, was making her theatre debut in her mother's musical *Godspell*, albeit in a small role, Alyque avoided an awkward situation with his ex-wife by sneaking in backstage before the show, and personally taping onto the wall a huge poster emblazoned with the legend "A star is born"—the gesture typically dramatic but also typically sincere—expressing a father's pride and joy at the torch being passed on. With his son Quaasar, now living with his mother, stage actress and TV announcer Dolly Thakore, he shares a warm friendship; and each day, for an hour, he gives his all to his one-year old daughter Shazaan the offspring of his marriage to Sharon.

"I never take anything for granted", says Padamsee, "not my success, not my reviews, not my relationship with people. Even in my relationship with Sharon, I give it my all, do things other husbands wouldn't bother doing. I get totally involved. When I'm with Shazaan, I don't cheesepare with her. I'm totally there."

In fact, so involved does Padamsee get with things, that he's eternally late. "I analysed it one day. I asked my secretary why I was always late for appointments. And she said, 'Mr Padamsee, you get so involved in whatever meeting you're in, that you overshoot it by an hour, then you're late for the next meeting, and from there you go on and on.' I mean, take today for example, a *Kabaret*. I think I spent more energy during the performance than any of the actors."

Coupled with this obsessional involvement comes a manic eye for detail and organisation. Says Titoo Ahluwalia, "When you think of the number of things that Alyque does - and he does a very great deal - one is struck by how organised he really is. He finds the time to do



Gautam Pakrashi

everything he wants to. I mean he's sending notes to people, he's being a good friend, amongst all of it - it's incredible."

"A few months ago," he continues, "I had what looked like an attack of appendicitis, he descended from God knows where and like the excellent theatre director that he is, took over the entire show summoning the doctor, deciding what sort of pillow I should use, even where the telephone should be placed.

This drive is what keeps Padamsee running like a cat on a hot tin roof. In this untypical introspective mood that I've caught him in, his sharp features turn wistful, the eyes that can send chills down a young actor or executive's spine are now looking into a deeper self. "Call no man happy while he lives", he says, "I don't know if any human being knows happiness. Satisfaction, yes, there's satisfaction in knowing that you've more or less achieved what you'd set out to do." And now comes the positively un-Padamsee statement, "I'm just as vulnerable to failure as the next man. Perhaps," he sighs, "if I hadn't tasted so much success, I wouldn't be so timid of failure."

In Padamsee's headquarters, at Lintas, Bombay, success has come in such volume, that it has been locked away in cupboards and ignored. The gaggle of awards, certificates, accolades that Lintas has earned is gathering cobwebs in various corners of the office. The message is clear to all. Don't rest on past laurels. Get on with the job.

When Padamsee took over Lintas from Gerson da Cunha, it was a Rs16 crore company. Today it is nearer the Rs 90 crore figure. More spectacular has been the recognition it has won for its work, here and abroad. "We are in the business of perpetuating our private fantasies on the public," says Padamsee of his profession. "Take the Liril campaign which had this girl cavorting in a waterfall. That was one of my fantasies. It worked, perhaps because it locked in with the fantasies of a lot of other people. Then Lalitaji, for instance," he says, describing the straight-talking housewife who plugs detergent, "she's based on my mother's common sense approach to things. In fact, the way she talks is exactly like my mother."

The thing about Padamsee is that he is always straining to find undiscovered associations, the linkage between things, the creative solution. "I remember when we had the account of the First National City Bank of New York", says da Cunha. "Now this was in the days, when all banks had this ridiculous system where they gave you tokens and you had to wait in a long queue to collect your money. Citibank did away with all of that. They came up with this system where they printed the client's name on every cheque. Padamsee came up with a brilliant campaign. It was based simply on the premise that Citibank was the only bank to treat you like a VIP—



we print your name on every cheque!"

"Or consider his rendering of the play *Marat/Sade*," continues da Cunha, "which, in my opinion, was far better than the Aldwych Theatre's production. Alyque decided to stage it in the pit of the theatre at St Xavier's, with the audience seated in the boxes and gallery above. I mean, the audience looked down on the actors, who were separated from them by a safety net. The play was set in a lunatic asylum, and he had created this respectful distance between the players and the audience. He is always finding creative solutions to problems," says da Cunha.

Examples of this kind abound in Padamsee's career both as director and as adman. To bring home the immediacy of domestic violence, he staged *The Birthday Party* in his parent's living room. In *Tarantula Tanzi*, a play about women's oppression, depicted through the life of a female wrestler, the entire play was staged in a wrestling ring. To quell criticism from conservative Christians about his staging of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, he began the play with an invocation to Mother Mary, and ended with an "Our Father", and to create a setting for the coronation of the young Tughlak, Padamsee began his play with a loin-clothed Kabir Bedi, being dressed on stage, before his audience's eyes.

Recently, at the press launch of the Kawasaki Bajaj motorcycle in a city hotel, the spectacle was sheer Padam-

Sharon Prabhakar and Homi Drauvala rehearsing for Alyque Padamsee's *Kabaret*: passion and intensity



In a way, for Padamsee, theatre is life. Everything else grows out of it. It has supplanted ambition. It has overtaken vocation. It is surrogate family



Smita Patil in Alyque Padamsee's play *Aap Ki Farmaish*: domestic trials

see, sheer theatre. "The audience watched a screen on which they saw a tiny motorcycle at a distance, steadily approaching them; they heard the motorbike revving its engines—then suddenly, as the bike became life-size on screen, a real bike, with rider, smashed through the screen, on to the audience. The effect was stunning, the press went berserk, and there was spontaneous applause."

But to many people, whatever Padamsee does seems to be glib, a bit too clever by half. The creative solutions seem not so much creative as gimmicky. These people are the crabs Padamsee refers to, waiting to claw off a tendril, chew up a reputation, pull him down. His preoccuptions, selling soap or staging musicals, seem trivial. Superficial. "Most people don't even know that I have a career as a director of plays in vernacular languages. I've done *Shishon Ke Khilone, Sara Sansar, Apna Parivar* (a translation of Millar's *All My Sons*) *Maha Dada,* (a Hindi adaptation of *All the King's Men.*) But the critics only see English plays. So they're not even aware of my work in Hindi or Gujarati."

Padamsee's critics may dismiss his plays as theatrical and gimmicky, his career in advertising as showy . But only a diehard cynic can not recognize the sincerity in his latest obsession: public service advertising.

In the early Eighties, the Year of the Disabled, Padamsee voluntarily made a film on the subject. It was a touching film. A little girl draws her mother, father and herself. Then, she rubs out her legs—and a voice-over gently explains that what the disabled need is not pity but understanding. The film went on to win the International Clio Award for the world's best film on public service. Since then many public films and awards have followed. In 1983 he won the International Association Award for his anti-dowry film. In 1984 he won the Prix National Award at the Cannes Film Festival for his film on family planning. In 1985 he won the Communicator of the Year Award, and in 1987 he won the Clio Award as well as the Lintas Golden Pencil Award for his anti-cancer film.

But back home, reactions haven't always been so congratulatory. Audiences watching his anti-dowry film have erupted with shouts of "*Tum kaun ho, bolnewallah*!" And for his anti-terrorist film, Doordarshan has simply said, "No thank you, it's a bit too strong for our screens."

"If we do possess the skills to market soaps and detergents, we might as well use them to communicate an idea and not a product," says Padamsee. "I took the idea to my board of directors, at Lintas, who I must say, have been extraordinarily supportive. We created a new cell at Lintas, that dealt specifically with public service advertising. We all talk about helping good causes. Most of us write cheques or buy UNICEF cards. But in my opinion, that's writing off the problem. When you involve yourself with a problem at a deeper level, that's when you become part of the solution"

Padamsee's commitment to public service advertising is total. It has become, like all things he does, an extension of his life. For instance, a brush with near-blindness resulted in a hauntingly evocative film on helping the blind. A romp with his baby daughter resulted in a gentle film, that invokes fathers in India to protect their daughter's interests by refusing to give dowry. Titled *A Daughter's Best Friend,* it projects a message that is touching and yet pointed.

"I was at a seminar in Pune at the FTII when a visibly shaken middleaged man approached me with tears his eyes. He had, he said, just agreed to marry off his dughter with dowry. And now he was so disturbed about the decision."

This is typical of Padamsee. Glib though he might be (gimmicky is how his critics dismiss him), somehow in theatre, public service films or in advertising, he seems able to make an impact on audiences and people, make a change. His ideas can make soaps move, musicals run and generate thought.

Which brings us to the question on everyone's lips. What's going on with all those breakfast meetings between the first man of Indian showbiz and the Prime Minister? For once, Padamsee is reticent. "As I've said before, I found the PM a man who genuinely listened. He asked me about *Tamas*, whether it was right to show it on TV. He seemed concerned with answers that weren't safe, it was a dialogue that was productive. I said that *Tamas* had been the bravest thing Doordarshan had done in its entire existence. Later, I found programmes like the Bolors one, going even further," says Padamsee.

And what of his involvement? Is he too going to be seduced into chucking his *boxwallah* job, for the heady thrill of nation building? "I don't know," he says, "certainly I would love to be involved in building something larger—but right now I'm involved in my next project—a feature film in Hindi on National Integration."

So at 57, Alyque Padamsee is getting ready to enter yet another field. Perhaps yet another feather in his cap, one more project for his fans to throng to, for his critics to carp about.

But for Padamsee all this doesn't matter. It's just one more thing that the force that drives him, requires him to do.

Malavika Rajbans Sanghvi/Bombay

TATAS

Blueprint to stay No.1

The country's largest industrial house draws up an ambitious Rs 6,000-crore expansion plan

In the world of big industry it is size that matters and the race for the top positions is always relentless. The house of Tata and the house of Birla, the traditional leaders of Indian industry, have over the years planned their corporate expansion schemes with an eye on the rankings. And this has resulted in interesting swings between the two groups for the first position. The race has only got hotter with the entry of Reliance Industries on the scene which has in a short period pushed its way to the third slot and is breathing down the necks of the Tatas and the Birlas. It is not without reason that the Tatas the largest group in terms of assets and profitability in 1987 have chalked out a major expansion plan to stay ahead of Reliance which has recorded a scorching 144.2 per cent growth rate during 1985-87 the highest in the Indian corporate sector.

And how are the Tatas doing it? Here is an instance of one Tata company. Tata Chemicals Ltd (TCL). At its headquarters in Mithapur in coastal north Gujarat, there is a "dream room" where members of the TCL family chalk out projects for the future. The ideas dreamt up in this room have made TCL the largest inorganic basic chemicals complex "east of the Suez" which is about to launch a massive Rs 2,640-crore growth programme. But Tata Chemicals is not the only company in what is called the commonwealth of Tata Enterprises, with total assets of Rs 4,934 crores, which is poised for a massive growth. The aggregate investment of the Tata empire in ongoing and future projects is estimated to be well over a whopping Rs 6,000 crores! And this figure is exclusive of hotel projects that the group has taken up in the Soviet Union.

The flagship company, Tisco, and truck giant Telco have always been the pride of the empire. Tisco has a Rs 1,000-crore expansion project which finally aims at making steel by using oxygen to save on scarce resources like coal and natural gas. Telco has embarked on a Rs 250 crore expansion project which will enable it to make the country's first fully indigenous automobile.

With the debate on privatisation of power generation and many state governments keen to let the private sector set up power stations, the Tata Electric Companies and its subsidiaries, the Tata Hydro-Electric Power Supply Co., the Andhra Valley Power Supply Co. and the Tata Power Co, are poised for exciting developments. Jamshedpur, for instance, where the sprawling Tata Steel complex is located, is starved of power because of the Damodar Valley Corporation's unsteady generation. Tata Electric may put up a 500 MW thermal station at an estimated cost of Rs 500 crores, and the investment may well be over Rs 1,000 crores in case they are allowed to put up two such stations.

But the most exciting developments in the group is expected to come from Tata Chemicals spearheaded by chairman Darbari Seth. Apart from ongoing projects worth Rs 100 crores, Tata Chemicals is making a foray into fields as diverse as fertilisers and refineries. The Karnal refinery, which the company will put up jointly with the Indian Oil Corporation, is the first collaboration of this type in the country. The Soviet Union will be providing Shell technology through its licensee, Combustion Engineering. The Tatas and Indian Oil will have an equal 26 per cent share of the Rs 28-crore equity. The only hitch at the moment is the delay in setting up the Tata-Indian Oil Refineries Ltd which will put up the refinery, as formal approval under the Companies Act as well as MRTP clearance are yet to come through. Tata Chemicals has also applied for setting up a Rs 60-crore LAB project at Karnal with a 60,000-tonne capacity.

Tata Tea, another company under Darbari Seth and flush with funds, has prepared a Rs 300-crore diversification programme. It had recently made a strong bid for DCM's Kota complex but failed to pull it off ultimately.

Darbari Seth: dream plans



Bombay House: planning ahead



While Seth and other Tata bigwigs are dreaming up all kinds of major expansions and projects which will keep the Tata empire ahead of the other biggies, there are also many hurdles which may turn some of them into bad dreams. As Seth points out, they had ambitious plans to set up a state-of the art Computer Aided Research, Design, Engineering and Management Centre (CARDEM) at Mithapur which was envisaged to rank among the best in the world in the chemical industry. But the plan suffered a setback as the import of the IBM-4391 mainframe computer approved by the department of electronics was shot down by the Capital Goods Import Committee.

In the final reckoning, it is finance that will matter. How much of the Rs 6,000 crore investment will come from the Tata coffers and how much will be contributed by the financial institutions is not yet known. And that is a big imponderable given the state of the capital market. For instance, Tata Fertilisers had to forego its plans earlier this year to raise resources entirely from the market. As Seth, who is the chairman of this company too, told shareholders, "The market conditions changed sharply not the worse and your directors found it prudent to redesign the financing plan". The company finally applied to the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) for a rupee loan of Rs 292 crores and a foreign exchange loan of Rs 220 crores.

The most exciting development in the group is expected to come from Tata Chemicals spearheaded by chairman Darbari Seth. Apart from ongoing projects worth Rs 100 crores, Tata Chemicals is making a foray into fields as diverse as fertilisers and refineries

Whatever be the hurdles, there is no denying the fact the Tata group has chalked out an ambitious expansion plan which would undoubtedly put it in an unassailable position as the country's No. 1 industrial house. And by the time the crown prince of the empire, the patrician Ratan Tata, sits in the chair now occupied by the redoubtable J.R.D. Tata, he may be presiding over the largest Indian industrial conglomerate by far.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

TEA EXPORT

A winning package

The Tea Board taps famous Western retail chains to recover lost ground

The world's largest tea producer is hoping to revive the flagging export earnings this year with a special thrust to high value-added teas. A recent attempt to promote exports of high-value tea has resulted in several marketing tie-ups in non-traditional European markets. This breakthrough was reported by a four-member Indian tea delegation led by Tea Board chairman R.K. Tripathi, which has just returned from a promotional tour of Poland, West Germany, France and Belgium. The delegation stopped over at Amsterdam, too, to discuss the prospects of promoting Indian tea in The Netherlands.

"The objective of this exercise was two fold," says Tripathi. "It was an attempt to find out first-hand, the tastes and preferences of the European consumer and to evolve a strategy for the promotion of Indian brands in these markets." Tripathi explains further, "We have decided that the only way India can increase its share in these markets is to arrange tie-ups directly between potential packet tea exporters in India and major departmental chains in Europe. The attempt is really to create our own market and establish a distinct identity and brand consciousness for Indian tea."

The high-powered team comprising, besides Tripathi, R.N. Deogun, chairman, Indian Tea Association, B. Bajoria, chairman, Darjeeling Planters' Association, and M. Chinoy, president, Tea Packeteers Association, has notched up modest successes and several tie-ups with major chain stores are in the offing.

Of the success stories, the most spectacular one is the tie-up entered into between Duncan Agro Ltd and Barends of The Netherlands, a giant retail chain outlet. This order is expected to yield an export earning of 1.2 million Dutch guilders or Rs 8.28 million during the current financial year.

For Duncans and other Indian tea exporters, the exciting Barends tie-up has come after months of hectic, behind-the scenes activity. For instance, the Tea Board had to fork out a cool Rs 10 lakhs in foreign exchange for a market survey in The Netherlands prior to signing on the dotted line as Barends had made it conditional that it would enter the tie up only if a market survey of responses to the Indian brew was made at the Tea Board's expense and the results were favourable.

Based on the results of the survey starting from October, the Barends



Attractive Indian tea cartons: for the Western market



Dilip Banerjee

R.K. Tripathi: tapping foreign chains

chain will sell a blend of Assam and Darjeeling teas in attractive purple-green and blue green cartons of 250 gm and 100 gm. The brand name Mughal Salute for the blend was selected from a host of others, and was based on the findings of the survey.

An attempt is also being made to make an inroad into the French market. Currently, the export of Indian tea to the French market is "insignificant" but a marketing tie-up between France's leading retail chain Monoprix and Duncan Agro is likely to wean the French tea drinker, claim Tea Board officials. Another such proposal between Tata Tea and Nartoom of France was also under active consideration. But while negotiations with European chains are in progress, a significant feature in the Tea Trading Corporation's export cap is the recently concluded tie-up with the British supermarket, Marks and Spencer. Since June this year, slick ink-blue, salmon red and leaf-green slimline packs have been selling Orange Pekoe, Flowery Orange Pekoe and a blend of "different jardins" in this world famous retail chain.

Traditional and loyal markets too have not been ignored in this renewed export thrust. A massive campaign is likely to be launched in West Germany which is India's biggest market for high-value tea. For the quality-conscious Germans who have acquired a taste for Darjeeling tea— the champagne of all teas —a special and distinctive Darjeeling logo exclusively for 100 per cent Darjeeling teas is likely to be introduced soon. To spread the tea cult, the Tea Board has planned a special "India Tea Week" to be held simultaneously in Frankfurt, Hamburg and Munich in the first week of December.

This concern for a renewed thrust in the tea export drive is not unfounded. In a situation of expanding world trade in tea, India's share of the market has declined from 45 per cent in 1951 to 21 per cent in 1987. Amidst the stagnation and declining market share, there have been two periods of high exports in the recent past. Says R.N. Deogun of Tata Tea, "The first period between 1975 and 1977 saw a definite rise in exports peaking to 233 million kg in 1976. The unfounded fear of shortage in the domestic market which finally led to the imposition of the export duty put paid to any sustained effort towards raising exports further. The next period of high exports was in 1980 to 1984, but then again the government strongly intervened by withdrawing incentives, imposing a ban on CTC exports and placing a minimum export price which achieved the then avowed objective of curbing exports and we slumped back to the traditional level."

The concern for a renewed thrust in the tea export drive is not unfounded. In a situation of expanding world trade in tea, India's share of the market has declined from 45 per cent in 1951 to 21 per cent in 1987

And to compound the problem, the share of value-added products, such as packet teas, tea bags, etc., has remained minuscule when compared to world trends. Packet tea exports from India in 1986 accounted for only 14 million kg out of a total of 203 million kg. In contrast, in the same year, Sri Lanka exported 66 million kg in packets out of total exports of 208 million kg.

Said Deogun at an international seminar on tea earlier this year "The packet tea market is distinctly stratified. At one end we have the high-value added sophisticated Western markets where teas are bought in bulk and packaged internally and then retailed. These are essentially consumer societies, where product launches involve huge outlays in terms of advertising, shelf space, rental, etc.

Obviously, the message had struck a responsive chord and provided the impetus for a new promotional strategy. And with a multi-pronged thrust from different sectors, Indian tea can expect to get a foothold in some of the untapped export markets and recover its lost ground in the traditional ones in the next financial year.

Debjani Sinha / *Calcutta*

STANDARD MOTORS

Riding the bumps

The company is poised for a smoother ride after overcoming crippling problems and adverse publicity

"There is unfortunately no mechanism available in our country by which I can repair the damage done to my company's reputation by those raids. I will not be able to go to courts to regain the lost image in such quick fashion...it should take its own course, and time." This was the lament of C.V. Karthik Narayanan, 49-year-old vice-chairman and managing director of the Madras-based Standard Motors, when asked soon after the 38th annual general meeting of his company on 30 September how he felt about the allegations heard in many quarters that the CBI and DRI raids had crippled his luxury Standard-2000 car and led to heavy losses for the company.

Earlier, addressing his company's shareholders, Karthik had said: "I know how you people feel now facing losses after an uninterrupted 11 years of profit. If you are called a fraud by the CBI and the finance minister announces in Parliament that concessions had been withdrawn on grounds of fraud, then

your reputation goes to the dogs and after that no client approaches you."

The company's fortunes nosedived when the Union government withdrew customs and excise concessions on fuel-efficient cars of more than 1000 cc in November 1986 for the Standard-2000. This led to the Standard-2000, the costliest car on Indian roads, becoming costlier by about Rs 1 lakh and uneconomical even for the elite Indian buyer. To compound matters, around that time, there were also the CBI and DRI raids on the factory premises on the 'suspicion' that the company had obtained fuel-efficiency certificate through improper means. And soon the company was faced with several cancellations of bookings for the car and withdrawal of deposits already made.

"In my more than three decades in the automobile industry and my association with this company, little did I expect that in the evening of my career, such unforeseen events could take place in a country like ours and with such a disastrous consequence," Standard Motors' chairman K.V. Srinivasan told the annual general meeting. "I pray that God should give us strength to redeem the situation as quickly as possible," the septuagenarian, who is also the father of Karthik, told his shareholders.

The "financial catastrophe" that Srinivasan mentioned has finally landed the company with a huge loss of Rs 21.63 crores for the year ending 31 March, 1988 (15 months), thereby turning it "sick" and driving it to the Board of





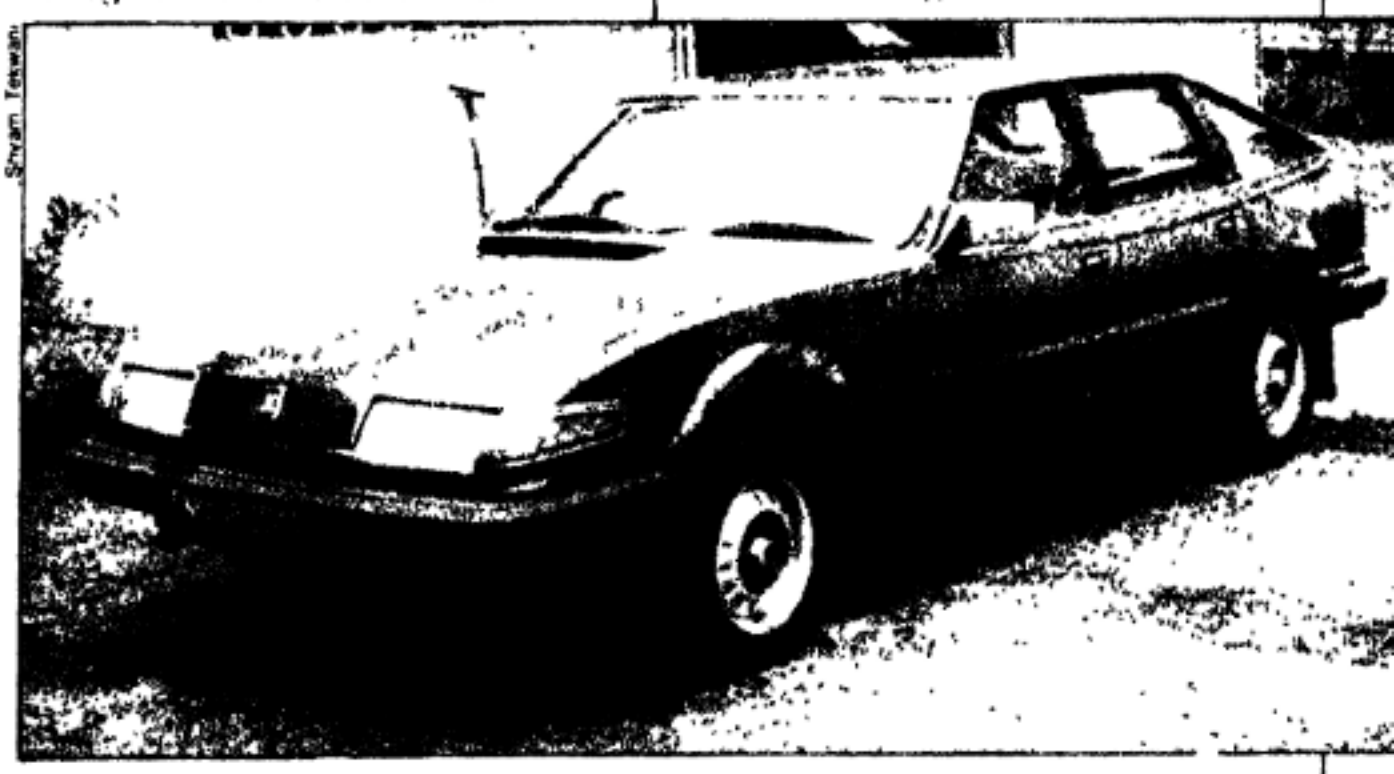
A.C. Muthiah (left) C.V. Karthik Narayanan

Industrial and Financial Rehabilitation (BIFR) to work out a recovery package.

The company has sought relief from BIFR over and above the grant of Rs 18 crores as reliefs in the form of deferment of past loans given by the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI). Also, the IDBI has recommended that banks should extend a working capital loan of Rs 792 lakhs. Pending implementation of the relief package, it extended a bridge loan facility of Rs 500 lakhs to revive the output from the present 70 vehicles a month to 200. The fact that the company has had to approach the BIFR makes it clear that Standard Motors needs much more than the IDBI relief package to put its automobiles back on the road.

The company's fortunes nosedived when the government withdrew duty reliefs for the Standard-2000 which made it too costly a car. Around that time, there were also the CBI and DRI raids which affected the image of Standard Motors

Though the government restored the concessions in December 1986, the damage had already been done because



Shyam Tekwani

The Standard-2000: back on the road

of the adverse publicity. Besides, the restoration of concessions came with a different set of conditions, one of which was that five cars would be selected at random out of every batch of 20 to be tested by the Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (VRDE) at Ahmednagar. "All the batches so far selected have passed the tests at the VRDE comfortably," Karthik said proudly.

Significantly, amidst the turmoil in his company, and much to his satisfaction, Karthik found his 3500-strong workforce rallying solidly behind him. In a rare gesture, the workers' union told the management they would defer payment of wages amounting to Rs 115 lakhs for two months until 31 December, 1989. Said M. Viswanathan, a worker-representative and shareholder: "The workers are proud of this sacrifice, just as they were immensely proud seeing the first Standard 2000 roll out of our factory. This is just to show our solidarity with the management in our efforts to keep the company on its feet."

In September last year, the Controller of Capital Issues consented to increase the capital base by Rs 2 crores, and half of this was at once bought by A.C. Muthiah, the shrewd technocrat and vice president of the joint-sector giant SPIC. He also helped the company with another Rs 1 crore credit. Now, Muthiah is the major shareholder and it could be just a matter of time before he takes charge. This is a prospect not as unwelcome to the traditional Standard Motors' employees as had been the rumours some months ago about prowlers from the north stalking their prestigious product.

A rights issue at six to seven was finalised and the promoters' group permitted Muthiah to absorb their own share of the rights. That would have made the Srinivasan-Karthik Narayanan and A.C. Muthiah groups equal in terms of shareholding. But then, unexpectedly, the financial institutions kept away from subscribing to the rights issue. Instead, they only agreed to take up Rs 1.50 crores worth of debentures. Thus, Muthiah landed himself with 40 per cent of the company's Rs 4.87 crores worth of equity. Even though he now shares clout equally with the promoters on the 12 member board, the question being asked is: would he for long stay satisfied with such an arrangement? Company insiders, however, insist that Karthik Narayanan and Muthiah have been great friends from college days and so a coup may not take place after all.

All put together, it appears things are not really too bad for the group and the Karthik-Muthiah team should pull the company through in the coming days.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

Going, going... but not gone

Genelec is an unusual company in that its parent firm, GEC, is more than than keen to let go of it, but it refuses to part company. Suitors, especially the Modis, have burnt their fingers every time they have tried to bag Genelec despite the fact that GEC has been an acquiescent partner in a possible deal. The Modis were thwarted twice—first by the shareholders who created a good deal of shindig, and then by the MRTPC.



Kalyan Chakravorty

GEC headquarters in Calcutta

Now, the GEC chairman A.K. Khosla has announced that fresh feelers have been received for purchase of 25 per cent of GEC's 33 per cent stake in Genelec.

Well, whoever the bidders are, they will have to overcome the jinx on this company before a takeover can be effected.

And now, tea

There's one more company coming for tea. After much hesitation, Food Specialities Ltd (FSL) has finally decided to try and muscle its way into the already crowded tea market. Its tea taster's choice will be launched nationwide next month. The company has been extremely careful about its new product and has conducted test marketing surveys in two north Indian cities. It is getting ready to launch its new product in Madras at the end of this month. It shouldn't take them long to find out whether their's will be the cup that cheers

Ruling the Indian road

The grand old dame of the Indian roads is in for a change--but not a facelift. Hindustan Motors has at last decided to face the challenge of the Maruti by making the trusted Ambassador into a more fuel-efficient automobile. The new Ambassador will have an entirely new engine, suspension, transmission and steering--and both the petrol and diesel versions will be fuel-efficient.HM is already negotiating with a British and a French firm for the engine technology.

And to make it good in the marketplace, HM has decided to maintain the price level. Looks like the smallest big car or the biggest small car in the world--as the Ambassador has been variously described—is destined to rule the Indian roads for many more years to come.

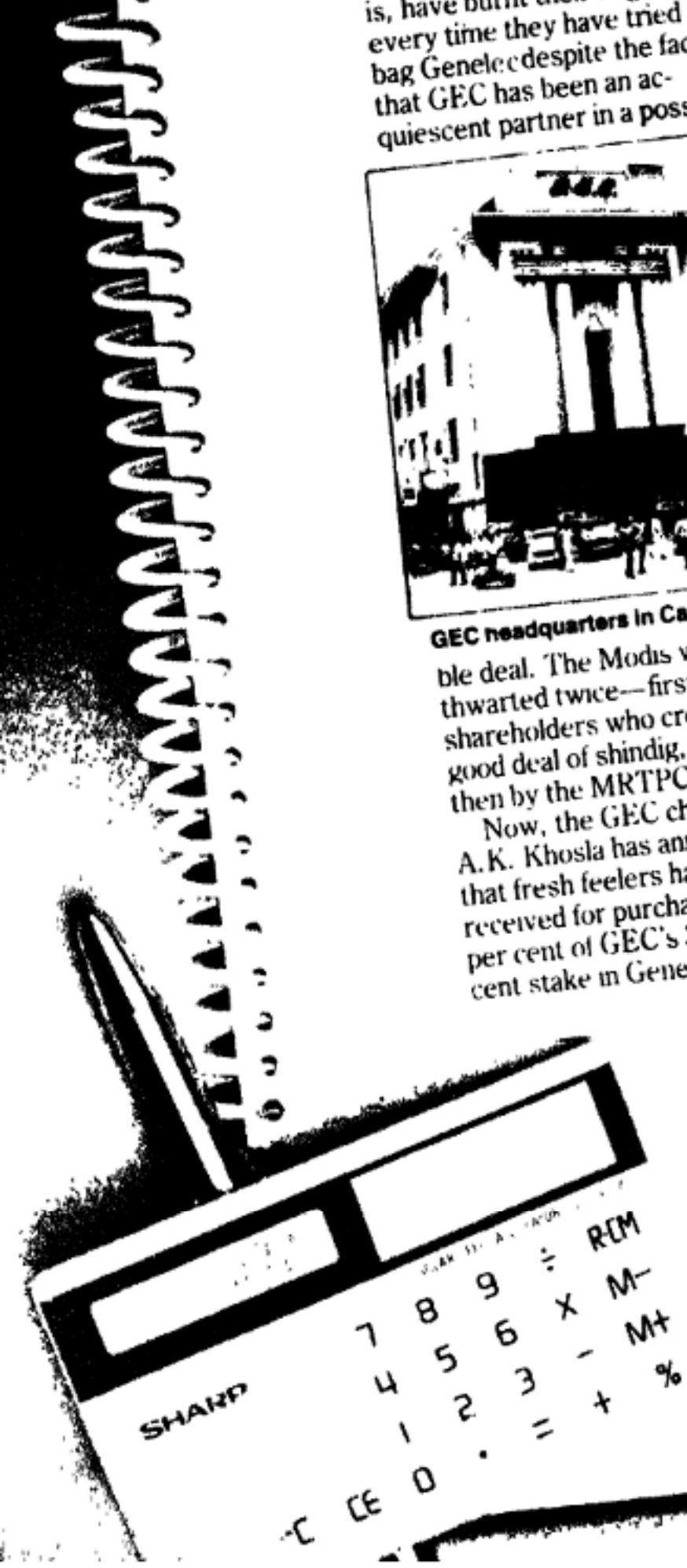
Coke ropes in Godrej

The multinational fizz merchants have set their eyes on India as the venue of their next cola war. Such is the competition that within just a few days of PepsiCo getting the clearance to come to India, Coke came out with the exciting news that it had selected Godrej as its partner for a possible venture in India.

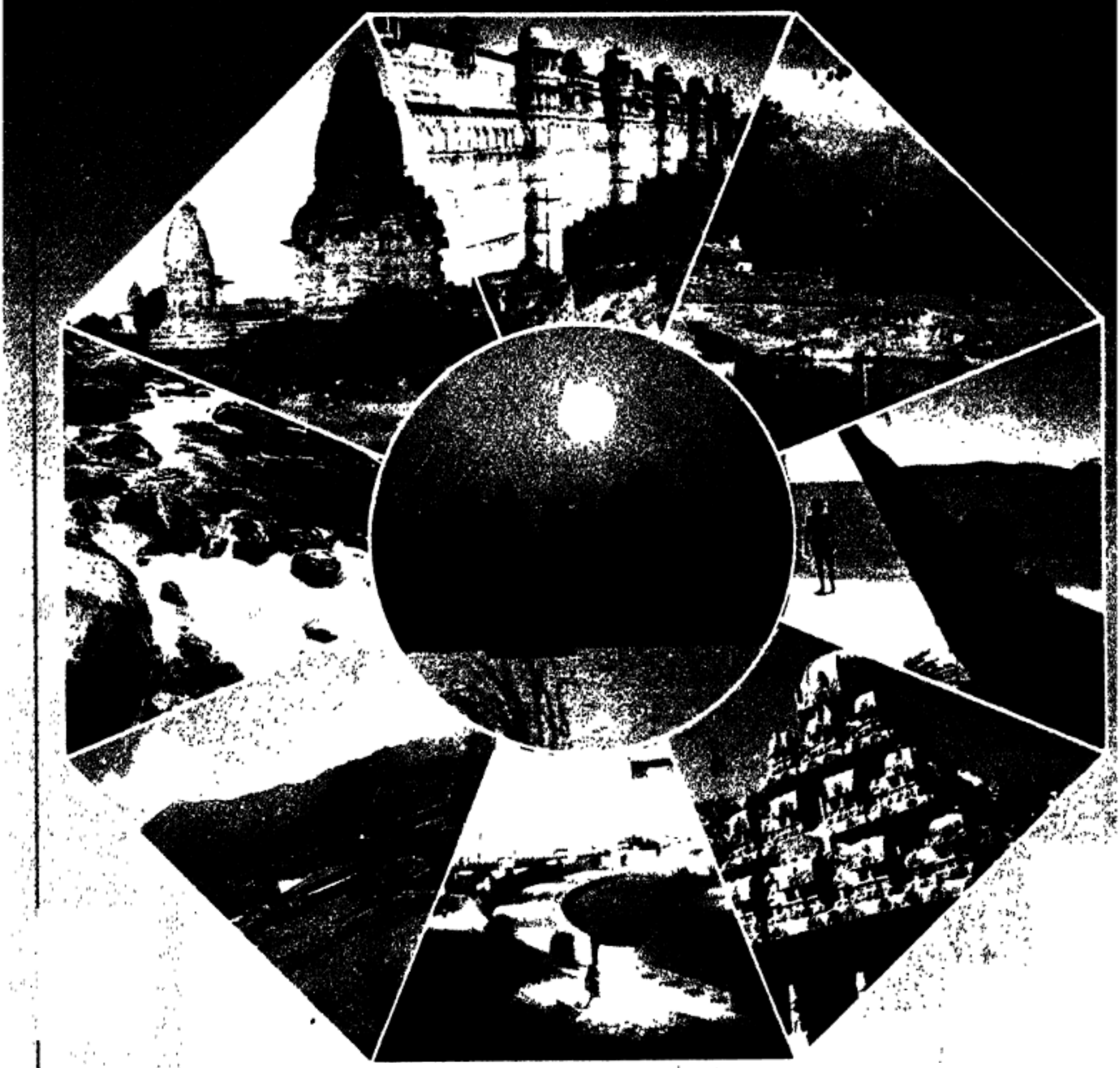


The Coca-Cola logo

Coke's *modus operandi* is uncannily similar to Pepsi's: while the latter chose to use the good offices of the Tatas (through Voltas), Coca-Cola Company has roped in Godrej! To make things doubly sure--especially after its being thrown out in 1977—Coke is learnt to be willing to improve upon the terms offered by arch-rivals Pepsi. And given the frequent visits to India by its officials from Atlanta, it is more than likely that the two most well known names in soft drinks will soon be battling to quench Indian thirst.



TOURISM



SUNDAY SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE



"A thing of beauty is a joy forever"

JOHN KEATS



Hotel Holiday Home Shimla

The richness of Himachal's time-honoured heritage shows beautifully in exceptionally fine Pashmina Shawls, Kullu Caps, Chamba 'Rumals', Embroidered Footwear, Wood-carvings and Carpets

For art-lovers, the world of romance comes alive in Kangra miniatures, stone-craft and sculptures – each a collector's item

Come spend some magical moments in Himachal The HPTDC will take good care with impeccable hospitality

Avail of HPTDC conducted tours in Himachal Tourism Luxury Coaches/AC Cars

HPTDC are also the Handling and Booking Agents for Vayudoot (at Shimla only)

HIMACHAL

The Land of Eternal Enchantments

For information please contact H P Tourist Offices at:

- New Delhi, Chandralok Bldg 36 Janpath Tel 3325320 3324764
  Tourist Information Office Himachal Bhawan, 27 Sikandra Road Tel 387437
- Bombay 36 World Trade Centre Cuffe Parade, Tel 219191/284 211123
- Calcutta 25 Camac Street Tel 446847
- Madras 28 Commander-in-Chief Road, Tel 472986
- Chandigarh S C O 1048-49 Sector 22-B Tel 26494
- Shimla The Mall Tel 3311 Panchayat Bhawan Cart Road Tel 4589
- Bangalore The Manager Himachal Emporium Ganesh Complex
  13, Sulaiker Chatram Road Tel 76591

HIMACHAL PRADESH TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
RITZ ANNEXE, SHIMLA-171 001, PHONES 4472, 3977, 5071

Dominica

Take a Welcombreak!



Welcombreak is an exciting getaway for the entire family. Walk down shell strewn beaches, and travel the timeless deserts. Play croquet on velvet greens, or a set of tennis early morning. Or simply revel in the luxury of India's best hotels. Welcombreak has it all!

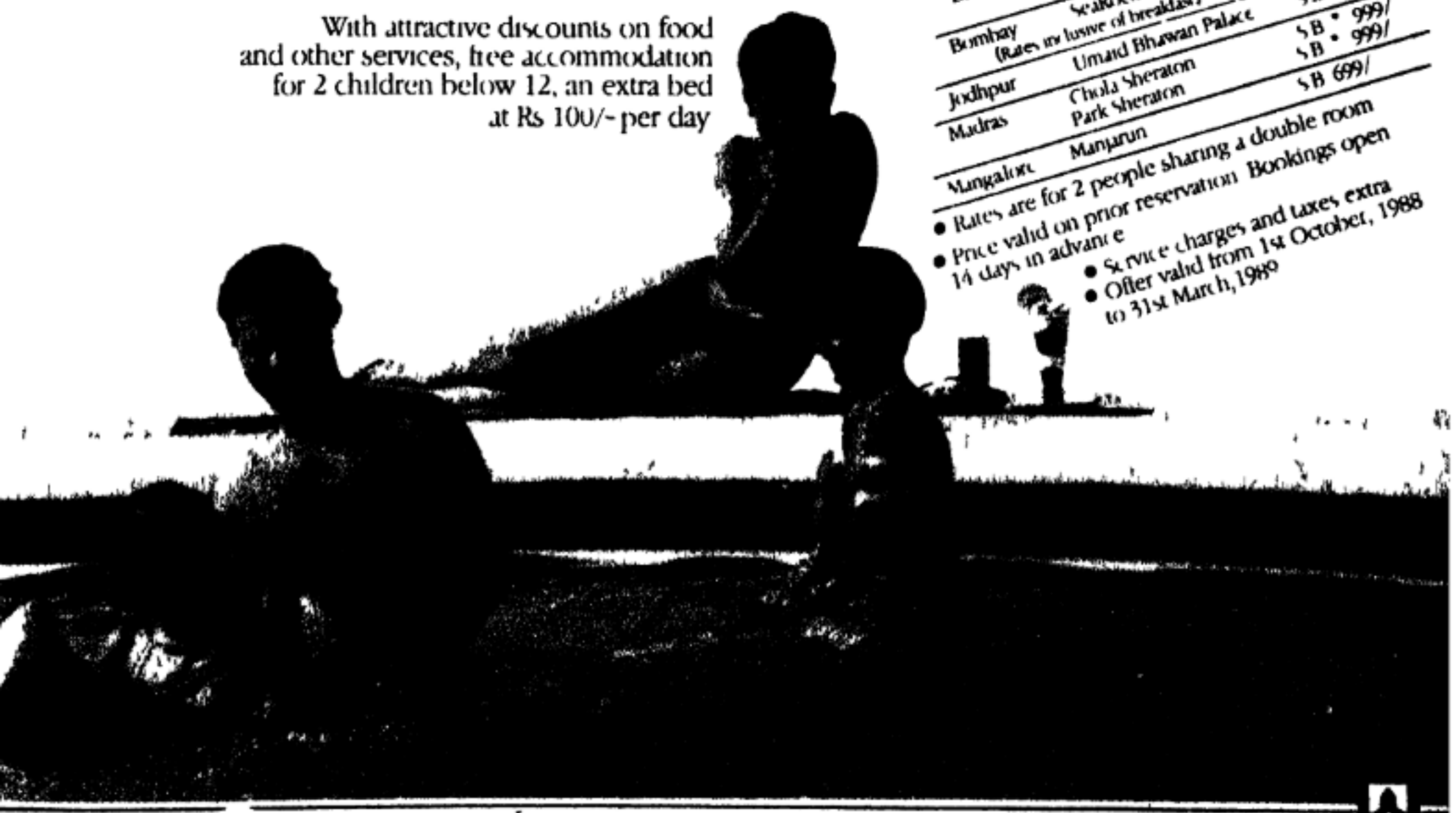
PACKAGES OFFERED

Short Break (S B)	— 2 nights, 3 days
Weekend Break (S B *)	(Friday in, Sunday out or Saturday in, Monday out)
Long Break (L B)	— 3 nights, 4 days
Big Break (B B)	— 5 nights, 6 days
Mini Break (M B)	- 1 night, 2 days (Friday in, Saturday out or Saturday in, Sunday out)

With attractive discounts on food and other services, free accommodation for 2 children below 12, an extra bed at Rs 100/- per day

Place	Welcomgroup Hotel	Rates (Rs.)
Agra	Mughal Sheraton	S B 1299/ L B 1599/
Andamans	Bay Island	L B 1650/ B B 2650/
Aurangabad	Rama International	S B 855/ L B 1185/
Bangalore	Windsor Manor Sheraton	S B * 1099/
Baroda	Vadodara	M B 333/ S B 799/
Bombay (Rates inclusive of breakfast)	SeaRock Sheraton	S B 1577/ L B 2366/
Jodhpur	Umaid Bhawan Palace	S B 888/
Madras	Chola Sheraton	S B * 999/
	Park Sheraton	S B * 999/
Mangalore	Manjarun	S B 699/

- Rates are for 2 people sharing a double room
- Price valid on prior reservation. Bookings open 14 days in advance
- Service charges and taxes extra
- Offer valid from 1st October, 1988 to 31st March, 1989



For more details on the Welcombreak holiday packages, CALL **WELCOMNET**
Welcomgroup Hotels' Instant Reservation Network

WELCOMGROUP
Palaces, hotels, resorts, indovillas.

Delhi	3014127, 3010849	Hyderabad	831023, 825428	Baroda	321261, 323232
Bombay	221121, 220923 2042286	Bangalore	258030, 70433	Ahmedabad	468603, 468557
Madras	473691, 479460	Coimbatore	22629		
Calcutta	203222, 203223, 209527	Pune	666115		

Or any Welcomgroup hotel or your travel agent.

HTA-613

"How I gave my family a fascinating vacation without going North, South, East or West."



"No, we didn't stay at home. Nor was it a vacation to the middle of nowhere.

This year it was centre stage. Madhya Pradesh!

And aren't we fortunate? We discovered a rich historical and cultural legacy. Ancient sites of great dynasties. Formidable forts that still echo battle sounds and tales of rare heroism. Legends of intense love and passion exquisitely chronicled in stone. Gorgeous palaces that still whisper the opulence, the style, the royal ambience.

Dense forests, the hunting ground of erstwhile emperors, transformed into vibrant wildlife sanctuaries."

"Madhya Pradesh!

It's where centuries seemed to be so charmingly preserved

Unfolding great, golden moments everywhere we went

Mandu - The City of Joy. The love of a poet prince for his beautiful consort is still alive in the many architectural wonders. You'll fall in love with Mandu. We did

Gwalior Fort - This massive monument so inspired Emperor Babur that he called it the pearl amongst the fortresses of Hind

Khajuraho - Magnificent. Beautiful. Sensuous. Khajuraho is many things to many people

Sanchi - So serene! Glorious stupas and pillars stand as in deep meditation

Pachmarhi — Enchanting. Tranquil. Myriad green shades embrace mountains. And everywhere there's the murmur of cool, crystal streams

Amarkantak. Chitrakoot - Further, splashes of Nature's colourful canvas. And wasn't the boat ride at the moonlit **Marble Rocks** a memorable experience?

Kanha. Bandhavgarh. Shivpuri — Wildlife reserves with such a profusion of species of birds, deer, antelopes, sambar, blackbuck. And, of course, the tiger.



Ujjain. Omkareshwar. Maheshwar — This is where a hundred gods have taken abode

And **Bhopal** — The capital city. Hugging the shores of a magnificent lake. It is a quiet blend of mosques and museums, parks and gardens, broad avenues and modern buildings

Madhya Pradesh!

The gods indeed destined that this vast 'wonderland' be located nowhere else but in the very 'heart of India'.

There are well organised tours from Delhi, Bombay or Calcutta. To make sure that the holiday was the most memorable we lived in log huts, tourist villages and retreats with true environmental flavour. And we tried the tourist bungalows and holiday homes too. So economical. So easy on the pocket. Transportation too is so planned with a choice of cars, jeeps and coaches

Madhya Pradesh! You surprise me."

Come to Madhya Pradesh... It's surprising a lot of people like you.

For more information and bookings, get in touch with Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. **NEW DELHI :** 204-205, IInd Floor, Hotel Kanishka Shopping Plaza, 19 Ashok Road, New Delhi-110 001 Tel 3321187, 3327264. Telex : 031-63417 MPT-IN. **BOMBAY :** 74 World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade, Colaba, Bombay-400 005 Tel 217603, 214860, 219191 (ext 299) **CALCUTTA :** Chitrakoot Building, Room No 7, 6th Floor, 230 A, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Road, Calcutta-700 020. Tel. 448543 Telex 021-4296 AVN-IN. **BHOPAL :** Gangotri, T.T. Nagar, Bhopal-462 003. Tel : 63552, 65154, 66383, 68563, 64388. 66342. Telex [illegible]-275 TOUR-IN.

MILESTONES/MPT/151a R

Opening new vistas



By Gopinath Menon

"Welcome a visitor, but send back a friend." In tourism circles in the country, one finds more and more people recollecting the guidelines set by former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru for tourism. Over the decades, development on the tourism front has come to be regarded in figures and targets. Now, efforts are on to reintroduce, as it were, an intrinsic aspect of tourism promotion: the personal touch.

A new strategy for tourism has been evolved and as Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi informed a meeting of tourism representatives recently, the sector has been receiving top priority from the government. The strategy discussed by the Prime Minister envisaged the country welcoming three million tourists by the year 1990. The targets are daunting judging even from the increased profitability in this sector in the past few years: in 1987-88 tourism was the largest single foreign exchange earner with an inflow of Rs 1,899 crores. The number of tourists who visited India in this period was 1.16 million. In fact, ever since India crossed the magic figure of one million tourists in 1986, the inflow of tourists has been going up by eight per cent.

Obviously, for the planners, as far as tourism is concerned, the Himalayas are the limit. Fortunately, as the targets have gone up, so have the budgets for tourism. An examination of the tourism outlays show that the beginning of the seventh five-year plan in 1985-86 brought about a complete change in the government's policy towards tourism. Against a total outlay of Rs 25 crores in the seventh five-year plan, allocations made in the plan amount to Rs 138.63 crores.

The fact that the allocations made for tourism are commensurate with the targets is a welcome sign. But broadly speaking, the breakthrough in tourism has been made because of the diversification and dynamism which the sector has witnessed in the current decade. Tourism planners in the country have now realised that they must get out of the "golden triangle" syndrome. There is more to India than just Delhi, Agra and Jaipur and it is this much-needed broadbasing of the tourism policy that has added the new thrust to it.

The major thrust areas identified for development by the ministry of tourism are:

- Diversification from culture-oriented tourism to holiday and leisure tourism;
- Development of trekking, winter sports, wildlife and beach resort tourism;
- Restoration of national heritage centres; and
- Development of selected tourist circuits including Buddhist centres.

In real terms, what this means is a redefinition of tourism programmes and a redesigning of the tourism map. To move attention away from, say, the beach resorts of Goa to the luxurious sands of Kerala. To lay out far-flung destinations for foreigners from the Kashmir valley to Lakshwadeep. What has also given a new dimension to tourism is the three-pronged strategy that has evolved in the Eighties. The first new thrust was highway tourism, the second, domestic tourism and the third, adventure tourism.

There is, of course, a fallout of all this tourist rush. The foothills of the Himalayas are already heavily denuded, thanks to the tourist influx in the hill-stations. It is these aspects which also need to be kept in mind while working out a full-scale programme for Indian tourism.



Rent-a-Plane

Vayudoot. It has brought you many firsts. From taking you to hard-to-reach places. To Holiday Package Tours. Giving you Night Flight Charters and now, the most innovative concept of all.. the Rent-a-Plane service

A boon to Tour Operators, in India and abroad, to Industrial Houses and to Businessmen. Charter a plane from Vayudoot individually or collectively To fly 'anywhere' in the country. At nominal costs.

The Rent-a-Plane service. Just one of the innovations to come from the fastest growing airline in the world... Vayudoot

For details, please contact
Vayudoot Limited
Safdarjung Airport
New Delhi-110 003
Phone : 699272

वायुदूत
Vayudoot
We fly for you

Mutual-4608

Get high in Himachal

By S.N. Verma
M.D. Himachal Tourism

Himachal, the abode of the gods and the land of snows is a tourist's dream and delight. Be it the summer of alpine flowers and melting snows, or the monsoon of sudden waterfalls and willowy clouds, or the autumn of pleasant sunshine and glorious sunsets and the winter of snow, snow and more snow, the magical power of these mountains is an indefinable blend of myth and reality. The Dhauladhar range in the north and the Shivalik hills further south stand guard over the state of Himachal Pradesh. In the far reaches of Lahaul and Spiti are the ancient Buddhist monasteries. There is Vashist, Tattapani and Manikaran and the angler's thrills of trout and mahashir in the Beas, Yamuna, Giri, Prabar, Baspa and rivers and streams.

A majority of the simple people of Himachal Pradesh, bound by common traditions and culture, are Hindus for whom there are more than 10,000 temples. They have countless festivals and fairs the important ones being Minjar of Chamba, Shivratri of Mandi, Dussehra of Kullu, Lavi of Rampur and Renuka of Sirmaur.

Himachal is a trekker's paradise. The unhurried absorption of nature is no less a joy than scaling a peak. Himachal provides a good training ground for mountaineers as there are many reasonably high and accessible peaks.

Kullu and Lahaul valleys Manali-Chandrakhani-Malana. This is a seven days' trek and the stages en route are Rumsu 2060 mts. (24km), Chandrakhani 3650 mts. (8km), Malana 2100 mts. (7km), Kasol 1580 mts. (8 km), Jari 1560 mts. (15 km), and Bhuntar 900 mts. (12 km).

You may cover the journey upto Naggar either by bus or on foot. Near the Chandrakhani pass, flanking the path are numerous clumps of rhododendrons and varieties of flowering shrubs which add to the enjoyment of a walk.

Manali-Chandratal: This trek involves a journey of 11 days. The stages are Chhikka 2960 mts. (13 km), Chhatru 3360 mts. (16 km), Chhota Dara 3740 mts. (16 km), Batal 3960 mts. (18 km), Topko Yongma 4320 mys. (12 km), Topko Gongma 4640 mts. (11 km), Baralacha 489 mts. (10 km), Patsco 3820 mts. (14 km), and Keylong 3340 mts. (21 km).

Dharamsala-Chamba via Lakagot and Bharmauri: It is an eight days' trek. Lakagot is at the foot of Indrahar pass (5660 mts) and is on the majestic Dhauladhar range. At the base, a wonderful view of the Kangra valley in its rural loveliness and a view of the awe-inspiring Himalayan ranges is obtained.

Banja to Narkanda via Bashleo Pass: This is again one of the finest treks in Himachal. Bandal is the first stage on the route and it is 8 km from Banjar. There is a neat and cosy forest rest house tucked away on a hill-side, which is under the Divisional Forest Officer, Seraj Forest Division, Banjar. For those interested in fishing and shooting, this is an ideal spot as trout is available easily in the clear pool at Goshaini about one and half kilometers from the rest house and where the Tirthan river is met by Plachan Khad. Game is in plenty in the surrounding forests. The journey upto Goshaini can also be covered by bus.

Trekking in Chamba district: There are ample opportunities for trekking in Chamba district. The Pangi valley, the Manimahesh range of mountains and many other peaks are attractive and important areas for trekking.

One can go to Kilar, the tehsil headquarters of Pangi, over the Sach Pass (4350 mts) and from there either to Kishtwar in Jammu and Kashmir or to Udeypur in Lahaul. Chamba to Kilar can also be reached via Chini, Kalichho, Chobia and Kugti Passes. Details of these treks can be had from the area Manager, HPTDC, Dalhousie.

Shivalik fossil park: The park, 21 km south of Nahan, displays lifesize fibreglass models of prehistoric animals whose fossilised skeletons were unearthed here. The park is the first of its kind in Asia to be developed at the actual site where these fossils developed. There are models of mammoth hippopotamus with six incisors, giant land tortoises and sabre-toothed tigers. The Shivalik formations contain one of the world's richest collections of mammalian fossils which go back to the Jurassic era nearly 835 million years ago. It is 85 km from Chandigarh.

Paonta Sahib: A city sacred to the memory of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Paonta Sahib retains the memory of the martial Guru through his weapons along with a majestic gurudwara, overlooking the river Yamuna. Paonta Sahib is distinguished by its association with the Sikhs and attracts them by the thousands at the spring festivals of Baisakhi and Holi. Bus services from Dehradun, Chandigarh and Shimla are available. Accommodation is available in the HPTDC Hotel Yamuna.

Renuka: One of the most beautiful lakhs in HP, it is shaped like a sleeping woman. It commemorates the sacrifice of Renuka who was killed by her son Parsuram on the orders of his father. In November, a fair which celebrates the immortality of Renuka and her son is held. The lake shelters a wildlife sanctuary inhabited by Asiatic lions, deer, and many kinds of water birds. There is a small zoo on the shore. HPTDC provides reasonably priced accommodation in Renuka, 42 km from Nahan.

Nahan: Perched on an isolated ridge of the Shivalik hills, Nahan overlooks ravines and green forests. The city, whose name can be divided into 'Na' and 'Han' in Sanskrit meaning 'invincible', is watered by man-made lakes and decorated with temples and gardens. Nahan's hub is Chaugan, which has princely affiliations. The cherished remains of the old royal capital, Sirmuri Tal, in the form of sculptures are displayed at the Circuit House. Contemporary art pieces are found at the Shanti Sangam. There are regular bus services from Ambala (64 km), Chandigarh (90 km) and Shimla (137 km). Accommodation is available in the PWD, the Municipal and the SFDA rest houses.



Himachal: Glory of the hills



MOBILE ASSET

People who are going places (in more ways than one) need this mobile asset. It's made of plastic, measures 2" x 3" and puts a world of convenience in your pocket. It buys your airline ticket (and automatically gives you free flight insurance for Rs. 1 lakh), pays for your hotel room, picks up your restaurant bills and your shopping tab. It gives you commission-free travellers' cheques, presents you with discounts upto 40% at select hotels in India and abroad. Through the year it makes you offers at hotels (extra room nights, upgradation to suites .. you are always pleasantly surprised) and its very name ensures personalised service and a travel package that's difficult to refuse

It wraps all this and a heap of other benefits in a style befitting the world's first credit card.

The Diners Club card. When you get it, you know you've arrived.

Diners Club
Welcome to our world.

Diners Club, Raheja Chambers, 213, Nariman Point, Bombay 400 021. Tel: 244949 Bangalore – Tel 567201, 567202
Calcutta – Tel: 432768 Madras – Tel: 475191, 475112. New Delhi – Tel. 602565, 601034. Secunderabad – Tel: 72277

I would like to be a member of Diners Club India Pvt Ltd. and enclose my cheque of Rs. 1,450/- towards Entrance Fees and one year's subscription.

Name _____ Tel. _____

Address _____

Company & Designation _____

Cheque No. _____ Date _____ Drawn on _____

Signature _____ Date _____

(Pl mail this coupon to the Diners Club Bombay address)

COUPSUN 3

LINTAS DC 149 2418 BM

Madhya Pradesh: Boundless beauty

By Partha Roy

Captain J Forsyth, the great naturalist, in *The Highlands of Central India* has described Madhya Pradesh thus, "As far as the eye can see, lie range upon range of forests-covered hills, tumbled in wild confusion The deep-red sand stone formation contrasts finely with the green bamboo vegetation, out of which they rise " Such is the beauty of Madhya Pradesh The topography ranges from the flat alluvial plains of the Chambal to the mountainous range of the Satpuras—among the oldest in the world

With its innumerable monuments, stupas, palaces and forts on hill tops and exquisitely carved monuments, Madhya Pradesh conjures up in the visitors' mind, visions of emperors and great kingdoms One may enter the state from Gwalior—gateway to the Vindhyas— which lies on the southern fringe of the Gangetic plain Contrary to popular belief, Gwalior is more than just a fortress Antiquities abound in the city around the fortress The Teli-Ka-Mandir is a classic example of Brahminical architecture Then there is Mandu, believed to be the largest fortified city in the world with a walled perimeter of over 70 km. Inside, is a virtual treasure trove of Islamic architecture not to speak of the walls which defy description However, the culmination of all architecture is Khajurah. It is "one of the most refined and finished manifestations of Indian architecture in the Indo-Aryan style" (*Indian Architecture* by Percy Brown). The temples of Khajuraho are like jewels amid green hills, open fields, ponds and rivulets and the sleepy hamlet of Bundelkhand.



MP. The beautiful Jhaz Mahal

The state abounds in wildlife, too The National Park of Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Shivpuri and Panna provide tourists with the rare opportunity to see tigers, bisons, a variety of deer and antelopes in their natural habitat. For ornithologists there is the Karera Bird Sanctuary at Shivpuri. Other spots of tourist attraction are the Panchamarhi plateau—a paradise par excellence for trekkers and rock-climbers— the Omkareshwar temples, Ujjain temples, Chitrakoot, Tajul Masjid at Bhopal, Sanchi, Udaygiri, Urchha and Chanderi. M.P. Tourism offers a wide range of comfortable and well-furnished accommodation units to see all this. The rich tribal heritage is another tourist mainstay of the state

Uttar Pradesh: The enchanting state

Uttar Pradesh is a land blessed with enchanting hill stations, salubrious climate and balmy breezes on the one hand and famous pilgrim centres like Hardwar, Rishikesh and Varanasi on the other. The state is endowed with immense tourist potential. The spots of natural beauty and landscape of the state are so fascinating and varied that, perhaps. no region of the world can compete with its beauty and grandeur.

The hilly region, a part and parcel of the majestic and unparalleled Himalayan empire, has a number of health resorts: Mussoorie, the 'queen' among tourist spots 2000 mts. above sea-level, Chakratu, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Lansdowne, Almora, Nainital, Ranikhet and Pithorgarh.

They are all treasures of exhilarating beauty. Hills apart, a tourist is sure to be enthralled by elegant architectural monuments like the temples at Sarnath, the Bara Imambara, the miraculous Taj—the most photographed monument in the world—the Alamgiri Mosque, a queer mixture of Hindu and Mughal styles of architecture, the lower part representing Hindu designs and the upper part a mosque.



UP: History at the roadside

The famous Corbett National Park with an area of 520 sq. kms., the Nainital lake resort, the pristine beauty of Mussoorrie and Dehra Dun are other major tourist attractions. The lofty shrines of Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath, the skiing resorts of the Auli slopes are sure to provide an impressive experience.

Uttar Pradesh has so many sacred as well as historical spots and has seen so much of history through the ages, that it is not possible to give any reasonable account of it.



About 4000 temples,
40 bathing ghats,
1600 gopika stories,
and Raslila of course!

Mathura beckons you. And you can stay by paying anything from Rs. 10 to 75 per head.

Everything about Lord Krishna is in and around Mathura. And in Mathura you have good accommodation too

Stay in a Rs. 10/- per head dormitory or a Rs. 75/- aircooled room and chant the Lord's name as you see his legends come alive in the 4000 and odd temples. Go to Braj Bhoomi and perhaps you'll come across a cowherd who is a descendant of the Yadavas.

In and around Mathura there are many places you can see. Like Barsana, Gokul, Radhakund, Vrindavan, Nandgaon and many more.

Whichever place you go to, rest assured you'll find accommodation in the tourist bungalows and Yatri Niwas.

To give you an idea we have—

Tourist Bungalow Barsana (195 km. from Delhi)	**— 20 beds**
Tourist Bungalow Gokul Phone : 43 (153 km. from Delhi)	**— 20 beds**
Tourist Bungalow Civil Lines Mathura (145 km. from Delhi)	**— 14 beds**
Tourist Bungalow Radhakund (169 kms. from Delhi)	**— 20 beds**

So set out and see where the divine who authored the Song Celestial lived. Perhaps you'll hear his flute...

Weekly conducted tours are also available from Delhi.

For further details contact :

U.P. State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.
Chandralok
36 Janpath, New Delhi-110 001
Phone : 3322251
or
U.P. Government Tourist Offices all over the country.

F.N./XII/96

Glorious Chittaur

"Chittaur is one of the cities that seem to have been doomed to continual struggle and gateway on her winding ascent is marked with stones that tell how a hero fought and died. She sits on her mountain top though discrowned and gazes over the plains that she has often seen glittering with lance points quivering under the hoop of charging squadrons."
--Dr Annie Besant

By Jaishri N. Jethwaney

Chittaur is reminiscent of many a battle. Battles, because it held a strategic position; battles, because of the self-esteem of the Rajputs who preferred to break but not bend in front of mighty enemies, battles, because some ruthless Sultan had an evil eye on the beauty of a queen. The saga of Chittaur has been written and rewritten with the blood of its valiant sons and daughters, after every successive bloody battle.

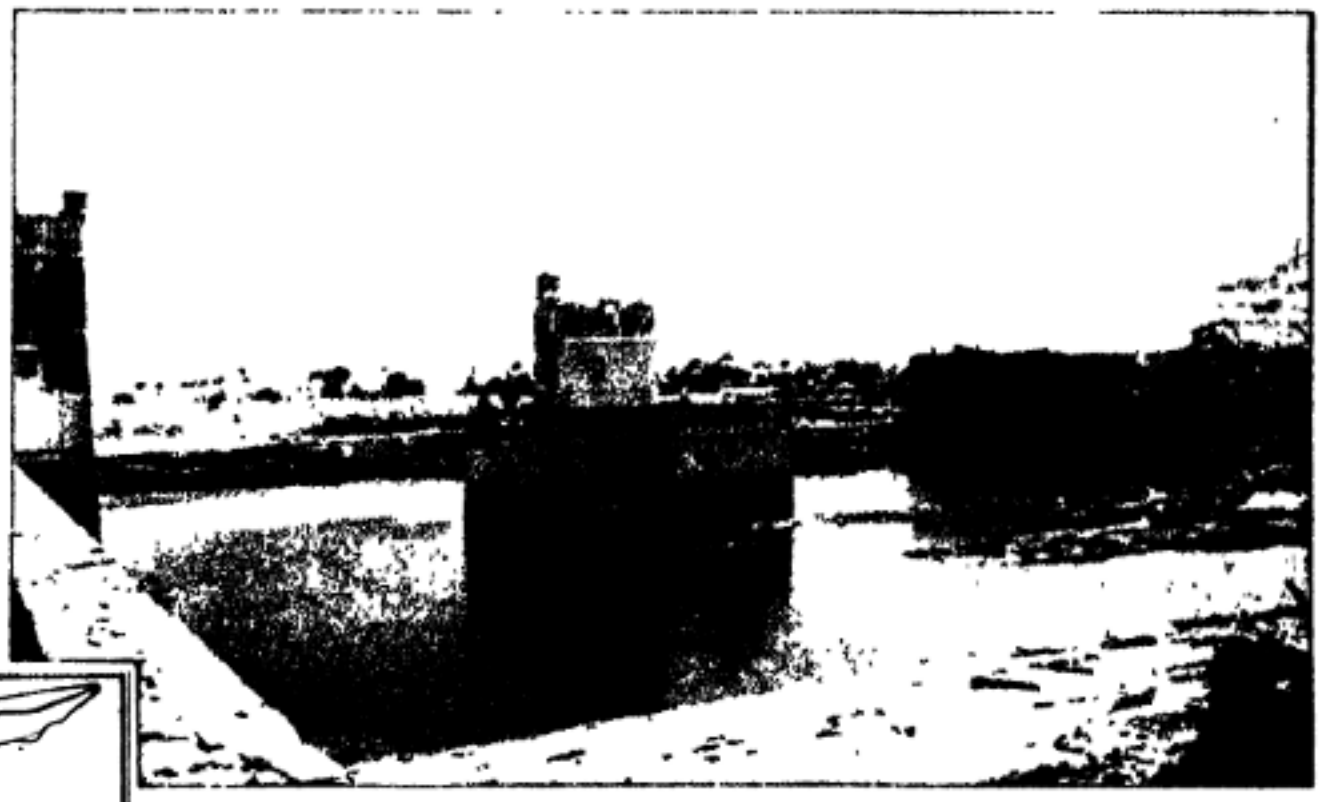
Some 112 kilometres from Udaipur, the road that leads to historic Chittaurgarh is as smooth as silk. On either side of the road are fields, making the journey more pleasant. Situated in the south-east of Rajasthan, Chittaurgarh is about 408 metres above sea level. Chittaur Fort, around which revolves the history of Chittaurgarh, with its old settlement, reposes on an isolated rock, the same formation as the plateau. Chittaur Fort is the best known of forts in Rajasthan. Though the exact date of its construction is not known, tradition, however, ascribes its founding by Chitrang Maurya in the 7th century. For eight hundred years, the fort was the capital of Mewar except for short intervals during which invaders held their supremacy over it. Rana Udaisingh founded the city of Udaipur in 1567 AD and shifted the capital there.

As one enters the fort, each stone suddenly comes to life. The effect is mesmerising, if you know the history of Mewar. The legendary beauty of Padmini which was the cause of her doom; the Jauhar committed by the fair queen along with 13,000 women; loyalty of Panna Dhai who sacrificed her son to save the heir to the throne; the devotion of the greatest of the great saints, Meera Bai; the images of Rana Sanga, Rawal Rattan Singh and Rana Pratap vividly come to life one after the other. Many centuries have passed by, but time has not been able to erase from the memories of the descendants the sacrifices made by one and all to save their motherland and honour of their womenfolk from the onslaught of the enemy and the battles that were thrust on this valiant race of people.

For a better appreciation of this historic relic, it is necessary to know a little bit of the history of Mewar, specially from the 13th to the 16th century.

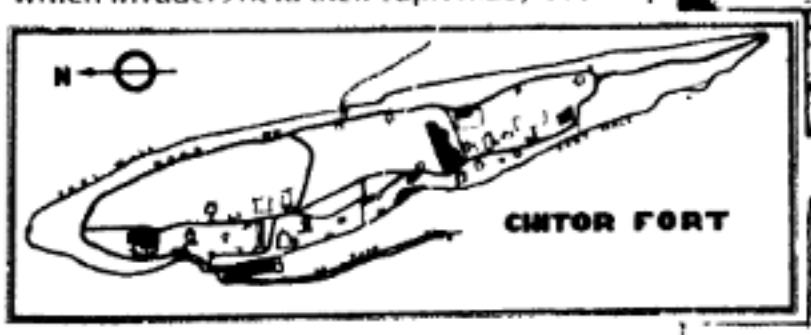
The first siege. There were recurring conflicts between the Sultan of Delhi and the Prince of Mewar. Allauddin Khilji, the Sultan of Delhi, raided the fort in 1303. History has it that the plan behind the siege was to win the fair Queen Padmini, wife of Rawal Ratan Singh, ruler of Chittaur. Historian Barauni, however, is of the view that this was not the real cause. Allauddin wanted to conquer Ranthambore, Chittaur, Chanderi, Malwa, Dhar and Ujjain as these places were strategically important to conquer the Deccan. To fulfil his ambitions, Khilji first captured Ranthambore. The Sultan then laid siege to Chittaur. Allauddin proposed that if Queen Padmini was shown to him, he would raise the siege. However, after she was shown to him in a mirror, the Sultan through a clever ploy captured the Rana. Five hundred select braves were killed in rescuing the Prince. Khilji continued the siege for six months. When all hopes of victory of the Rajputs were lost and defeat was imminent on the horizon, Queen Padmini entered the subterranean chamber along with the wives and the daughters of the defenders, membering 13,000. The doors were sealed behind them and they immolated themselves.

Chittaur Fort. A view of Padmini's summer resort



Chittaur Fort. A view of Kumbha Palace





Photos and sketch: Jaishri N. Jethwaney

Instant ORISSA!

THE many splendoured eastern state, is a world of surprises

Washed by the waters of Bay Of Bengal, the coast is dotted with golden beaches Puri, Gopalpur, Konark and other lesser known but no less beaches

Cool and placid Chilika, the largest brackish water lake in Asia, is a popular abode for migratory birds

For the naturalist there is the hot sulphur spring at Taptapani

And Simlipal National Park, a virgin forest with protected flora and fauna, is simply beyond the wildest imagination Migratory birds, resident tigers and elephants, giant water falls, wild flowers all in their natural habitat, untouched and unspoilt by civilisation



Migratory birds, resident tigers, giant water-falls
Beyond the wildest imagination!

Apart from being naturally bountiful, the state is a treasure-house of historical relics and monuments Long-ago-and-far-away Jain, Hindu and Buddhist temple-complexes, rock-edicts and archaeological remains of eras gone by, the oldest being the Udaygiri-Khandagiri caves from 1st Century, BC! While some fell to the ravages of time and tide, others like the Jagannath Temple at Puri (12th Century, AD) still hub with life and prayer The Sun Temple at Konark is the best known among the ancient Kalingan style of temple architecture

The modern Capital-city of Bhubaneswar has an ancient sister which had at one time as many as 1000 temples, of which only 600 remain Six hundred! Lord Lingaraj presides, with a temple that towers over all, and among the other temple-complexes in 'The Cathedral City Of India' are Mukteswar (10th Century) Raja Rani (11th Century), and Kedar Gouri (12th Century)

Dhauli Hill stands witness to Emperor Ashoka making peace with himself Only, the rock-edicts are in the long forgotten language of Pali A 'Viswa Shanti Stupa', built in recent years by the Japanese, celebrates the historic event

And the Lalitgiri-Ratnagiri complex, has been described by Hiuen T' sang, the Chinese pilgrim-historian, as a flourishing Buddhist university called Pushpagiri

Colourful is just the word for Orissa and it shows in the local handicrafts, be it applique-work canopies and umbrellas of Pipli or patachitra paintings and papier-mache masks of Raghurajpur 'Katki' sarees, ofcourse, have long been fashionable



Long-ago-and-far-away

But there was a long felt need to bridge the gap between places of tourist interest and services available; and that is exactly what entrepreneur J K Mohanty did with Swosti Travels and an exciting, never-before tour-package named after the popular classical dance-form of the state

Naturally, 'The Odissi Package' was an instant hit!

The 5-Day/4-Night package includes accommodation in 4-Star hotels at Bhubaneswar

Hotel Swosti
PERFORMANCE PAR EXCELLENCE

and Puri,
transfers from and to airport, breakfast, shopping sprees, sight-seeing ofcourse and a live Odissi performance

Small wonder, therefore, that at Rs 1300 per person (for groups of 5 or multiples) and Rs 3400 exclusively for couples or two persons, the travel agency's booking offices in Calcutta, Bombay and New Delhi are busy directing traffic

To Orissa!

For details of 'The Odissi Package', write to SWOSTI TRAVELS (A Division of Hotel Swosti Pvt Ltd, 103 Janpath, Bhubaneswar 751 001 Telephone Bhubaneswar 54 178/179/359 56 57 Calcutta 48 3605 Bombay 27 4356, 24 4741 New Delhi 62 0493, 55 1648 Telex Bhubaneswar 0675 321 Bombay 011 6781

GRIFFIN

The second sack of Chittaur Rana Sanga, one of the greatest Rajput kings, ruled Mewar from 1506 AD. He won 16 battles against the Muslims. He also defeated the Lodhi sovereigns of Delhi and rulers of Malwa. He exercised his influence in central India and Gujarat and greatly added to the prestige of Mewar. He was, however, defeated by Babur in the battle of Khanwa in 1527 AD. Rana was succeeded by his third son Rana Ratan Singh who was soon succeeded by his brother Bikramajeet, who was an egoist, vindictive and disrespectful to his nobles. Seeing this opportunity, Bahadurshah of Gujarat stormed Chittaur in 1534 AD. Almost every clan lost its chief. Thirty-two thousand valiant Rajputs were slain. This was the second "Saka" of Chitaur. Rani Karnavati, the Mother Queen, sent Emperor Humayun a 'Rakhi' and requested him to save Chittaur. Humayun marched towards Chittaur but before he could reach, the fort fell to the enemy. Rani Karnavati along with 13,000 women committed Jauhar after handing over the custody of her young son Udaisingh to his nurse, Panna. When Humayun reached Chittaur, Bahadurshah retreated. Chittaur hence was restored to Bikramjeet. Humayun felt sad and miserable because he had reached late.

The third siege. Udai Singh was enthroned in 1537. Proud as he was, he refused matrimonial alliance with the Mughals. So, Akbar decided to subdue the Rana. He marched to save Chittaur on the request of his 'Rakhi' sister. His own son, however, was bent upon subduing the son of the same Queen and captured Chittaur. In 1567, Akbar marched in person against the Rana with a large army. Rana left Chittaur and retired to the hills on the advice of his chiefs, leaving the administration to the care of Jaimal and Patta, who guarded the fort till they died fighting the enemy.

Fighting continued ceaselessly from October 20, 1567, to February 23, 1568, when Jaimal was shot by Akbar. The entire garrison died fighting. The womenfolk performed Jauhar.

The destruction of Chittaur did not deter the spirit of the Rajput clan of Mewar. ARbar had to fight them from time to time during the greater part of his reign. On Udai Singh's death, his son Pratap Singh ascended the throne. Rana Pratap as he came to be called, embodied in himself, the spirit of Rajput freedom, who considered it a dishonour to bow before the Mughals. Akbar sent Mansingh, his army chief, to subdue the proud Rana. In the famous battle of Haldighat, Pratap Singh was defeated. His invincible horse 'Chetak' died too while saving the life of his master. Though defeated, the battle earned Rana a place among the immortal heroes of Mother India. The Rana, after some time, collected his band with the help of his minister Bhamashash. In one of the short campaigns, he recovered all Mewar except Chittaur, Ajmer and Mandala. To commemorate the desolation of Chittaur, he interdicted to himself and his successors every thing of luxury until Chittaur could be restored to the Rajputs. Though the Rana could not take back Chittaur till his last breath, he held his head high and never bowed before his indomitable foe Akbar.

The fort has seven gates known as pols each significant in the history of Chittaurgarh. After the Padan Pol comes Bhairon Pol named after Solanki Bhairon Dass of Desuri who fought and was killed in the second siege of Chittaur. Near the pol are memorials of Jaimal and Kalla who were killed fighting Akbar during the third siege. Akbar had claimed the honour of the death of Jaimal by his own hands. The third gate of the fort is Hanuman Pol, where Rajana Sinha of Delwara and Rajaha Sajja of Sadri fought and were killed in the second sack. After Hanuman Pol, towards the south is Ganesh Pol on the bend. The fifth and sixth



Vijay Stambh: Remembering battles long ago

are Jorla Pol and Luxman Pol. The main gate of the fort is known as the Ram Pol facing west. The pillars of this gateway are covered with sculptured ornamental designs of Hindu deities.

From the memorial of Chudawat Patta, who was killed by the forces of Akbar, the road to the north leads to the places of ruins and small settlements and the southern road to the principal monuments. As we reach the open flat ground, the view of Chittaur town can be had in full. On the platform is a huge circular bastion with a vaulted chamber, known as the Nav Lakha Bhandar. It was supposed to house the treasures house of Mewar with gold and jewellery amounting to nine lakhs at that time.

One of the important monuments in the fort is the Kumbha palace. Mostly in ruins, it is an attractive building typical of Rajput civil architecture. Recent excavations have revealed the existence of huge underground cellars with vaulted roofs over which the palace was built. It is believed that Queen Padmini committed Jauhar in one of these subterranean chambers. Toward the east of Kumbha palace is Fateh Prakash Mahal built by Maharana Fateh Singh of Udaipur. To the south-east is the Jain Temple known as Sat-Bees Deora or 27 shrines. This is believed to have been built in the eleventh century and renovated by Shvetamber Jains in the year 1942 AD. To the south west of the road is the Tower of Victory.

The tower of victory known as Vijay Stambha is a unique specimen of Rajput architecture built by Rana Kumbha in 1440 AD to commemorate his victory over Mahmood Khilji of Malwa. With a basement of 47 square feet and 10 feet high, the tower has nine storeys connected by a staircase with 157 steps which go winding alternately through a central wall and a gallery formed around it. The structure is 122 mt. high. Col. Tod has described the Vijay Stambha as one which is much superior to the Qutab Minar in design and execution.

The temple of Kali is one of the oldest temples in the fort, dating back to the 8th century. To the south of the Kali Temple is the famous palace of Padmini, the wife of Rawal Ratan Singh. It is a large building overlooking a tank, in the middle of which is another pavilion said to be Padmini's island retreat. Padmini was shown to Allauddin in a mirror in this palace.

As we retreat from the fort, the effect is one like after watching a war film. The clash of metal, the sound of the hooves of running horses, the sky high flames engulfing the innocent, the shrieks of the dying, the saffron robes worn by the warriors and the 'Rakta Tilak' on their foreheads suddenly haunt us. The earth looks red all over. We are uneasy walking on it.

TCI: A trailblazer's profile

Striding successfully with the tide of tourists for the last 27 years is a rare distinction for any travel company. Travel Corporation(I) Pvt. Ltd. as one such company which has been able to achieve this. Beginning with a small band of men in 1961, TCI has now 25 offices in India and 9 offices around the world. Today, TCI offers a range of travel facilities including domestic and foreign tours. To add to its feathers, TCI has also won many awards from the Department of Tourism, Government of India for its meritorious service in the promotion of tourism, within and outside India.

The idea of setting up the company was mooted at the annual convention of Travel Agents Association of India in Darjeeling in 1960. At that time there were rumours that the travel business would be nationalised if a large national travel agency was not formed. Thus three major companies—Jeena & Co., Mercury and Trade Wings—combined to handle conference business on an experimental basis. The success of this scheme led to the inception of TCI in 1961, by merging the inbound travel business of Jeena & Co, N. Jamnadas & Co, Lee & Muirhead and Trade Wings (Bombay and Calcutta). Initially, TCI started off with four branch offices and two partners, Trade Wings (Bombay and Calcutta) opted out later. In 1970, domestic and international ticketing was also added on to the company's numerous activities. The company is today headed by six directors: Nari Katgara, Adi Katgara, Arvind Parikh, Jagdish Parikh, Naresh Kotak, Krishna Kotak, Bhagwan Kotak and Dr. Pranav Parikh.

TCI has various firsts to its credit. It was the first to open an overseas sales office to promote Indian tourism. New areas like Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh, Andamans and Lakshwadeep were developed for foreign tourists first by TCI. The company was also the first to introduce all-India tours by motorcoaches. It also introduced the concept of special-interest tours to India, brought in the first tourist charter flights to the country, the first to introduce Buddhist tours, the first to bring incentive tours to India and lastly the first to introduce cruising in the Indian Ocean.

With over a thousand professionals at work, 25 offices in India and 9 abroad, over a thousand affiliated travel agents around the world and a membership of most major travel associations worldwide, TCI today has the largest network in Asia.

TCI has various unique products to offer.

■SPEEDOTEL. Instant hotel reservation service assures room reservation in over 50 hotels at major cities in India.

■TCI is India's largest incentive tour operator. It is a member of SITE, IDMA & Networld Inc. Some of the companies who have sent their winners with TCI are Agfa, Agip, Canon, Philips, Toyota, Kawasaki and many more.

■Adventure tours. A wide range of tours include, mountaineering, white-water rafting, trekking, wildlife, camel safaris, angling, shikar and scuba diving. A special cell handles all the necessary arrangements.

■TCI has introduced weekly fixed departure coach tours for tourists coming into India to Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Khajuraho, Varanasi, Kathmandu and Srinagar.

■TCI will be introducing special honeymoon packages and tours to destinations in India like Goa, Kashmir, Kodaikanal, Matheran, Mahabaleshwar, Ooty, Nepal and to Bangkok, Singapore, Jakarta, Bali, China and Mauritius.

The secret of TCI's success lies in the loyalty and dedication of its staff. Over 150 staff members have put in over 20 years of service. All this speaks volumes for TCI and its pioneering spirit. But for the pioneer there is no rest.

FESTIVE HOLIDAYS

TOURS TO BANGKOK, PATTAYA, SINGAPORE

HOLIDAY PACKAGES IN INDIA AND NEPAL

SPECIAL "JUST MARRIED HOLIDAYS" FOR HONEYMOONERS IN INDIA AND OVERSEAS

EURAIL, GREYHOUND, BRITRAIL PASSES

TCI WE SERVE YOU BETTER

Travel Corporation India Ltd
"Everest House" 46-C, Chowringhee Road
Calcutta 700 071 Tel: 449971-74, 445469

Darjeeling, Patna, Varanasi, Lucknow
or any of our 25 offices in India.

TCI

ADVERTS

VIP CLUB CARD – THE CARD THAT REFLECTS YOUR STATUS – MAKES YOUR MONEY GO FURTHER.



Welcomed in all affiliated establishments Internationally. With a VIP Club International membership you get more than just another card because VIP Club card entitles you to a unique and comprehensive range of Services and privileges in India and Abroad.

VIP Club membership will extend you a recognition reflecting status and high social life style.

LOOK AT SOME OF THE BENEFITS OFFERED TO VIP CLUB MEMBERS

- Upto 40% off on your hotel bills and 20% on car rental in India and Abroad
- Save upto 20% in restaurants and shops
- Personal accident Insurance upto Rs. 50,000/-.
- Retrieval of lost luggage.
- VIP Club News, monthly magazine sent to members.

Membership processed within 15 DAYS

R A Advtg /VIP/001/88

Please enroll me as a member. Enclosed Cheque/DD No for Rs

Name *** _____ Occupation _____

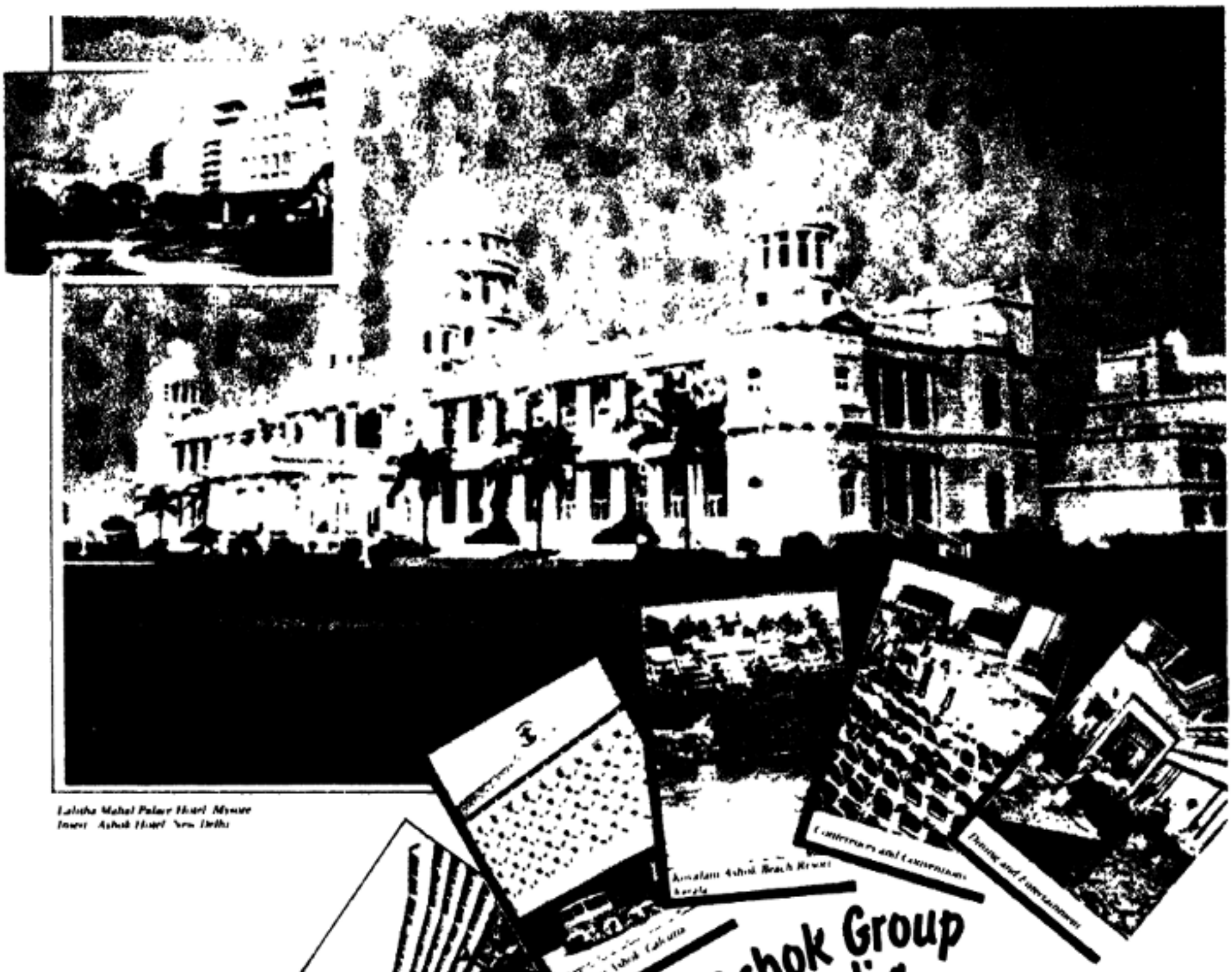
Tel Off _____ Res _____ Address _____

_____

_____

MEMBERSHIP FEES
1 Year Rs. 550/-.
3 Year Rs. 1,200/-.
VIP Club Gold Card (Life Membership) Rs. 5,000/-.

VIP Club International
109, Embassy Centre,
Nariman Point,
Bombay - 400 021.



Lalitha Mahal Palace Hotel Mysore
Inset: Ashok Hotel New Delhi

The Ashok Group unfolds India

With 33 prime properties in 26 destinations and 25 new projects being added, the Ashok Group spans the length and breadth of India.

It's the only Group offering every experience — leisure, wildlife, pilgrimages, royal palaces, beaches. On every budget — luxury to economy.

Booking is very convenient. Through nearly 400 international outlets of OHR and Golden Tulip

It has an in-house travel agency, entertainment, the latest conference facilities in 14 cities, duty free shops.

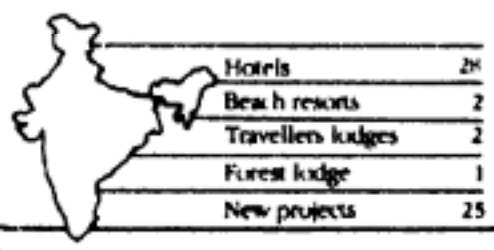
And more. The singular Ashok Group service and hospitality.

North India Ashok Hotel, Hotel Samrat, Qutab Hotel, Hotel Janpath, Lodhi Hotel, Hotel Ranjit, Hotel Kanishka in New Delhi Agra Ashok Jaipur Ashok, Jammu Ashok Khajuraho Ashok Bharatpur Forest Lodge Ashok Travellers Lodge in Manali

South India: Hotel Ashok, Bangalore Hassan Ashok Kovalam Ashok Beach Resort, Kerala Lalitha Mahal Palace Hotel Mysore Temple Bay Ashok Beach Resort, Mamallapuram Madurai Ashok

West India Aurangabad Ashok Laxmi Vilas Palace Hotel Udaipur Ratanada Ashok Jodhpur Shalimi Palace Ashok Kolhapur Executive Ashok Pune

East India: Kalinga Ashok Bhubaneshwar Bodhgaya Ashok Airport Ashok, Calcutta Patalputra Ashok Patna Pinewood Ashok Shillong, Varanasi Ashok Brahmaputra Ashok, Guwahati Ranchi Ashok



GOLDEN TULIP WORLD-WIDE HOTELS® BV

Odner Hotel Representatives

The Ashok Group

HOTELS TRAVEL SERVICES DUTY FREE SHOPS

The largest hotel chain in India

For information contact:

General Manager (Hotel Sales)
India Tourism Development Corporation
Ashok Hotel 50 B Chanakyapuri New Delhi 110021
Tel 600121, 600412 Cables ASHOKAHOTEL
Telex 031-61779, 031-65207

India Tourism Development Corporation

Move over, cash!

By Perveez Aggarwal
Joint Managing Director
Diners Club India Private Limited

The worldwide revolution in credit cards has made a late but successful start in India A revolution in the magic world of "Buy Now, Pay Later" that has changed the lifestyles of people and the science of economics. It is a movement that has already made currency "old fashioned" in the developed Western countries The road to a cashless, chequeless society, it is said, is paved with the one billion credit cards in use in the world

In the old days, the system was barter of goods and services. Then came coins made of precious metals These were found to be inconvenient because of the bulk and the lack of safety Soon, paper money came as an acceptable medium of transaction and gave birth to other forms of monetary transfers like cheques, drafts, money orders and postal orders But these were still not safe and convenient enough. Credit cards came in the third wave Basically, they are an identifying device confirming that the holder owns a valid credit account with the issuing organisation and is thus eligible to make purchases on its basis. Credit is accumulated and at regular intervals, paid back by the user.

Prominent Americans, including astronant Neil Armstrong, have voted that they would include the credit card in a time capsule to represent the most revolutionary change of the century. The concept of plastic money is catching on in India and there are now eight banks issuing their own credit cards Diners Club has been operating since 1960 It is the first card in India and the first in the world

Why do people prefer credit cards to cash? As one business executive points out "I have the cash, but need the convenience offered by the cards " The card makes it possible to travel or entertain without carrying large bundles of money. One businessman we know, tried carrying a handbag, the type that has come into fashion recently, but gave up when he lost it on two occasions.

The proliferation of goods and services that can be bought on credit is startling. Hotel bills in Sikkim, a meal in Rishikesh, a ticket to London at midnight, hospital bills in Madras, chips to gamble at the casino in Nepal, shopping in all the major cities, are all available on the card.

Credit cards score over cash as far as safety is concerned. Today, carrying a card is safer than carrying cash. A member's liability ceases when he informs the loss of his card to the company concerned. At the Diners Club office, about hundred and fifty cases of pick-pocketing are reported each month. This loss would have been great if they carried money instead of a card.

Unlike cash, credit cards offer members instant mobility A person can travel anywhere, anytime! A businessman may be on a trip to Delhi when he gets a call from his head office to proceed to Calcutta The card enables him to buy an Indian Airlines ticket, hire a car, check into a hotel, shop and pay his restaurant bills

Card-holders appreciate that they are members of a prestigious organisation A card gives them instant recognition everywhere. There is the story about the Managing Director of a multinational company, who wanted to check in at the Hilton Hotel, New York (all hotels in Europe and USA require full payment to be made in advance if a guest is paying in cash) and was requested to pay in advance. He produced his credit card valid in India and settled the issue, because the hotel recognised that he was a credit-worthy individual in his home country

M F Husain, the celebrated Indian artist, agrees that carrying a card in your pocket adds to your credibility even if you can't use it to get credit

Credit cards make good business sense for small and large companies It is the easy, inexpensive way to keep track of business travel and entertainment-spending. It reduces cash advanced and related accounting.

Financial controllers appreciate the increased cash flow available to the company when credit cards are used for company travel and entertainment. They have a valid argument. They say, why does one need company funds for cash advances when the credit card company can handle the bulk of company expenses, using those funds for 4-6 weeks' interest free? This money can be put to work in other more profitable ways.

For example, if a company spends Rs 18,00,000 a year on travel and entertainment, the company's float could amount to Rs 2,25,000 when credit cards are used instead of cash Invested at 18% per annum, this could yield over Rs. 40,500 in additional revenue

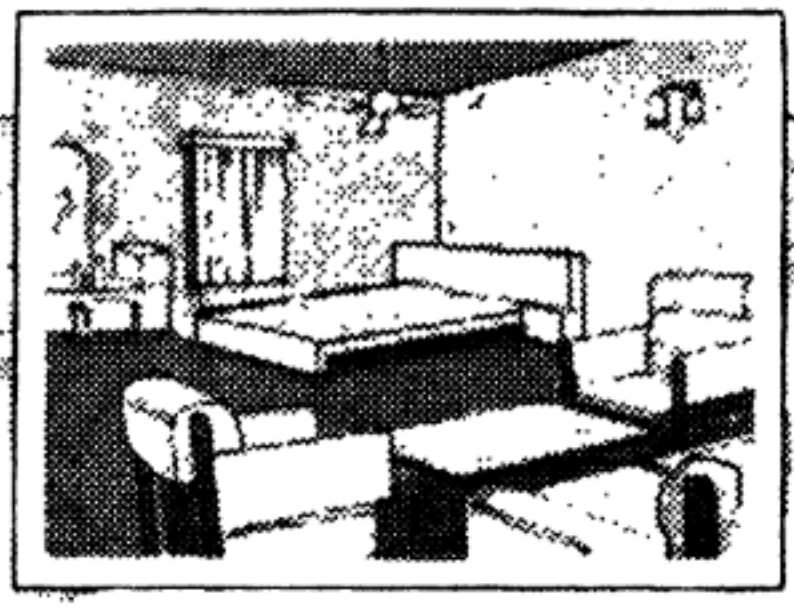
Travel and entertainment card companies like Diners Club provide a wide range of privileges to make the card 'invaluable' for their members. Some of these facilities are: special discounts in 770 cities in India and abroad, automatic free flight insurance on airline tickets purchased on the card, emergency cash advance facilities, exclusive mail-order service and commission-free travellers cheques.

In India, there is a prevailing perception that a credit card is an instrument of the elite, used for luxuries, executive travel and entertainment. The large-scale entry of nationalised banks into the picture, with the determination to make the credit card a useful tool to the burgeoning middle class in India, is sure to change that perception and expand the market

So, move over cash—credit cards are here to stay.



Make the best of Monsoons & Spring time in Puri



Be our guest at SER HOTEL

It's the right time. The sea calls, the beach beckons. And we wait at South Eastern Railway Hotel,Puri, to welcome you.

20% Discount
1st July '88 to 30th September '88
1st March '89 to 30th April '89

Telex/Conference facilities, Train Reservation facilities also provided.

Leisure/Tranquil .. work if you must .. SER Hotel, Puri,awaits you.



For further details contact :

Manager
South Eastern Railway Hotel, Puri
Phone . 2063 Cable . SURF Telex : Puri 675-256
Dy Chief Commercial Superintendent (Catering)
14 Strand Road, Calcutta 700 001
Phones . 28-2936, 28-9494, 28-0257

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY

Promoting a concept

By Protima Tagore

Imagine having vacations year after year till 2054 or even later than that at today's prices. Not only that, imagine spending these vacations at your very own home-away from-home, without the burden of owning a second home! Incredible, did you say? But it is true.

The average Indian when going on a holiday, has three alternatives stay in hotels, stay with friends and relatives, or have one's own holiday home. These are either expensive or restrictive propositions Moreover one is hardly likely to have friends or relatives at every holiday destination. Besides, no one wants to be a bother too often. And even the most generous LTAs can at best cover either a comfortable travel and an uncomfortable vacation, or vice versa. In addition there is the problem of reservations, that rears its vexatious head, specially during peak seasons.



One alternative that satisfies each of the above objectives and gives best value for money, both short and long term, is Vacation Ownership. A vacation-cum-investment concept, it is working successfully in 50 countries worldwide. And Dalmia Resorts International Pvt. Ltd. are the pioneers in promoting the concept of Vacation Ownership in India.

Vacation Ownership is based on the concept of time sharing and is usually sold by the week. It entitles the purchaser the exclusive use of a holiday resort apartment for certain week(s) every year. Such entitlement is also coupled with other rights such as loan, rent, exchange, sell, gift, or bequeath as the scheme permits

With Vacation Ownership, one can lock in years of vacation at today's rates. Since the cost of the holiday resort is divided proportionately among its many users, the expenses borne by each vacation owner is only a fraction of what it would be to own a unit as a whole And the cost of the unit depends on whether the purchaser wants a 2-Bedroom, 1-Bedroom or efficiency unit, and the time of the year— which has been divided into high, medium and low seasons Thus he only pays for the time he purchases. Which means guaranteed accommodation, without the worries of maintenence and furnishings, a special vacation spot to which to return year after year.

One of the best things about Vacation Ownership is that the holiday resorts provide, besides the usual F & B outlets, a wide range of entertainment activities normally not available even at five star hotels

The rooms are air-conditioned, exquisitely furnished and have all the amenities— crockery, cutlery, linen, refrigerator, television, piped music, telephone and a fully-equipped kitchenette

So, a vacationer can easily cook in his own apartment's kitchenette and save on food costs, if he so desires. Alternatively, a choice of bars and gourmet restaurants within the resort would be serving different cuisines at competitive prices Each resort will also have a variety of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities depending upon location

Putting money into Vacation Ownership is a great way of investing in years of vacation enjoyment at today's prices. It provides insurance against "Vacation Inflation". And over a period of time the value of Vacation Time Share appreciates, as its rental/sub licence value increases in tune with regular increases in competitive hotel room tariffs (by almost 10% every year)

The Old Anchor is a complex of 184 luxurious, fully furnished apartments and the centralised amenities faculty, sprawling over 68,000 sq. mtrs With Vacation Ownership it is yours for all time to come The Old Anchor is affiliated to the Resorts Condominiums International (RCI),the world's largest resorts exchange company of today, has over 1,300 resorts in 50 countries worldwide affiliated to it

Nestling in the midst of breath-taking splendour, Misty Meadows at Pahalgam is the second Dalmia Resort which takes you into one of the most enthralling valleys of Kashmir Here, at the foothills of snow-capped mountains and overlooking the Lidder river is the newest in the chain of Dalmia Resorts. With 75 luxurious, fully furnished apartments and the central amenities complex spread over 10,000 sq. metres of lush, contoured landscape, with Vacation Ownership it is yours till the year 2054.

Fantastic!

Yes, that is what you will say after experiencing the 5-star service and comfort of Lytton Hotel at 3-star rates.



Centrally located very close to New Market Channel music,24-hours room service. Tastefully decorated restaurants—
Dynasty *for Chinese &* **Gaylords** *for Indian and Continental Cuisine.*

Where service is more than a business, it's a tradition.

See you then at—

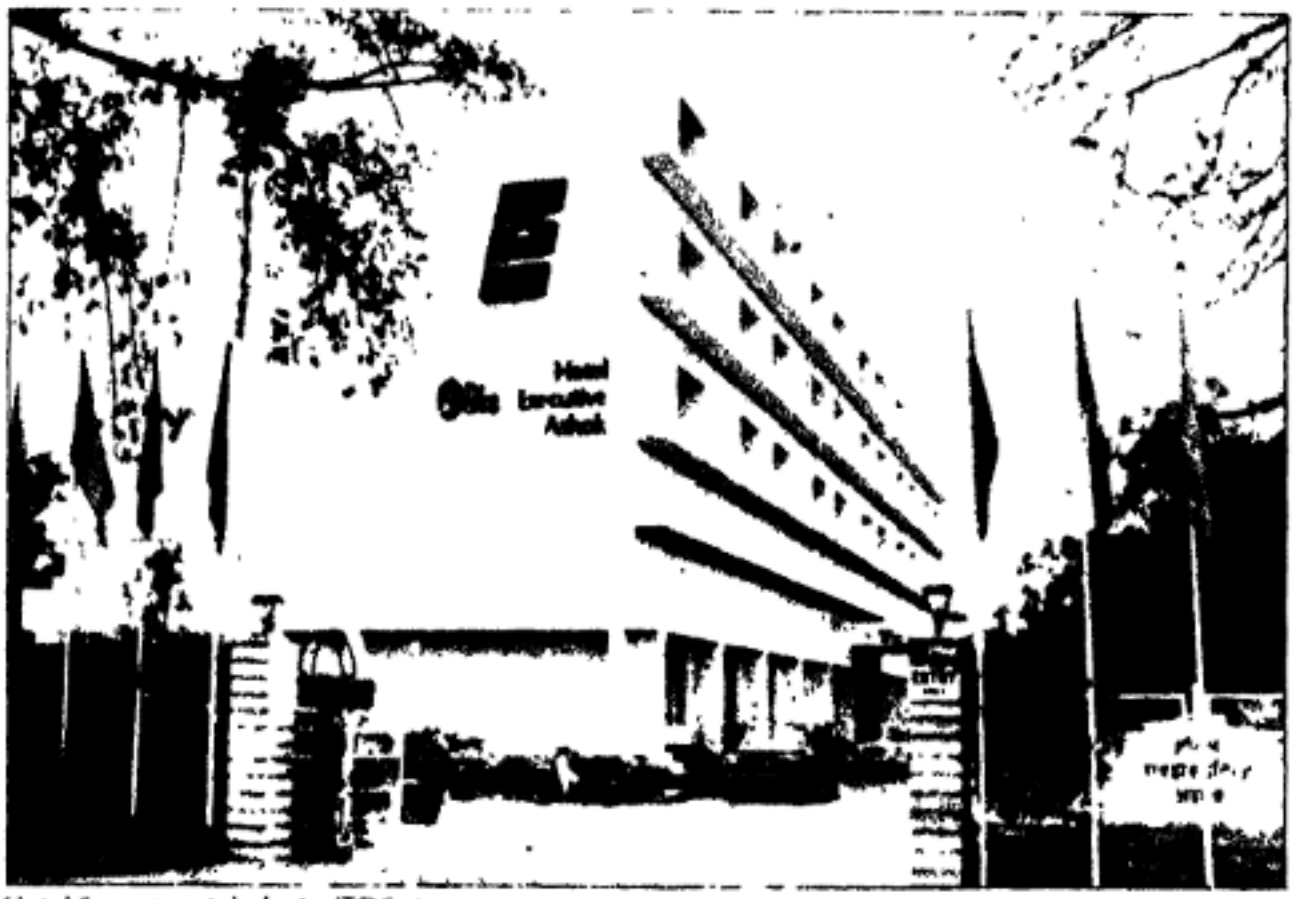
Lytton Hotel

14, Sudder Street,
CALCUTTA-700 016
Ph: 29-1875 (5 lines)
Telex : 021-3562 NYLO IN.

ITDC: A dual role

By Chandni Luthra

Any public sector corporation has to try its best to make a mark in an industry dominated by the private sector. So is the case with ITDC (India Tourism Development Corporation). In the 22 years since its inception, the corporation has been blazing new trails in the development of tourist destinations as well as improving the infrastructure. All along it has been in the public eye. Although ITDC has had to play a dual role--that of promoting tourism and being a commercially profitable public sector organisation—it has never faltered. The new destinations opened by it in places like Mandu, Bangalore, Hassan or Kovalam have brought it credit. As a public sector organisation, it has never been in the "red" and has proved that some organizations can achieve the near impossible: that of marrying the promotional and the commercial roles even in the face of fierce competition.



Hotel Executive Ashok. An ITDC star

Being a part of what is commonly known as the "government set-up", ITDC has received along with compliments a large share of criticism. It has been sometimes dubbed as a loss-making public sector undertaking by those who have never bothered to actually look at the bottom line. In fact, ITDC has consistently made profits and paid dividends and taxes since 1966, the year of its inception.

As the only complete tourism organization—with its own hotel chain, catering outfits, transport, publicity and image-building expertise, duty free shops and cultural and entertainment wings--ITDC has now reached a stage where it is busy sharing its experience and launching joint ventures with both the government and the private sector. ITDC's consultancy services offer expertise from research and feasibility studies to the execution of entire hotel and resort projects. This includes hotel management, facility planning, administration and manpower development, both in India and abroad. Some of the tie-ups at home include a hotel project at Pahalgam, a fast food restaurant at Vaishnodevi and hotels in Nainital and Kanpur. Tie-ups with state governments in Assam and Bihar have led to the opening of the Brahmaputra Ashok at Guwahati and the Ranchi Ashok in Ranchi. Hotels in Bhopal, Puri and Pondicherry will also open this year.

Till the early Eighties, ITDC had never ventured abroad except for a small restaurant project in Czechoslovakia. Its internationalization began with the signing of marketing contracts with the Odnor Hotel Representatives from Hongkong and the Golden Tulip from the Netherlands. Soon, the organisation's Management Services division took up foreign consultancy and a restaurant called Delhi opened in Moscow at the same time as the Festival of India. This was followed by contracts for an Indian cuisine restaurant at Wellington in New Zealand and hotels in New Zealand, Germany and the USSR.

ITDC's consultancy extends from building projects to publications and publicity and to sound and light shows. Its Corporate Communications division handles the publicity for the Ministry of Tourism as well as for states like Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. ITDC has put up sound and light shows for the government of Bihar in Buxur and is in the process of getting one ready at the Cellular Jail in Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. ITDC also runs the country's three sound and light shows at the Red Fort in Delhi, the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad and the Shalimar Gardens in Srinagar.

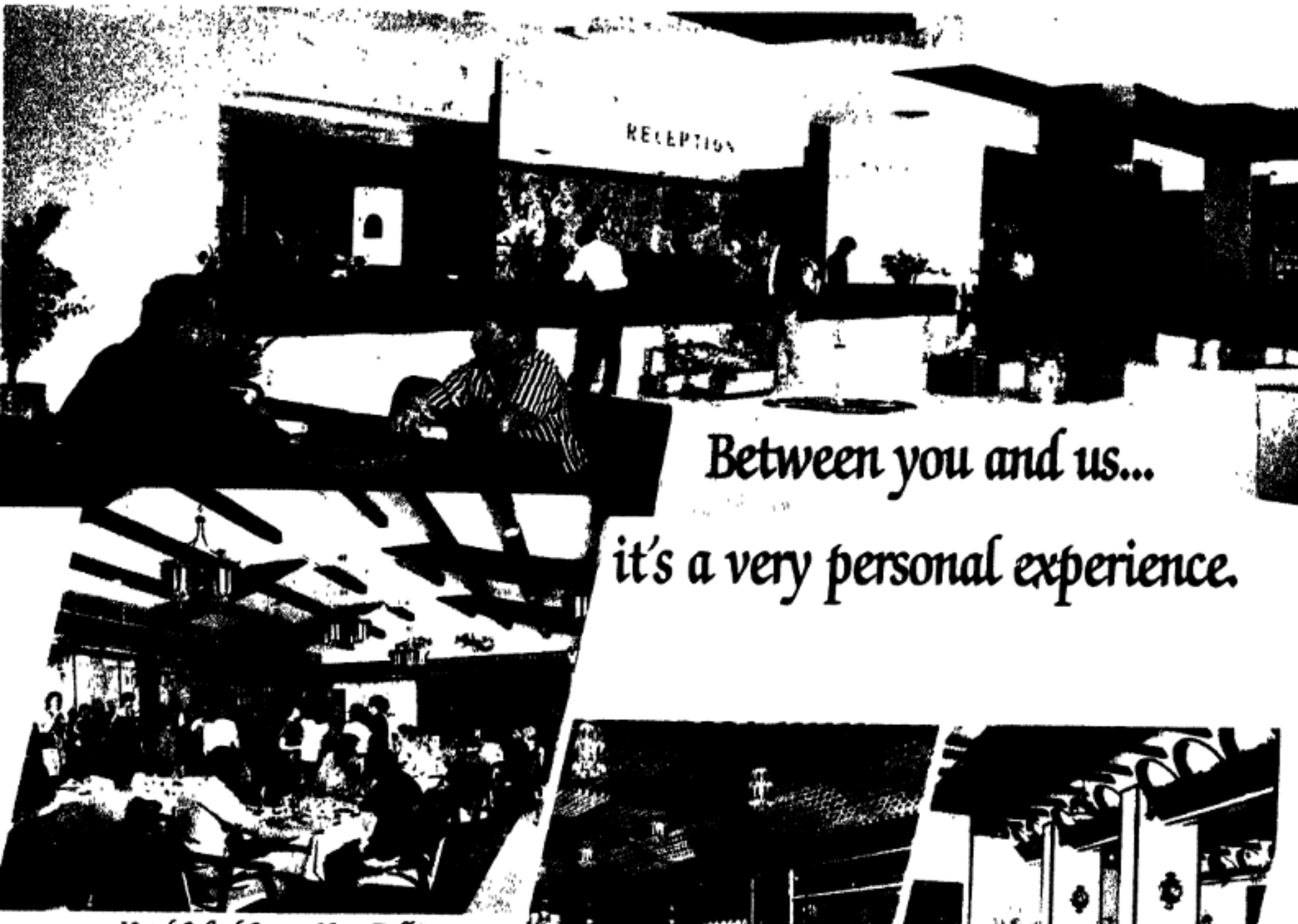
As part of its tourism package, ITDC runs duty-free shops at the international airports in India. Considered among the less expensive duty free shops, these also promote Indian goods, such as music cassettes, cosmetics, liqueurs and wines, gold jewellery and even mangoes.

To move around in India, you need transport and the Corporation has its own fleet of cars and coaches as well as its own travel agency, the Ashok Travels & Tours, that can plan, budget and package your tours.

ITDC has often been criticised for promoting the five-star culture through its hotel chain. In fact, the ITDC hotel chain or the Ashok Group has only seven five-star hotels out of the 27 that it owns in 20 destinations in India. The rest belong to the four and three-star category as well as the no-star category. This ensures accommodation even for the budget-conscious. To further implement its social objectives and promote domestic tourism, the ITDC launches a series of attractive holiday packages every summer. These packages, specially designed for students and senior citizens, families and honeymooners, offer hotel accommodation and meals at surprisingly low rates.

India has often been cited as a conference destination and ITDC can claim a pioneering role in the planning, organization and promotion of national and international conferences and conventions. Its Ashok Hotel in New Delhi has the largest convention hall in Asia with facilities like simultaneous translation into many languages and pre-and post-convention tours.

When the world catalogues the successes and failures of the public sector in India, ITDC can stand out as being the only one of its kind. It is the only organization that has survived and thrived in a sector where there is fierce competition from private entrepreneurs. Unlike monopoly situations in parts of the travel trade, ITDC has had to be better than the best to get its normal share of business from the discerning client. At the same time it has consciously ventured into the not-so-commercial projects by opening up new destinations and building hotels in places where the private sector has hesitated to break new ground. The ITDC travelogue has only just begun. India is slowly opening the doors of new and unknown destinations to its own people and the world at large.



Between you and us...

it's a very personal experience.







Hotel Sofitel Surya, New Delhi.
Where you are not just a room number, but a VIP-from check-in to check-out. And what's our secret? We are a 230 room hotel,so the attention to details that we give you is really quite unmatchable. The next time you're in Delhi,stay away from the crowds. Try the Sofitel experience.

Ideal location in South Delhi, specially if you have business in Faridabad, NOIDA, Okhla, Nehru Place and Ghaziabad. Close by to main sports stadia. And a mere 10 kms. from Connaught Place.

Call us today and discover five star deluxe hospitality at its personalised best. The hallmark of the Accor chain, with over 600 hotels in 50 countries.

Your satisfaction is our business

Hotel Sofitel Surya

Friends Colony, New Delhi-110 065
Tel.: 6835070 Cable - SUROTEL Telex -031-66700 SURA IN, 031-75192 SURA IN
Instant Reservation Service, Bombay.
CSIPL: 34, Juhu Supreme Shopping Centre, Gulmohar Cross,
Road No. 9, J.V.P.D Juhu, Bombay 400 049
Tel: 6201306 Grams. FLETYPE Telex 011-71884
A link in the world-wide Sofitel Accor chain.

Courtesy coach service to Connaught Place* and City Airport*.
* 6 and 4 times a day respectively



Rakesh Kumar

Bhaskar Ghosh: a rare honour

SO WHAT if Doordarshan director general **Bhaskar Ghosh** hasn't worked wonders at Mandi House. He can take consolation from the fact that he has been elected president of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association at a meeting convened in the Bahamas, last fortnight. The delegates believed, mysteriously, that he could improve the quality of programmes telecast by the Commonwealth Television Programme Service to be set up shortly (whatever evidence they had, it couldn't be Indian TV fare).

Ghosh is the first Indian to be honoured thus and is, predictably, thrilled. Now gearing up to supervise the working of the secretariat to be set up to monitor and select programmes for distribution throughout Commonwealth countries, Ghosh would be well-advised to devote some time and thought to improve Indian television fare, starting with news coverage. After all, betterment should begin at home.

HE HAS a talent to abuse. That much we know about **Ram 'Inspector Clouseau' Jethmalani.** But what we didn't know was that his secretarial staff share his talents. According to **Syed Shahabuddin,** the maverick MP, he has received a letter signed by a certain P.N. Saxena on behalf of Inspector Clouseau, himself. The letter begins, in that subtle, restrained style that we have come to associate with Jethmalani: "Mr Jethmalani regards your letter as undignified and impertinent...Mr Jethmalani does not wish to take lessons in patriotism from you. He regards you as a rank communalist and one of the principal enemies of the Muslim community...Your reference to Mr Jethmalani's moral sense does not make sense. Mr Jethmalani thinks that you are a mental case."

This dignified, high-minded outburst was Clouseau's way of replying to a missive from Shahabuddin. The Janata MP had written to the good inspector that Jethmalani had misinterpreted a TV interview he had given and understood it to be unpatriotic.

The Pink Panther was so outraged by Shahabuddin's complaint that Saxena, the hatchet-man's hatchet-man was immediately sent in to do battle with the Janata MP.

For his part, Shahabuddin now says that he will not persist with the correspondence. "What can you say to a crackpot?" he asks.

A case of the crackpot calling the kettle...?

BORN TO **Benazir Bhutto:** a baby boy. Named Bilawal by his fond parents, the cuddly bundle of joy is the pride of papa Asif Zardari, grandmother Nusrat Bhutto and one half of Pakistan (those who support the Pakistan People's Party, that is). Jubilant PPP members distributed sweets at the Dufferin Hospital, Karachi, where the birth occurred.

The celebratory mood could be ascribed, at least partly, to the fact that their gutsy leader had had the last laugh, after all. Keeping the date of delivery a closely-guarded secret, she had hoodwinked the late Pakistan President, Zia-ul Haq into announcing elections in November, when he mistakenly believed she would become a mother. But Benazir has engineered to be able to participate in the polls. A bonus surely for PPP, which will need all her famed charisma to win at the hustings. And perhaps, motherhood will only enhance Ms Bhutto's appeal.

Benazir Bhutto with husband Asif Zardari: their own Prince of Wails



Rakesh Sharma: narrow escape

FORTUNE FAVOURS the brave, hence India's first cosmonaut Wing Commander **Rakesh Sharma's** narrow escape from death. Piloting a MIG 21 FL variant fighter plane recently, Sharma almost came to grief when the craft developed a technical snag. Sharma ejected from the craft, which later crash-landed at a farm at Pimpal Gaon, a few kilometres away from the Hindustan Aeronautical Limited's (HAL) MIG factory, near Nasik. Sharma parachuted to touch ground at Vani, sustaining leg injuries, which he is now nursing at the HAL hospital.

WHEN IT comes to dancing to **Rajiv Gandhi's** tune, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) could teach you a graceful step or two. And recent events have only increased its proficiency in the prime ministerial polka.

Gearing up for his historic

tour of China, Rajiv decided, in his wisdom (such as it is), that a troupe of dancers should precede him in China as an advance party, instead of the usual gang of bureaucrats. The request mystified most, but theirs not being to question why, they passed it on to ICCR, which had a very pertinent question to ask. Who would foot the bill?

Who, indeed? The ICCR certainly did not have the money to finance such a venture and testily said so to the finance office of the external affairs ministry. Bureaucratic inertia being what it is, it was decided that the issue would be resolved only when the dates of the PM's visit were finalised.


Vivek Das

Rajiv Gandhi: calling the tune

But the *babus* had reckoned without foreign secretary K.P.S. Menon. The Prime Minister's wish was their command, he informed officials and money would have to be raised, whatever the means. Falling in line rather meekly, the ICCR went on to sanction the visit of a troupe of 84 dancers and underwrite the cost.

◆

IT WILL be the marriage of the year, as far as the art circuit is concerned. Early next year, **Deepa Sahi** of *Tamas* fame (launched into films by Govind Nihalani's *Party*) will wed **Ketan Mehta**, talented director of avant-garde films such as



Deepa Sahi: wedding bells



Ketan Mehta: second innings

Holi, *Mirch Masala* and *Bhavni Bhavai*. The pair worked together in the telefilm *Kisi Ek Phool Ka Naam Lo* and the much talked-about *Hero Hiralal* and love sprouted on the sets. For Ketan, this will be his second venture into matrimony, Deepa succeeding first wife Archana. Let's hope he's second time lucky. After all, a couple who work together, should stay together. Touch wood.

◆

IT SEEMED an innocuous enough memorandum, detailing objections against the Narmada Valley project. And it was only a coincidence that all signatories, with the exception of Bharatanatyam dancer **Mrinalini Sarabhai** and former member of Parliament **P.G. Mavalankar,** were non-Gujaratis. But all in Gujarat, seeing conspiracy where none existed, insisted that the two erring souls were "enemies of Gujarat" for having tacked on their names to a list consisting of 'aliens'. Among those raising objections were Opposition parties, consumer groups and even the state government. Some student leaders even threatened to hold demonstrations in front of Sarabhai's house to protest her action. Not to be outdone, chief minister Amarsinh Chaudhary announced, with just the right amount of self-righteous indignation, that Mrinalini had been asked to step down as chairperson of the Gujarat Handloom and Handicrafts Corporation, for reasons not too difficult to fathom.

Under pressure Mrinalini retracted, issuing a public statement to withdraw support to the memorandum and declared that she was all for the Narmada project. And a say in Gurjari affairs, surely.

◆

BLOOD WAS thicker than fruit juice the other day, at a training camp organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI). The sons of two big guns—ministers **Margaret Alva** and **Dinesh Singh**—had participated in the "air rifle shooting" category. And though blessed Margaret will deny this till the cows come home, Singh's son—although hardly a dab hand—proved he had a surer eye than hers.

The minister for sports didn't like this one bit and


Gautam Patole

Mrinalini Sarabhai: bowing to pressure

things really came to a boil at breakfast one morning. While the other participants were served fruit juice, the authorities served Alva's little 'un with—perish the thought—fruit pulp. When the old fruit discovered this, it gave her the pip and she dashed off a letter to the SAI demanding why it cheated on her baby's nosh. As a parting shot, she charged the SAI with inviting "unfit" persons to the camp. No one had any doubts that the reference was to Dinesh's son. "Trust Alva to fire the last volley," one of the organisers was heard muttering.

Compiled by Seema Goswami

Margaret Alva: standing up for the little 'un


Ashok Vaishnav

Dinesh Singh: tangling with blessed Margaret


Ashok Vaishnav

When your friends abroad talk to you of resorts in the Caribbean, tell them about the Dalmia Resort at Goa.



The Old Anchor

On the Cavelossim beach, with the Arabian Sea on one side and the River Sal on the other. With 200 living units — air-conditioned and fully-furnished, down to the linen, crockery and cutlery. And a fully-equipped kitchenette.

To be ready for occupancy shortly. Yours to enjoy. Forever.

Luxury Resort facilities — for the time of your life

** Swimming Pool * Health Club*
** Restaurant * Bar * Food Plaza*
** A range of water sports * Tennis*
** Conference facilities And much more.*

Vacation Ownership — the Big Idea

In Vacation Ownership, you buy the right to exclusively occupy a unit in the resort for one or more weeks, every year.

Vacation Ownership — the Big Benefits

** Your holidays become inflation-proof.*
** You can sell, rent, loan, gift or bequeath your unit week/s to anybody you wish.*
** Your Vacation Ownership is for ever.*

The Cost Factor

Depending upon the Season and Unit Type, the prices range from Rs. 13,500 to Rs. 28,500. Plus a nominal maintenance deposit. And a small annual maintenance fee, if necessary.

There is also an Instalment Scheme, where the Down Payments range from Rs. 4,200 to Rs. 11,900.

Some resort facilities will be at charge and some at no extra cost.

Today, Goa. Tomorrow, the world

*You can exchange your unit week/s at Goa with those at other Dalmia Resorts, on the anvil all over India. Through the affiliation with **Resort Condominiums International (RCI®)***; you can also exchange your unit week(s), with those at over 1200 resorts, worldwide, subject to availability and a nominal exchange fee payable to **RCI®***

The Old Anchor at Goa. The pleasure's yours. Forever.

****Subject to RBI approval.***

Please send me further particulars about The Old Anchor Resort at Goa.
I understand the literature is free and imposes no obligation upon me to buy.

Name . _____

Address : _____

_____

_____

Telephone : Off : _____ *Res :* _____

the Old Anchor
A DALMIA RESORT

Cut out the coupon and mail it to:

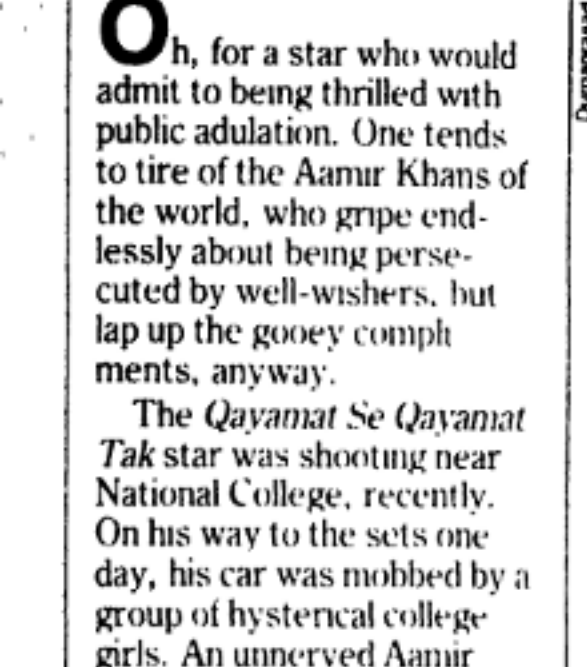
Dalmia Resorts International Pvt. Ltd.
1st Floor, Devika Tower,
6, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110 019.
Phones: 6441554, 6445971, 6414113
Telex: 031-71095

AVAIL OF THE INSTALMENT SCHEME

©OVAN/DRI/G5/87

Oh, for a star who would admit to being thrilled with public adulation. One tends to tire of the Aamir Khans of the world, who gripe endlessly about being persecuted by well-wishers, but lap up the gooey compliments, anyway.

The *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* star was shooting near National College, recently. On his way to the sets one day, his car was mobbed by a group of hysterical college girls. An unnerved Aamir failed to roll up the window panes in time and saw to his horror a hand make its way in, a delirious female fan at the other end. The only way to get rid of it was to kiss it,



Aamir Khan: victim of mob hysteria



Meenakshi Seshadri: the female Bachchan?

which the hapless young star did with evident disrelish. (That, at least, is his story and he is sticking to it.)

Said he after the incident: "I hate all this drama." Believe you us, Aamir, you'd hate it even more if such dramatic interludes stopped occurring. Ask Kumar Gaurav, to set all lingering doubts at rest



Sridevi: a consolation prize?

Poor Kunal Goswami. He's been getting the short end of the stick once too often, of late. While shooting at Film City recently, he was heard moaning how everyone was slapping him on the sets these days (only complying with script requirements, let us hasten to add). The latest smack was administered by erstwhile ice-maiden Meenakshi Seshadri, who turned down his celluloid marriage proposal in the best indignant-Hindi-film-heroine manner.

To add insult to injury, producer Sathyu raved: "Meenakshi has a good role in this film. She is my Amitabh Bachchan! She has done everything that Amitabh does in all his films."

"What about me?" asked a distraught Kunal. "You...you are my Sridevi," replied Sathyu. Talk about consolation prizes!

The policy now seems to be: live and let live. Amitabh Bachchan, the hero of Habib Nadiadwala's *Satyam*, refuses to comply with the script and pop off in the last reel. No, not even to oblige good friend and director Tinnu Anand.

The superstar has not suddenly become averse to eliciting the sympathy of the audience by going heaven's way in the climax. It's just



Amitabh Bachchan: living and letting live

that he (even genius has its limitations) can no longer think of new ways of dying. So, until the famed Bachchan imagination gets cracking, this hero will go on forever.

Anil had an interesting story to relate about Feroz Khan, with whom he did *Jaanbaaz*. Evidently, everytime Anil performed a scene indifferently (which would be most of the time, one imagines) master-plagiarist Khan would burst out: "For God's sake Anil, stop behaving like Feroz Khan. Stop hamming."

The *desi* Coppola had got it only a little wrong. Anil, give him credit, was only being himself. ■

Funny lines

Though his work is highly acclaimed in the US, Sudhir Dar has not received enough recognition in his own country

It is strange—and perhaps, sad—that while Indian journalism has produced scores of talented editors over the last two decades, the same has not been true of cartooning. At the end of the Sixties, there were only three Indian political cartoonists of consequence: R.K. Laxman, Abu Abraham and Sudhir Dar; and just one light cartoonist: Mario Miranda. And now, as the Eighties draw to a close, only one name has been added to the list: the *Indian Express'* contract killer, Ravi Shankar.

While Laxman and Mario are forever being interviewed (perhaps because they live in media-crazy Bombay), Abu has been a member of Parliament and the thrusting Shankar is always good copy because he slugs his peers, Sudhir Dar has never quite got the recognition he deserves. Of course, he is far from unknown. He represented India at the first International Cartoonists Convention in London in 1970 and others in the profession rate him highly. Mario Miranda recalls how, when he visited *Mad* magazine's New York offices, the only Indian cartoonist the *Mad* team had heard of was Dar, whom they regarded with great respect. And, according to the potted biography at the front of *The Best of This Is It*, a collection of Dar's pocket cartoons (just published by Rupa), *Mad* had described him as a 'tasty Indian nut'. Moreover, it notes, his work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Die Welt*, among others.

Nevertheless, it still seems that within India, at least, Dar's work deserves far more acclaim. Perhaps because his cartoons appear only in *The Hindustan Times*, a paper with no editions outside Delhi, the rest of the country still seems unaware of his talents. No doubt, this new collection will set that right.

Dar's daily pocket cartoons are nearly always drawn from the headlines. Frequently, he even draws a newspaper on the top right hand corner with the headline in question. A typical cartoon will reproduce a topical headline, say "Opposition team to visit Sweden" and then add the comment: in this case, a buxom housewife warning her husband (obviously an Opposition leader): "Remember one thing...Just stick to Bofors!"



While it is such cartoons that Dar owes his Delhi-following to, many which depart from this format are far funnier. One shows the personal assistant to the Prime Minister inquiring of a telephone caller: "Who shall I say is crawling?" summing up the prevailing atmosphere of sycophancy better than a hundred editorials could.





Mario Miranda recalls how, when he visited *Mad* magazine's New York offices, the only Indian cartoonist the *Mad* team had heard of was Dar, whom they regarded with great respect



Few of Dar's cartoons are vicious His favourite targets are, obviously, politicians but the humour is gentle, Dar's politician is not the cynical racketeer of Ravi Shankar's work Rather he is a nervous wreck, seeking hard to please his masters A typical cartoon shows two Congressmen one with his hand over the other's mouth, refusing to answer a reporter's questions because the party has told them to shun the press Another shows the usual gang of nitwits queuing up to say goodbye to Rajiv Gandhi before he goes abroad While most of the ministers are standing, hands folded sycophantically, the experience has obviously been too much for one of them who has been reduced to getting down on bended knees, in sheer terror

Dar also understands Delhi and *Dilliwallahs* better than any other cartoonist



Another shows two Congressmen in what is probably Parliament's Central Hall "We're under observation" one warns the other "Wear your shawl the right way' As the man being addressed has his shawl tossed loosely around his torso while the other has it draped elegantly in the manner preferred by Rajiv Gandhi and Amitabh Bachchan, the reference is clear



In all his work, Dar's basic affection for the city he lives in and the people he shares it with—politicians, burghers, matrons, policemen, commission agents, etc.—comes through



His regulars are two Punjabi burghers the woman a well built dominating type with an eye for jewellery and saris, while the man is always staring at pretty girls Doctor" says one youth I've got an acute pain in my eye 'Did you stare at the sun yesterday' he is asked 'No, he replies 'Not the son the daughter, revealing that the pain has been caused by a black eye, obviously planted by some possessive father

And yet in all his work, Dar's basic affection for the city he lives in and the people he shares it with—politicians, burghers matrons, policemen commission agents, etc comes through Considering the perception with which he sketches his cast of bemused regulars, perhaps the time has come for him to do a comic strip that will do for Delhi what Doonesbury often does for Washington

Vijay Sahni

The Best of This is It by Sudhir Dar
Published by Rupa and Company
paperback Price Rs 15

The accord that boomeranged

Somasundaram Vanniasingham explains why the India-Sri Lanka agreement has run into trouble



India offered to be a mediator between the Tamil militants and the Sinhala government of Sri Lanka. After the Thimpu conference, at which no agreement was reached, New Delhi proceeded to issue deportation orders on three persons associated with the militant groups. Two of them were lawyers; one lawyer actually represented one of the militant groups at the Thimpu talks; the third was an adviser to one militant group. One of the persons to be deported actually left the country; another was deported to Britain because he was a British citizen; the third was put on a plane and sent to the US because he had a passport with a multiple entry visa to the US. He refused to get down from the plane on landing in the US. In the meantime, his wife filed a writ petition in the court. The government could not justify the issue of a deportation order because he had committed no offence against the law in India and was there on a valid visa; so he was allowed to remain in India.

At the Thimpu conference all the militant groups acted in unison when they walked out. It was only gradually that differences arose among the militant groups. It is not stretching a point too far to infer that New Delhi wanted to isolate the most committed militant group, the Tigers, in order to force them to surrender to President Jayewardene's terms. While Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's anxiety to be a successful mediator can be appreciated, it cannot be said that he kept in mind the stark fact that every action of his would have a serious impact on the image of India.

In relation to the Gandhi-Jayewardene Accord, this is what a former Indian high commissioner wrote in the *Indian Express* of 4 August 1987.

> Consultations, if that (sic), with the Tamil militants, were rushed with no assurance of their complete and willing acceptance of the package, especially on the part of the LTTE. Indeed the strangest part of the whole exercise is that neither the Tamil militants nor even the moderate TULF has signed the agreement. The Government of India has implicitly assumed total responsibility for their acceptance and implementation of the provisions requiring action on their part.
>
> The mediator has become a key participant.
>
> Should the Indian armed forces be committed outside the nation's boundaries, except in the course of war, without explicit parliamentary or even formal Cabinet approval?
>
> According to one report, the Political Affairs Committee of the Cabinet met after Mr Gandhi's return from Colombo to ratify the agreement. It would be shocking if this were to imply that there was no Cabinet approval as such before the agreement was signed. Ad hoc consultations with ministers or opposition leaders at different times, is no substitute for procedures that should necessarily be followed...
>
> The composition of this force (i.e., the Peace Keeping Force) does not appear to have been clearly specified. In any event, a peace keeping force or observer group, is something different from a force enjoined with a positive duty to compel compliance on the part of unwilling or even hostile elements on either or both sides of the ethnic divide. The fact that the Indian contingent will be placed under the supreme commander of the Lanka forces (President Jayewardene) could be misunderstood by the Tamils or even others.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Sri Lankan policy was and is very steady, consistent and purposeful; it is of course quite different from and diametrically opposed to the Sri Lankan policy of Mrs Indira Gandhi. It is highly personalised—an affair just between President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi

The unholy haste with which the accord was signed, with most matters being allowed to dangle under the description 'Residuaries', remained a mystery. A news item printed in bold type in *The Hindu* under the caption, 'Pact Halts Motion' on 7 August 1987 helped to clarify matters:

> A resolution condemning the Sri Lankan government was halted at the last minute in the US House of Representatives.
>
> The strongly worded resolution asked the Government of Sri Lanka to spare no efforts to stop altogether violations of human rights of Tamil civilians by government forces and establish a central registry listing the names of all detenues in order to account for missing persons.
>
> The resolution's principal author, Mr Mervyn Dymally, Democratic Congressman from California, with-



Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene signing the Sri Lanka accord: diplomatic bunglings

drew it when the news reached Capitol Hill that an agreement had been reached by the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi and the Sri Lankan President, Mr J.R. Jayewardene.

The resolution, which had strong bi-partisan support in the House of Representatives and many Congressmen had offered to co-sponsor it, had sought to 'condemn unequivocally' acts of terrorism directed against civilians by 'all parties'. Its passage and also the approval of a similarly worded resolution in the Senate were a forgone conclusion.

One can now understand why the accord was signed in such haste and how keen Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was to shield his friend and the Sinhala government of President Jayewardene from public criticism and exposure.

As mentioned earlier, the only provision in the accord which is precise and of significance is the one relating to the disarming of the militants. From the day the Republic of Sri Lanka was created in 1972 without the participation of the main group of elected Tamil representatives, the Sri Lankan government had faced what it calls 'terrorism' from Tamil youths. Over 15 years this 'terrorism' has grown in dimension and has drained off the resources of the Sinhala government of Sri Lanka despite all support from the Aid Sri Lanka Consortium countries, and supply of materials and influx of mercenaries from Israel, South Africa, China, Pakistan, South Korea, the US and the UK. President Jayewardene has only been losing ground.

At the SAARC meeting at Bangalore in November 1986, Pirabhakaran was summoned and told by the Government of India that President Jayewardene had lost all patience and that unless a settlement was reached soon, he would unleash his armed forces in a final and decisive bid to crush the militants. This would mean immense loss to the civilian population and India could do nothing about it. The Seventh Fleet would also move in. The editorial of *The Hindu* of 25 April 1987 is illuminating:

> The message was conveyed to the LTTE chief, Mr V. Pirabhakaran, in Bangalore and elsewhere in late 1986 that the Jayewardene government had virtually threatened to kill thousands of Tamil civilians in pursuit of a military solution, unless a quick political settlement could be worked out and that India, given its policy perspective, would not be able to do anything about this. It was also suggested that the Seventh Fleet might enter the picture if a quick deal was not struck, and that the Government of India would be helpless in the face of this development.

The suggestion that the Seventh Fleet might move in was clearly a bogy and was conspired jointly by President Jayewardene and top decision-makers in New Delhi or perhaps exclusively by New Delhi. When this threat failed to get Pirabhakaran to respond in the manner desired by President Jayewardene, a new strategy appears to have been contrived by New Delhi and Colombo.

There has been close understanding between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene for a

If the Indian Peace Keeping Force is responsible for the safety of the people of all communities and the Sinhala armed forces are to withdraw to the barracks, as stated in the accord, the instruction to the Sinhala armed forces to protect the Sinhalese, breaks the backbone of the accord



pretty long time. On the other hand, Indira Gandhi (according to the TULF leader, Amirthalingam) had told the TULF leaders not to confine themselves to India and to canvass the case of the Tamils in various foreign countries, particularly in the West. Clearly, Indira Gandhi wanted world opinion to influence the parties to the dispute and to allow the political solution to be shaped by world opinion. But Rajiv Gandhi, in a volte-face, has been at great pains to suppress world opinion that would be adverse to Sri Lanka. The following quote from *The Week* is apposite:

> The Tamil groups thought India would intervene militarily to check the drift to disaster.
>
> What followed was something else: India began soft-pedalling the Tamil cause. Foreign secretary Romesh Bhandari was most acceptable to Colombo while Indira Gandhi's special envoy, G. Parthasarathy, was anathema. Bhandari rushed to Colombo in March, 1985, to reassure Jayewardene that with Indira Gandhi ended India's old Sri Lanka policy. India had begun equating Sri Lanka state terror against the Tamils with the defensive violence of the guerillas and would not admit that it was a genocide of the Tamils.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has made India's Sri Lankan policy a highly personalised affair. It became an affair between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene ostensibly on the grounds that President Jayewardene was the best person to sign and implement an agreement.

A corollary of this personalised approach was the need to change horses mid-stream both at the official level and the deputy ministerial level. G. Parthasarathy, considered to be a very capable civil servant and who was *au fait* with all aspects of the Government of India's Sri Lankan policy, was initially kept at a distance and later replaced by Romesh Bhandari, whose pro-Sinhala and anti-Tamil attitude was distinctly visible at the Thimpu conference. In fact it is stated that he used unparliamentary language to a senior lawyer, who represented one of the militant groups, and had to withdraw it later. The moves to issue deportation orders are traceable to Romesh Bhandari.

At the junior ministerial level, first Khurshid Alam Khan had to move out. Later, Bali Ram Bhagat was sacked for his 'elements of genocide' remark in relation to the killings of Tamils by the armed forces of the Sinhala government of Sri Lanka. In fact, the removal of Bhagat from the ministerial position was announced with much glee in the media in Sri Lanka. But a perusal of the *Hansard* record of his statement and replies leads one to conclude that Bhagat maintained much restraint and objectivity and weighed his words carefully when conveying his ideas.



IPKF commander A.S. Kalkat has a word with his men: a costly exercise

Media persons and columnists in India have often observed that India's Sri Lankan policy suffered from ad-hocism, casualness, incoherence and inconsistency and have sought to ascribe such shortcomings to the frequent changes in personnel at official and the junior ministerial levels. But the truth is quite the opposite. It is the inability of different officials and junior ministers to grasp, to understand, to appreciate and to attune themselves to the nuances, overtones and undertones that were inextricably involved in the Sri Lankan policy fashioned by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi after he rendered the earlier Sri Lankan policy of Mrs Indira Gandhi's government, a mere matter of ancient history.

The Tamils are a tiny lot and their resentment at being crushed is of no consequence. It is, however, necessary to put up a public posture of solicitude for the interests of the Tamils and their aspirations, although in reality Rajiv Gandhi's policy is in perfect harmony with the objectives of President Jayewardene

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Sri Lankan policy was and is very steady, consistent and purposeful; it is of course quite different from and diametrically opposed to the Sri Lankan policy of Mrs Indira Gandhi. It is highly personalised—an affair just between President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The failure of officials and junior ministers to adapt themselves to the changed policy was what led to the frequent changes of personnel in officialdom and junior ministerial levels.

What exactly Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visualised as the political solution to which the parties should be pressurised is not known, but she definitely sympathised with the sufferings of the Tamils. She studiously avoided making any commitments as to what India would or would not do, since to keep the parties in a state of suspense was the most effective way of compelling the parties themselves to reach a settlement. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's thinking ran along quite different lines. He must have probably thought thus: 'These Tamils are a tiny lot; supporting them will not result in any



tangible return; the Sinhalese efforts to crush the Tamil Tigers are nowhere near success. If the Sinhalese are helped to succeed there could be tangible returns since they constitute a state. Further, the Sinhalese are represented by one individual—President Jayewardene and he counts internationally.'

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's policy is distinctively averse to the Tamils with ill-concealed hostility to Pirabhakaran, solely because he insists on *swaraj* for the Tamils, while other groups can be bludgeoned into accepting a mirage of a homeland, a merger of the north and the east which would be undone by a referendum. The Tamils are a tiny lot and their resentment at being crushed is of no consequence. It is,however,necessary to put up a public posture of solicitude for the interests of the Tamils and their aspirations, although in reality Rajiv Gandhi's policy is in perfect harmony with the objectives of President Jayewardene. There is *animus ad idem* in the fullest sense of the term between President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on the question of disposing of the Tamils on the island.

The island was never a single polity. The observation of the first British official in June 1799 clearly stated that the possession of the island was divided between two nations, the Sinhalese and the Tamils, and a map showing the division was prepared for the information of the Colonial Office. The Portuguese, the Dutch and the British till 1833 maintained separate administrative organisations for the Sinhala and Tamil territories.

In 1833, the whole island was brought under a single administrative unit. At every stage of constitutional advance, the Tamils demanded safeguards against domination by the Sinhala ethnic majority. Ultimately when a responsible government was restored in 1947, a clause was inserted in the Constitution which denied the Parliament capacity to enact laws discriminatory, in favour of or adverse to any one community. This was agreed to jointly by the British and the Sinhalese. The insertion of that clause was not for the Tamils; it was not the result of any agreement between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Just like the Gandhi-Jayewardene Accord, it was an accord between the Sinhala maiority and the departing British without any understanding being reached with the Tamils.

It was later discovered that this clause had far-reaching implications. It rendered the polity a conditional polity: the Sinhalese and the Tamils came into the polity on the condition that the ethnic Sinhala majority would not discriminate against the Tamils; if there was discrimination the Tamils had the option to quit the polity and form their own state. The clause was an entrenched clause, i.e., the Parliament cannot repeal or amend it.

The Parliament was not a sovereign Parliament. In this context, the enactment of the Sinhala Only Act could be declared *ultra vires* by an appropriate court. In fact there was already a case before the Privy Council challenging the validity of the Sinhala Only Act. Therefore, it became necessary to protect the Sinhala Only Act by hook or by crook.

A fraudulent intent underlies the creation of the Republic. the Constitution of the Republic of Sri Lanka is not legally valid in the northern and eastern provinces. Thus, the revolting militants were fighting against an unlawful aggressor.

But Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi will not hear anything suggestive of an unlawful entity in respect of Sri Lanka. In respect of Fiji, he draws attention to the nature of the Fijian Constitution and insists that it should be respected But he would not hear of the legal infirmities or the fraud underlying the Sri Lankan Constitution. For reasons of geo-political strategy, he wants the fiction of a single polity of Sri Lanka with national sovereignty and territorial integrity embracing the whole island. He can throttle Sri Lanka by making use of the Tamils and their revolt if only he proclaims that Sri Lanka is one sovereign, integrated, political unit. In order to overawe Sinhala Sri Lanka he has got to maintain the fiction of an integrated Sri Lanka within which Tamils are a discontented,subjugated lot.

If Eelam is separate, he has no excuse to poke his head into Sinhala Sri Lanka. That is the rationale of India's stance. Solely out of deference and regard to India's interests, the Tamils and the militants were agreeable to the fiction of a sovereign Sri Lanka, especially as Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi assured autonomy for a merger of the north and east, the homeland of the Tamils.

Let the Sinhalese enjoy the fiction of sovereignty and territorial integrity; we will have the substance of self-government. It was on such an assump-



George Francis

Tamils massacred by Sri Lankan security forces: 'Tamil resentment is being crushed'



"As a leader in business, I am here to set an example...

I am very careful, very selective... about my official dealings, my reputation.

Even my associates.

Naturally, when it comes to general insurance I prefer the leader as well.

New India, of course."

Leaders have a habit of gravitating towards leaders. That's why New India is the company of choice for most.

Today, it's a company with a Rs. 500 crore premium, with a national and international presence. Amongst its clientele are the largest, most successful business houses...

As well as people from all walks of life, every section of society... both urban and rural.

Because New India has innovated many insurance covers. The range exceeds 75... to meet any and every need. Through a giant network of over 1000 offices in India and abroad.

To retain leadership, New India offers something special with every cover...

The personal touch...

A genuine concern for each and every customer shared by 4000 inspectors and the over 16,000 strong New India family. Internationally.

You name the risk. We insure it.

NEW INDIA ASSURANCE

A subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India

The New India range of assurance covers:
Industrial: Business Interruption, Loss of Profit, Third Party Liability, Public Liability, Machinery, Boiler and Pressure Plant, Workmen's Compensation, Contractors' All Risks, Marine-cum-Erection, Money in Transit, Product Liability. **Commercial:** Fidelity Guarantee, Marine, Combined Fire and Theft, Protessional Indemnity. **Personal:** Mediclaim, Unborn Child, Personal Accident, Householders' Policy. **Rural:** Livestock, Agricultural Pumpset, Janata Personal Accident, Gramin Personal Accident. And many more...

CONTOUR ADS-NIA-701/88

tion that the Tamils agreed to blunder along with India on a totally unacceptable legal fiction. It is obvious, now, that the relationship must be guaranteed by India; the safety and security of the people of Eelam should be assured by the presence of the Indian armed forces.

But unfortunately it does not appear that Rajiv Gandhi's government is sincere about the merger of the two provinces. The two provinces form the homeland of the Tamils, and every Tamil, militant or non militant, man or woman, child or elder, are all of one mind in regard to the preservation of the homeland. No group of people having a distinct entity and anxious to preserve that entity can ensure self-preservation unless there is a geographical focus. This homeland concept is recognised in various states in India. When President Zail Singh was invited by the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir to settle down in Kashmir after retirement, the former pointed out that under the law of the land he could not own immovable property in Kashmir. Is a more telling proof of the importance of preserving the homeland necessary? In Nagaland only the indigenous people have the vote. The cut-off date for citizenship, implying voting rights, has been the crux of controversy in respect of Assam. All these are restrictions against the inflow of outsiders.

However, in the northern and eastern provinces the homeland is violated by mass colonisation schemes carried out by the state under which Sinhalese selected on the basis of their criminal record and those selected by politicians for their racist and chauvinistic outlook are settled in the midst of Tamil villages with the obvious object of annihilating the Tamils. It is impossible for Tamils to continue to live in their villages when these Sinhalese are settled in the neighbourhood by the state. Such colonists are really persons prematurely released from jail. The aim is to alter the demographic pattern as well as to make it impossible for the Tamils to live in their homes.

Arms surrendered by Tamil militants after the accord: elusive peace



Surely, those who drafted the accord should have thought of a cut-off date. The obvious date is 1948, the date of independence. Who will vote in the referendum to be held at the date decided upon by President Jayewardene is vague and undefined. Any number of Sinhalese could be inducted and the referendum made to deprive the Tamils of their homeland. India does not agree to a referendum in Kashmir on the grounds that traditional territories are not to change hands on the basis of plebiscite which would be influenced by extraneous forces. But on the question of merger of the eastern province, the accord signed by Rajiv Gandhi, of his own volition, makes the decision to be determined by future colonisation of the territory by Sinhalas of dubious extraction, for the special purpose of colonising the traditional homeland of the Tamils.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's failure to get the subjects to be allotted to the Provincial Councils specified before the accord was signed, is another serious mistake. According to an editorial in *The Hindu*:

> The attitude of the Sri Lankan government towards the devolution package supposed to be settled with India has been distinctly unhelpful; the substance of the package is known to be not up to India's expectations and falls considerably short of what even the Tamil moderates, the TULF leaders want (12 October 1987).



Tamil refugees at Rameswaram: night without end

The other party to the accord is not sincere. President Jayewardene had said over the radio that Sinhala armed forces would be there to protect the Sinhala colonists and that the Indian forces would not go there. If the Indian Peace Keeping Force is responsible for the safety of the people of all communities and the Sinhala armed forces are to withdraw to the barracks, as stated in the accord, this instruction to the Sinhala armed forces to protect the Sinhalese, breaks the backbone of the accord. Again, President Jayewardene has stated that the merger would not last and that he would himself canvass at the referendum to vote against the continuance of the merger. But Rajiv Gandhi wants to persist with the accord.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's *bona fides* are dubious for the following reasons:

- At a very early stage, while playing the role of a mediator, he had given clear signals to one party to the dispute that he was disposed to favour that party.
- He had studiously excluded consideration of the legal and constitutional infirmities of the Sri Lankan Republic to encompass the northern and eastern provinces while in respect of the ethnic conflict in Fuji he drew pointed attention to the nature of the Constitution.
- He avoided the Directive Principles laid down by Article 51 of the Indian Constitution which enjoins the Government of India to endeavour to refer the



dispute to arbitration.

- Although the Aid Sri Lanka Consortium countries were keen that the ethnic conflict should be resolved (some of them even suspended aid to Sri Lanka because of the violation of the human rights of Tamils), Rajiv Gandhi did not want any other country to interfere in the mediation. The presence of another country in the picture would have prevented Sri Lanka from denigrating India.
- A mediator's function is to try to bring about an agreement between the parties to the dispute. However, this accord was not agreed to or confirmed by the Tamil groups.
- The provisions in the accord, except for disarming the militants, are vague and give rise to greater discord.
- The urgency in signing the accord has an ulterior motive—to shield the Sri Lankan government from adverse criticisms in the US Congress: the Congress Resolution condemning the Sri Lankan government for human rights violations was due to be discussed on 4 August. This accord was intended to and did pre-empt the discussion.
- The accord being signed at Galle Face Green reveals an interest in conferring advantages on particular political parties in Sri Lanka's internal politics.
- Relegating vital issues to the category of 'Residuaries' gives rise to greater discord and confirms the ulterior motive.
- The size of the armed forces transported to the northern parts of Sri Lanka is far in excess of those needed for peace-keeping functions.

Rajiv Gandhi has done a number of things in this connection which indicate that as a mediator he has gone out of the way to help Jayewardene and his government. The highly publicised argument that the accord enhances the security of the region and India's own security is an untenable exaggeration. Various countries like Israel, South Africa, China, Pakistan, South Korea and others never entered into an agreement or cultivated any friendship with Sri Lanka—much less acted to the detriment of India. There were only selling materials, equipment and weapons for hard cash and in most cases the items sold were really obsolete and not of much value in a serious war between two countries. The accusations against USA were unwarranted.

What is the *quid pro quo* expected by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in helping the party to the dispute actually in the wrong and, in the process, spending some 15 to 20 million rupees a day on the war against the Tamils, without making any tangible advance? India's role as a mediator is full of contradictions and mystery and remains inexplicable

The whole idea of Provincial Councils being set up to resolve ethnic conflicts has of late taken on the flavour of fundamentalism. India is imposing on Sri Lanka its own model made worse by President Jayewardene's constraints. In India the Centre-state relationship is subject to the canker of a provision which enables the Centre to suspend the state government and impose President's Rule. This provision was introduced at the end of the sessions of the Constituent Assembly and was stoutly resisted by certain delegates, particularly those from Punjab. That unfortunate state has experienced the imposition of President's Rule seven times. On the last occasion, Punjab was subjected to the imposition of President's Rule for—it is freely stated and depicted in cartoons—winning the elections in Haryana for the party in power at the Centre. But the voters of Haryana did not oblige.

In the northern and eastern provinces the homeland is violated by mass colonisation schemes carried out by the state under which Sinhalese are settled in the midst of Tamil villages...The aim is to alter the demographic pattern as well as to make it impossible for the Tamils to live in their homes

The Galle Face Green Accord which, in the final analysis, is only an accord between two individuals, notwithstanding the high political positions they hold, has created more violence and discord than it sought to remedy. In the north and the east, the Indian Peace Keeping Force is waging a ruthless war against the Tamils. What they are fighting for is still a mystery. In the south and the west, which were earlier quite normal, there is serious violence aimed at the leadership of the governing party. The President of the UNP himself has been killed.

President Jayewardene says that he has implemented the accord legislatively. The legislation related to matters which were left over as 'Residuaries' when the accord was signed. The legislation was finalised without the Government of India being shown the draft. Even the TULF, which has lost all credibility among the Tamils because of its servility to President Jayewardene, is thoroughly dissatisfied with how the 'Residuaries' were finalised.

On the side of the Sinhalese, there is no one to pursue the implementation of the accord. The senior minister in charge of finance in President Jayewardene's Cabinet has unequivocally demanded that general elections be held to replace the obsolete Parliament. Other senior members of the Cabinet are keen that the proscribed JVP, which is thought to be behind the violence in the south, should be made a legitimate party. Both the demands cannot be evaded any longer by President Jayewardene. The legal position and democratic rights can no longer be suppressed or evaded by means of armed might or Machiavellian accords.

The general elections will have to be held in the Sinhala provinces with JVP being made a legitimate party. Of course, no elections can be held in the north and the east with some 200,000 refugees out of the island. Further, the Sri Lanka Republic has no legitimate right over the north and the east. The Government of India, with its accord aborted, has no alternative but to tell Sri Lanka to hold a Referendum in the north and the east to validate the Republican Constitution since the people of the north and the east had earlier refused to grant the mandate sought for creating the Sri Lankan Republic. Further mediation should depend on the outcome of such a Referendum in the north and the east.

Sri Lanka: The Conflict Within by Somasunderam Vanniasingham. Published by Lancer International, New Delhi, 1988. Price, Rs 200

Courting death

What drove tennis ace Premjit Lall to attempt suicide? An unhappy marriage or chronic depression?

Ex-tennis ace Premjit Lall is back in the limelight. But certainly not for reasons he would ever have chosen - attempted suicide. What drove him to jump before the tram at Calcutta's underground Park Street Metro station on that muggy Wednesday morning of 21 September is, of course, not known. But his wife Sanghamitra's rather unexpected comments in a Calcutta daily about the mishap have fuelled conjecture of the most unfortunate kind. "It's going to be traumatic enough for Premjit when he recovers," said younger brother Ajit Lall, an Indal executive. "What Sanghamitra has said has certainly not gone down well with the family."

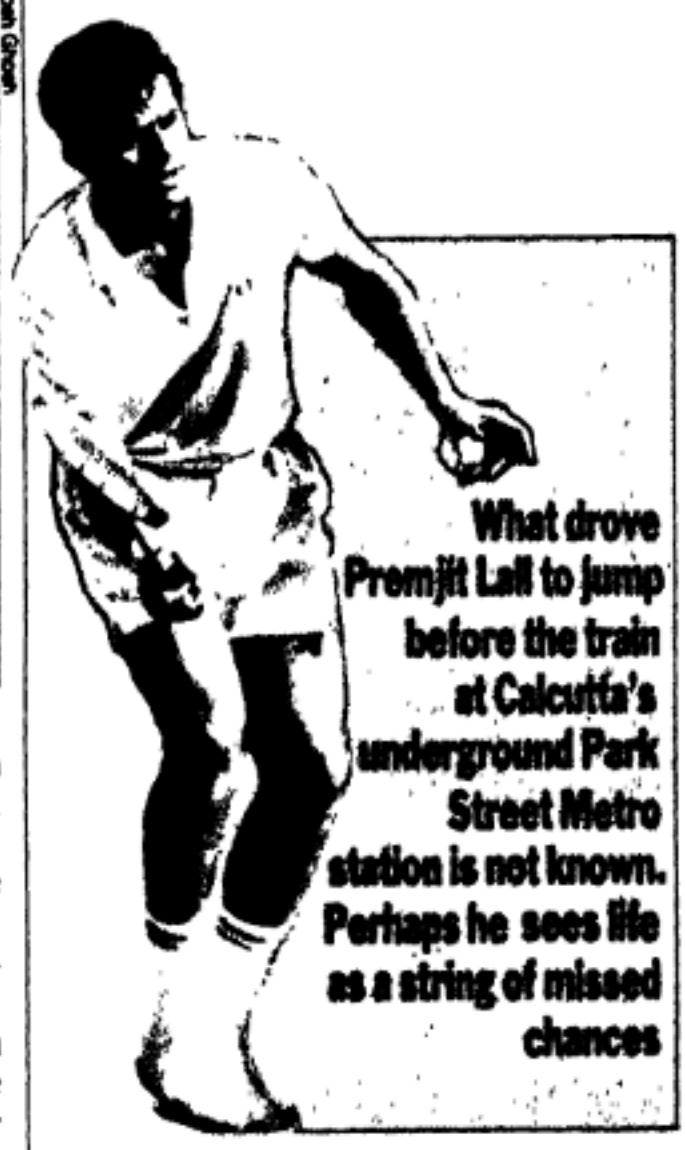


Premjit Lall: bleak future?

Which, given Sanghamitra Lall's statements, is not surprising at all. In effect, she has not only labelled her husband a chronic depressive, but branded the whole Lall clan as well. "This (chronic depression) has been running in the family," she said. "His sister also suffers from it." Lall, she elaborated, had been under psychiatric treatment for some time. And, practically setting the cat among the pigeons, she added that Wednesday's suicide attempt was not the first. It was, she said, his third.

Premjit Lall's family members say they had no idea about the earlier attempts. Nor did Jaideep Mukherjea, Lall's long-standing friend and tennis partner. "Yes, occasionally Premjit *would* seem depressed," said Mukherjea, "but doesn't that happen to everybody?"

So, if it wasn't what the doctors term 'manic depressive psychosis' that drove Premjit Lall to try and take his own life, what was it? Inevitably, some skeletons have come tumbling out of the Lall cupboards and one suspicion, perhaps predictably, is about an unhappy married life. Sanghamitra is Premjit Lall's second wife and he her third husband. Earlier, Premjit was married to one Georgina Roy, who used to teach at Calcutta's La Martiniere Girls School.



What drove Premjit Lall to jump before the train at Calcutta's underground Park Street Metro station is not known. Perhaps he sees life as a string of missed chances

Premjit Lall: fighting fit

Lall had two children by her, Dev and Jaya, who lived with their mother after the divorce about 10 years ago.

Sanghamitra is, however, one person Lall's friends claim not to know very well. "They seem a perfectly normal couple and have a young son," said Jaideep Mukherjea, "but since I haven't been seeing Premjit too often in the last two years, I don't know Sanghamitra very well." "I haven't met Sanghamitra at all," said Rita Bhimani, chief public relations manager at Indal who has known Lall for some time, "but from what I have heard, she is actually running the show at Premjit's printing press."

After quitting Associated Cement Company (ACC) in 1974 and after retiring formally from tennis, Lall ran a label printing press, Label Kraft, in Calcutta's Park Circus area. "I wouldn't say he was a Birla or something," said Jaideep Mukherjea, "but he was fairly well-off." But lately, it is believed, Label Kraft had not been doing too well and Lall was trying to sell his car. "I don't think he was so badly off that he would be driven to commit suicide," said Ajit Lall, however. But ill health had kept Premjit Lall from going to work and Sanghamitra was, indeed, looking after the press. Early last year, Lall had suffered "something like a stroke" which had left him with a speech defect. He had also been advised by his doctors against any physical exertion, including tennis.

But, whether it was a state of mind or body that pushed Lall to take the plunge, it was a tragic near-end to India's tennis celebrity. "A nice looking tall fellow, soft-spoken, a university man from Calcutta where he sometimes works as a cement salesman," Rod Laver had remarked after beating Premjit Lall to the Wimbledon trophy in 1969. That was the period when Lall was at his tennis peak. In 1958, Lall had gone as far as the finals at the Junior Invitation Wimbledon, to eventually lose to the American, Earl Buchholz. In 1973, Lall lost to Bjorn Borg, then a tennis newcomer, but after a tough fight.

But 1969 had been Premjit Lall's closest shave with tennis history. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime chance," said Lall after losing the Wimbledon finals to Rod Laver, "and I missed it." Perhaps 47-year-old Lall sees life as a string of missed chances. But after struggling to live, despite his cracked ribs, his damaged lungs, his leg, arm and head injuries, despite his near-comatose state even 10 days after the mishap, maybe Lall will realise that there is more to life than missing or taking chances. Or maybe he won't. All that Sanghamitra is hoping for at the moment is a swift recovery. "I am praying to God," she said. But the only cure for Lall's problems lies with Lall himself.

Monideepa Banerjie/Calcutta

BEGINNING 9 OCTOBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) A successful week lies ahead of you Those in business will succeed in their deals. Specialists will be crowned with success Attend to important matters on hand A favourable time to pursue new ideas You are likely to gain through new friendships Job prospects are likely for the young Keep an eye on your health.
Good dates: 9, 10 and 12
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) This is a week of fluctuating fortunes This is not the time to take risks You might suffer from financial losses Those in service will face difficulties Engineers are likely to achieve promotions. The health of elders in your family may cause you some anxiety Steer clear of controversies and arguments with elders and superiors at the office
Good dates: 13, 14 and 15
Lucky numbers: 2 3 and 4
Favourable direction: East



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) Do not be impulsive this week Clear all backlog of work Be careful of your enemies who are likely to cause you harm. Business deals are not likely to turn out successful The health of your elders might cause you some worry The time is suitable for matrimonial alliances Do not shirk responsibilities.
Good dates: 10, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers: 1, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: South



CANCER (21 June—20 July) The week ahead will call for patience. New ventures are likely to succeed But the domestic front is not promising this week. You are likely to antagonise a near one. The time is not favourable for matrimonial alliances. Exercise caution in business deals. You might have to pay heavily for a *faux pas* Proceed cautiously. Do not endanger your self-respect.
Good dates: 11, 13 and 15
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: West



LEO (21 July—20 August) Your plans are likely to materialise this week. You will benefit through financial gains The time is favourable for sportsmen and creative artists. Others are advised to guard against temptation Excitement may come your way. You are advised to be careful during a journey. Keep an eye on your health Do not neglect your near ones
Good dates: 10, 11 and 13
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: South-east



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) This is a week of financial gains for you. Those in service are likely to get a promotion Fame is in store for litterateurs and artists. Exercise caution in lending and borrowing Borrowers might cause you some anxiety A good week for undertaking new business ventures A lady might be of big help Do not neglect minor colds and coughs
Good dates: 11, 12 and 14
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: North-west



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) A week of ups and downs For those in service the week will not be so fortunate. Take care of your health New opportunities are in the offing, especially for the young and unemployed Teachers and actors will gain prominence and respect this week Do not make a hasty marital alliance. Businessmen will suffer.
Good dates: 12, 13 and 15
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: East



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) The beginning of the week is favourable for taking risks. Avoid impulsiveness later in the week Do not antagonise elders and those in authority For those in service, there might be cause for worry The health of a close relative might cause some anxiety Those in love will be very fortunate this week Be confident in all your dealings
Good dates: 10, 11 and 12
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: South



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) This is an important week An old problem will be resolved Loved ones will gladden your heart Those in service will be lucky Businessmen will gain financially There will be sickness in the family. Steer clear of domestic troubles A good time for cultivating the creative arts A favourable time for love.
Good dates: 9, 12 and 15
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: South-west



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) Success is foreseen in your career this week This is the time to undertake new ventures. Be careful about your health and that of your dear ones. Intellectuals will gain prominence and recognition You will be praised by elders and employers for a good decision. Matters of the heart will progress Exercise patience and caution.
Good dates: 9, 10 and 11
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: North-east



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) The time is not ripe for implementing plans You will be unable to get what is legally yours. Businessmen will face hardships. Deals will fall through. Politicians are likely to be troubled. Favourable phase for those who are unemployed Those already in service will be rewarded with promotions.
Good dates: 11, 12 and 13
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North



PISCES (21 February—20 March) The beginning of the week is favourable for those in service Exercise caution and patience. A matter—long forgotten—will come up This is the best time to start a commercial venture Be careful during a journey The domestic front will be peaceful. The health of an elderly family member might cause problems.
Good dates: 10, 11 and 14
Lucky numbers: 1, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: West

Star Partners: Aries—Leo

The aura of confidence that the Aries man exudes will immediately attract the Leo woman. His boyish impulsiveness coupled with his innate urge to take life as a challenge will endear him to her. However, they may encounter ego clashes leading to quarrels Each must take care not to hurt the other's sentiments.

ODDS AND TRENDS

Dusty Delhi

Wide thoroughfares, impressive boulevards, imposing high-rise structures, sprawling parks --Delhi is among the swankiest capitals in the world. But the spick and span city also has another distinction- -a dubious one but not man-made: it is among the four dustiest cities in the world.

According to an environmental study conducted jointly by the World Health



Organisation and the United Nations Environmental Programme, the situation continues to deteriorate in developing countries like India. What is making the problem even more grievous is the fact that an estimated 625 million people are exposed to an unacceptable level of sulphur dioxide pollution and another 550 million live under marginal conditions. And yes, our own holy Ganges is the most polluted river in the world!

Governor's abode

What is wrong with Goa's grandiose Raj Bhavan that the state government has sought Rs 11 crores from the Centre to build a new one? This is precisely what Goa's active environmentalists and ecologists are asking. The existing Governor's house in Dona Paula is situated on the western end of Panaji on a picturesque hillock overlooking the sea and is a grand specimen of Indo-Portuguese architecture. Moreover, it is pointed out that the proposed new Raj Bhavan will also be located in Dona Paula which will only lead to congestion in the quaint town.

The rationale of the state government authorities is interesting: "The present Raj Bhavan lacks modern amenities...and since it is located on a hillock facing the Arabian Sea, a lot of money is spent on checking erosion..." What has raised eyebrows is the intention of the state government to turn it into an archives museum—once the Governor moves out! Query: how will that check sea erosion?

Male child only

Social progressiveness does not seem to be Gujarat's strong point. If the astonishingly high rate of female foeticide is anything to go by, Gujaratis seem to have a strong bias against female offspring. According to a spokesperson of the Forum Against Sex Determination, at least 20,000 sex determination tests are carried out in the state every year. And each time a female foetus is detected, it nearly always meets with the same fate—a premature death.

In view of this alarming situation, the forum is trying its level best to urge the state government to ban amniocentesis. Chief minister Amarsinh Chaudhary has promised to look into the matter. But whether he can actually do away with this practice remains to be seen. Time—and many more cases of female foeticide—perhaps can tell.

Turning dry

The wettest place on earth could, in the not too distant future, become one of the driest places. Cherrapunji, in the north-eastern part of India, has for years occupied a pride of place in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the place which records the maximum amount of rainfall in a year.

But thanks to human depredations, Cherrapunji is fast losing its forest cover, which is so important to hold rain water. The *jhum* cultivation practised by the tribals of the area—which entails large-scale destruction of trees—has spelt disaster in terms of soil erosion.

Moreover, the *jhumming* cycle which once lasted for at least 25 years, has now been reduced to about four years. With man exploiting nature so mercilessly, the day is not far off when Cherrapunji will become the driest place on earth.

Hunt for a home

West Bengal is perhaps the only—or among the very few—states which cannot boast of a palatial official residence for its chief minister. One is not sure whether this is in keeping with the image of a Marxist state—but the fact is that CM Jyoti Basu himself is making do with a flat in the sprawling Raj Bhavan. But this lack of



adequate official residences seems to have affected the seniormost people in the bureaucracy too. And the latest to be affected is none other than the city police commissioner, B.K. Saha.

The police chief who took over on 31 July, was occupying the official residence of the inspector general, CRPF—his previous assignment—till 31 September and has now shifted in with his in-laws. Reason: state police chief B.K. Basu, Saha's predecessor, has yet to vacate the official quarters of the police commissioner. Commissioner Saha had requested the SP, South 24-Parganas, to vacate his official residence in the posh Alipore area but to no avail. And Saha couldn't be too happy about moving in with his in-laws despite being the most powerful police official in Calcutta.

THIS INDIA

• NEW DELHI: The winners and runners-up of the Khassi tournament—an annual hockey championship organised at various places in Chotanagpur—get goats as prizes! The Adivasi participants are not particularly keen on gold and silver medals—*The Times of India* (Mitali Gupta, Bombay)

• BHOPAL: There is a college in Madhya Pradesh where not a single student has taken admission this year. Elsewhere, in Khilchipur, only one student has taken admission this year. According to informed sources, there are at least 30 government colleges in the state where the number of students is not more than 25. However, all these colleges have the full quota of professors and lecturers—*The Hindustan Times* (Mitra Dutta, New Delhi)

• PATNA: A priceless collection of rare books and periodicals dating back to the 17th century is gathering dust in the library of the Lalit Narayan Mithila University here for lack of proper maintenance facilities. Repeated appeals to the University Grants Commission for adequate funds to carry out repairs have failed to evoke a positive response—*The Telegraph* (Kesharichand Parakh, Howrah)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

Illustrations: Krishnendu Chaki

Political play

Tamil Nadu's celluloid superstar, the actor-director-producer T. Rajendar, has defected just as often as most of the state's politicians. At one time he was an AIADMK camp follower but after being spurned by M. G. Ramachandran, he fled to the DMK to have his interests protected. Now, the maker of innumerable blockbusters is training his eye on the Congress(I). He is a frequent visitor to the G. K. Moopanar residence and if the Congress state party chief can manage to win over the star, it could mean a big boost for the party in the forthcoming elections.

Of late, things have not been very good between the DMK leadership and Rajendar. It is believed that he is viewed as a threat to Karunanidhi's son, M. K. Stalin, the DMK's youth leader. Another opponent of Rajendar's is party general secretary K. Anbazhagan. He is said to have turned against Rajendar after a public meeting, when the crowds melted away after the star's speech.

Upset over the cold shoulder from the party leadership, Rajendar is spending his time in the privacy of a hotel room writing a script. If the DMK persists in alienating him, then Rajendar may allow himself to be persuaded by Moopanar. The Congressman, from all accounts, is patiently waiting for Rajendar to bite.



Rajendar with Karunanidhi (left): sending feelers to the Congress(I)?

Salve praises Pawar

N. K. P. Salve's attempt to praise Maharashtra chief minister Sharad Pawar as "the first leader to wipe our tears", has come under flak from energy minister Sudhakar Naik. In a letter to Salve, Naik wrote: "Does it mean that none of the previous chief ministers right from the late Y. B. Chavan till now, had cared to solve the problems facing the people of Vidarbha?" Naik has special cause to be angry because he is the nephew of Vasantrao Naik who was probably one of the most efficient chief ministers that Maharashtra had and ruled the state for 11 long years. In this missive Naik churned out facts and figures to show what each chief minister had done for the development of Vidarbha. Both Naik and Salve come from the Vidarbha region. Salve, whose political fortunes are on the wane, was responsible for getting Sharad Pawar's PDF government dissolved after Mrs Gandhi's return to power in 1980. He is now apparently trying to ingratiate himself with Pawar, who has recommended him for MPCC presidentship.

Salve: changing tactics



The price of real estate

The Bombay Police are being hounded out from their traditional quarters in the high-premium Worli Sea Face area and pushed to the distant suburbs of Marol and Malavani. However, top brass of the police who live in the plush quarters at Churchgate and Napean Sea Road appear to be unconcerned about this. The latest fiat of the Pawar government orders the police to vacate their barracks in Worli. Four luxurious ownership buildings grabbed by powerful legislators, politicians and their friends have come up in a part of the barracks vacated earlier by the lowly paid constables. The Pawar regime now wants more space for its patrons and friends at the cost of the constables, ten per cent of whom live in slums and others in dilapidated buildings, according to the Police Mitra Mandal president Sambaji Rao Chavan.

Subrata Mukherjee's Libyan love

Guess whose photograph adorns the walls of Congress leader Subrata Mukherjee's house in Calcutta? After Rajiv's and Indira's



Mukherjee: new idols?

portrait, it's the Libyan leader, Col. Gaddafi's. The Libyan embassy in Delhi had sent the photograph of Gaddafi to Mukherjee after his recent sojourn to that country. Mukherjee has been telling all and sundry that Gaddafi is a popular dictator. Though why Mukherjee has taken a fancy for the Libyan leader is still not clear.

DELHI DIARY

D.E. NIZAMUDDIN

Bhajan Lal's *faux pas*

The recent floods in Assam appeared to have given a bright idea to the Union agriculture minister Bhajan Lal: why not make political capital out of the crisis? Lal is believed to have told the Prime Minister that he needed a helicopter to tour the flood-stricken areas. The high command promptly agreed to his request. But Lal blundered during his sojourn: he told the distraught masses of the state that the PM had personally given a helicopter to him to change the political climate in Assam. The boast reached Rajiv's ears.

When the Prime Minister later went on a three-day tour of Assam, Lal was missing from the entourage. This piqued the agriculture minister. The grapevine has it that despite repeated requests to the high command to take him along, Rajiv is reported to have brushed them aside, with the repartee that Lal should take a rest in the capital.



Bhajan Lal: vain boast

Five-star culture

If there is one bond that unites Subramaniam Swamy and Ajit Singh, it is their fancy for five star hotels. Ever since differences among Janata leaders split the rank and file of the party, the two have only grown closer to each other. And it is not the American connection that binds them together. One can see them holding parleys at five star hotels be it during the day or night. Strangely, the Harvard-educated professor sports a *dhoti-kurta* while Chaudhary Charan Singh's son wears western clothes. What's more, Swamy takes Ajit Singh around in his spanking new air-conditioned Maruti. Incidentally, the main haunt of these two leaders is Hotel Meriden, which is close to the Janata Party office. Seeing Ajit Singh in five-star hotels, one Janata leader marvelled at how this city slicker could have led a party of peasants at one time.



Ajit Singh, city slicker

Reds to the rescue

When in trouble, ask the Reds for help. Notwithstanding our fascination for everything American, our leaders have had to turn to the Soviet Union. Recently, Union home minister Buta Singh's wife needed medical treatment and Singh had decided that a trip to a well-known hospital in the USA would do his better-half a world of good. But as soon as he made his wishes known, there came a volley of protests, apparently from his well-wishers. How could he go to the USA when his name was on the terrorists' hit-list? And to top it all, weren't there a large number of Sikhs in the USA, who have been known to be clearly anti-Indian? So, Buta Singh had to settle for the USSR. He is now taking a course in Russian.



Singh: Russia bound

bajaj group

When time stops for a little sweetness...



We are there to share those moments with you.

Bajaj Hindusthan brings you the finest sugar crystals manufactured from sun-kissed sugarcane.

With an expertise perfected over 50 years from one of India's foremost sugar manufacturing units, has enabled Bajaj Hindusthan to crush 12 lakh tonnes of sugarcane annually by working in close harmony with 60,000 farmers.

Keeping you in close touch with the best things in life everyday in everyway!

bajaj hindusthan ltd.
(SUGAR DIVISION)

Sweetening an entire generation.

SUNDAY WEEKLY 9 OCTOBER 1966 REGD. NO.
WB/CC 256 TN/MS (C) 376 MH-BY-SOUTH-660



Wills Filter set the filter trend in cigarettes long years ago. Today it's still the finest. In taste, in satisfaction. Hand-picked virginia tobaccos married to an efficient filter make it so. Millions of smokers have discovered it, then stayed with it.



WILLS FILTER
Filter and tobacco perfectly matched

STATUTORY WARNING
CIGARETTE SMOKING IS

THE JAN MORCHA'S IDENTITY CRISIS

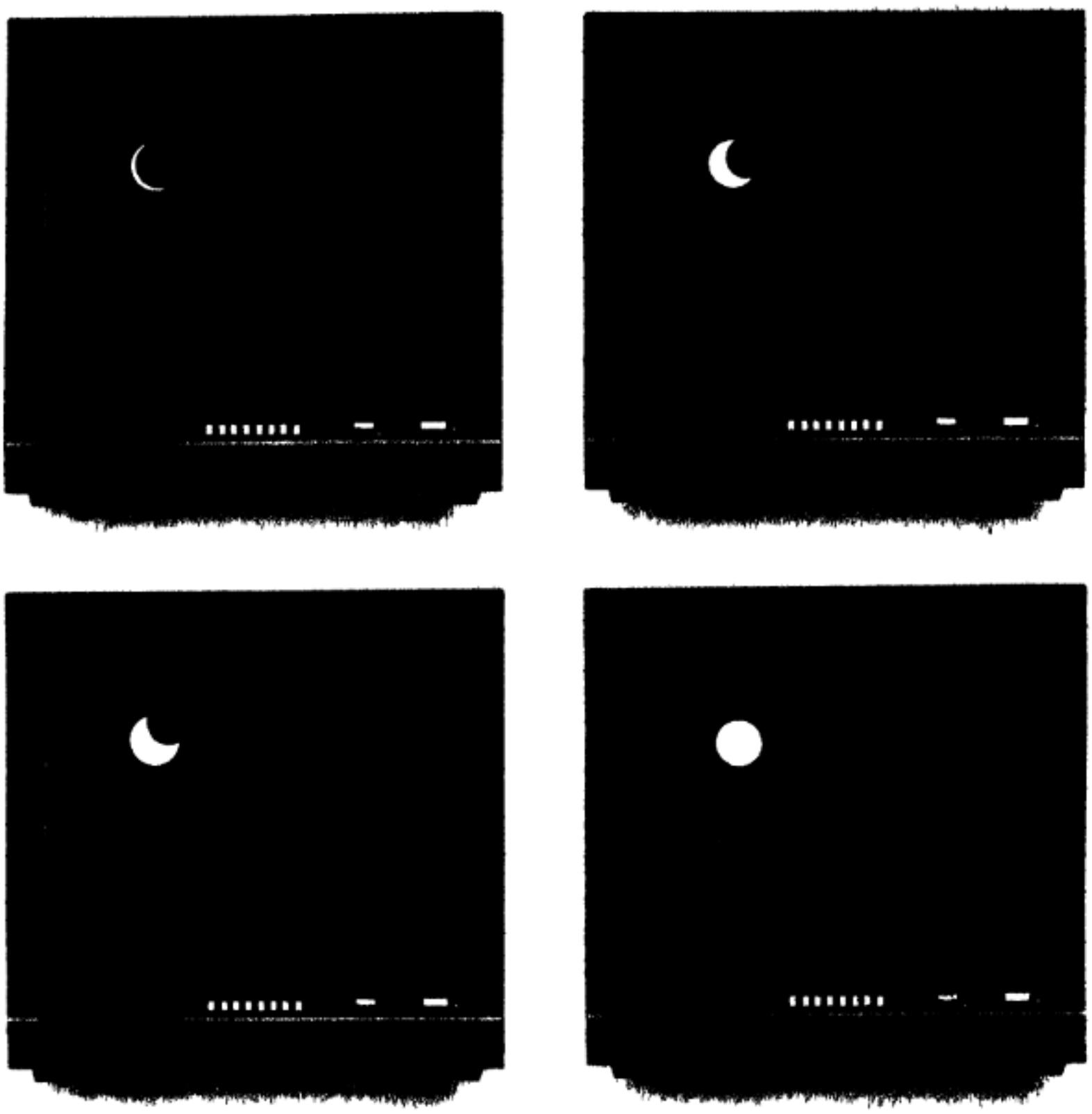
SUNDAY



Master's Voi

Glasnost is over at Doordarshan and it's back to being a propaganda machine

EC Colour TV



Real value... as time goes by.

ECTV

SCANTEC Electronics Corporation of India Limited (A Government of India Enterprise), Hyderabad-500 762.

CONTENTS

VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 47 | RS 6.00 **SUNDAY** AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

16—22 OCTOBER 1988

COVER STORY **23**

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESS

Bhaskar Ghosh's exit suggests that as far as the government is concerned, it is not credibilty but the tedium that is the message.

SPECIAL REPORT **15**

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Questions relating to dual membership plague the Jan Morcha.

CONTROVERSY **36**

VERSE OR WORSE?



India's democratic stance is undermined by the ban on Salman Rushdie's book, *The Satanic Verses*

ART **45**

PAYING TO THE GALLERY

Chemould has come a long way from the days when it was an obscure concern that manufactured picture frames.

BUSINESS **58**

COMPLEX POLITICS



Prevarication and not politics stalls the Haldia petrochem project.



Page 23



Page 14

COMMENT

Letters 4
Byline M.J. Akbar 10
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 13
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 38
Sight and Sound 7
Guest Column S.S. Gill 32
Business Diary 62

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Random Notes 81
Delhi Diary 82

Cover photograph of Rajiv Gandhi by Tapan Das.
Artwork by Sandip Bhattacharya.

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bijit Kumar Bayu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001

Air surcharge for Srinagar ex Delhi and Tripura 20 paise North Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh Nagaland Meghalaya and Kamrup Barpeta, Kokrajhar Dhubri, Nowgong Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts of Assam 30 paise

EXPATRIATES **67**

BHANGRA GOES WEST



Finally, Indians and Pakistanis in the United Kingdom evolve their own pop music. And guess what? It's Bhangra

BOOK EXTRACT **70**

THE BIRTH OF A COMMUNALIST



Bipan Chandra traces the growth of communalism in modern India and describes how Jinnah, a nationalist, turned communal in this extract from his book, *India's Struggle for Independence*.

SUNDAY SPORTS **78**

LOSING HEART AT SEOUL

In one of its worst Olympic debacles, the Indian contingent returns without a single medal.

NEWS **48**

Khaas Baat 63
Spotlight 64
Sundayweek 75
Odds and Trends 77



Whither Opposition?

The squabbling factions seem to have a diametrically opposite stand and unless concrete measures are taken to remove the hurdles, a vertical split cannot be avoided (*Two way street*, 25 September–1 October). A division in the Janata Party will put paid to all unity efforts. Positive attempts must be made to do the right things at the right time.

Sachchidananda Satpathy, Hirakud (Orissa)

■ The cover story provided excellent food for thought in view of the coming general elections. The political scenario in India today is that of a band of power-hungry politicians engaged in a game of one-upmanship, the common man be damned. It would do well if Hegde and Chandra Shekhar could rise above petty politics in the interests of the nation, which is gradually moving towards a state of fragmentation.

Gordon Maelzer, Guwahati (Assam)

■ The reason behind the tussle in the Janata Party is a personality clash between the two leaders, Chandra Shekhar and R.K. Hegde. The rift between the two leaders can be resolved if they meet each other for a frank exchange of views for the sake of unity of the Janata Party. Personal differences should be cast aside for the sake of the country and a strong Opposition built to overthrow the Congress(I) at the Centre.

Arjun Parthasarathy, Madras (Tamil Nadu)



(From left) R.K. Hegde, Chandra Shekhar, George Fernandes and Madhu Dandavate bumbling along

■ It is unfortunate that the Janata Party, considered to be the largest and the most credible among the Opposition parties, is finding itself in a crisis engineered by the party's own stalwarts. The party is divided into two groups, one headed by Chandra Shekhar, and the other by the charismatic Ramakrishna Hegde. It is fortunate that both the leaders have not come out openly against each other and are confident of finding a solution.

The formation of SJD and the National Front is a welcome step towards Opposition unity. Ajit Singh should step down in favour of Hegde who is a more charismatic and acceptable leader.

B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur (Bihar)

Talent and charm

Jayalalitha is undoubtedly the only talented leader in Tamil Nadu (*A healthy campaign*, 18–24 September). It is her charm and adherence to basic principles that will enable her to win votes.



Jayalalitha: winsome ways

If she ever comes to power in Tamil Nadu, she will certainly have the support of the Centre. Not only will she be able to improve the economic condition of the masses, but will also be a symbol for national unity and integrity.

K.V. Rajagopalan, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

How come?

Kuldip Nayar in his article (*On the line*, 25 September–1 October) states that a candidate placed 621st in the recent civil services examination made it to the elite IFS. I am amazed to read this, as I secured the 205th rank and was offered the Railway Traffic Service, even though the IFS was my first option. Something is amiss somewhere. Can Mr Nayar dispel my doubts?

Ravi Valluri, New Delhi

Misquoted

To my dismay I find that the report (*The Bill of wrongs*, 11–17 September) has quoted me incompletely as having said that "If it comes through, we can send Priya Ranjan Das Munshi to jail for what he says about Jyoti Basu". This not only gives a wrong impression but changes the tenor of my conversation. When queried whether the defamation law would be applied in West Bengal, I had said: "If it comes through, we can send Das Munshi to jail for what he says about Jyoti Basu. But we won't do that. We won't take advantage of this law because it is a matter of principle." There is a fundamental difference between what I had stated and the way I have been quoted.

Saifuddin Choudhury, MP, Lok Sabha, New Delhi

A gentleman in flannels

It was indeed a pleasant change to read a book extract on sports (*A view from the field*, 25 September–1 October). Judging from the excerpts, *All Round view* promises to be better than the earlier biographical *Imran*. All this goes to show that Imran Khan is good both on the field as well as off it. I am glad SUNDAY is not biased against this player just because he belongs to a hostile country. Your magazine has done well to give him due media coverage.

Debjani Ray, Calcutta (West Bengal)

Imran Khan: popular



Hard evidence

The report (*The Rs 1 crore question*, 18—24 September) should have mentioned that there was much more in my story *Shocking! The strange escapades of J. B. Patnaik* (*Illustrated Weekly of India*, 18—24 May, 1986) than "short interviews with boys and girls whom the chief minister allegedly abused". There were facsimile extracts from the register of a government guest house where nurse Sevarani had stayed for 57 days. While checking out she had written "Send bill to PS to CM" and signed it. We carried extracts from a letter written by a woman to Soma Gandhi alleging sexual harassment by Patnaik. We published a photostat copy of a confidential letter from an important functionary to the Governor accusing Patnaik of misusing the CM's relief fund for "purchasing pleasure". We also published a picture of the CM intimately holding a woman's hand. Subsequent issues of the *Weekly* carried copies of affidavits by some young men detailing their sexual interaction with J.B. Patnaik. Surely, all these amount to more than just "short interviews".

The second para of the box item states that one of the defendants in the *Weekly's* Rs one crore libel suit is "S.S. Mahapatra, a former MP who had given an interview to the magazine suggesting that J.B. Patnaik was a sexual pervert". On the contrary, Mahapatra had clearly stated on tape: "He (Patnaik) is not only a sex maniac but a pervert."

SUNDAY has stated: "The *Weekly* filed a number of other petitions including one requesting the quashing of the case in Rourkela, but all of them were disallowed by the Supreme Court." The report's last para demolishes this contention when it says: "Most of the *Weekly's* petitions have been rejected by the Supreme Court..."



Debabrata Banerjee

J.B. Patnaik: under a cloud

There is surely a difference between 'all' and 'most'.

The last para states that the *Weekly's* "lawyers are yet to draw up the list of witnesses to be produced". While we do have a list of witnesses, we have petitioned the court that if we release the list, the Patnaik government would start harassing and intimidating them. This issue has yet to be settled conclusively by the High Court.

S.N.M. Abdi, special correspondent, Illustrated Weekly of India, Calcutta (West Bengal)

A great scholar

The columnist is no doubt a prolific writer and a towering personality, but his comments (*Gossip sweet and sour*, 18– 24 September) did seem to be rather queer. What Khushwant Singh seems to forget on many occasions is that Dr Radhakrishnan was a human being and not some sort of a demi-god. The former President occupies a pride of place in India's history. The columnist has cast serious aspersions on the integrity of the great leader and scholar. It is our duty to applaud the late leader for his good qualities, not find fault with him.

Kartikeswar Behera, Keonjhar (Orissa)

■ Khushwant Singh's column made informative reading. What struck me the most was the fact that the writer has used the personal pronoun "I" thirty times! I am not analysing the rhetoric and the literary aspects of the article. What I am trying to say is that it is only human that when a person crosses a certain age and maturity, he inevitably becomes egocentric, which is not commendable in certain spheres like public life, literature and so on.

Alex Beersai Ekka, Jashpurnagar (Madhya Pradesh)

■ After a long time I enjoyed reading Khushwant Singh's column. Radhakrishnan remains for me the greatest interpreter of Hinduism. Anyone who goes through Dr Radhakrishnan's books on Hinduism will be greatly impressed by its wide scope, excellent interpretation of Hindu tenets and the entire humanity engulfed in it.

Prabhakar S. Harsole, Indore (Madhya Pradesh)

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager(U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta 700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

Not Rajiv's cousin

I would like to point out certain discrepancies in the *Deccan Diary* item (*Rajiv's high-flying 'cousin'*, 11—17 September). First, I am not a cousin of the Prime Minister as the report states. In my 17 years of public life such a fallacious statement has never been made. Second, the item states that I did not attend the swearing-in ceremony of Sharad Pawar's government. If only your reporter had cross-checked, he would have known that I was away in Delhi arguing a case in court. Further, it has been written that I was absent on the opening day of the Maharashtra Assembly on 30 June, 1988, since I had gone to the airport to see off the Prime Minister. For the record, the Prime Minister was not even in Bombay on that day. Besides, the Assembly register would show that I was in the House on 30 June. Lastly, I am supposed to have been abroad on the day elections to the Legislative Council were held. My passport would bear out that I was very much in the country on the day of voting.

Marazban Patrawala, minister of state for general administration, law and judiciary, and tourism, Government of Maharashtra, Bombay

A combative syndrome

Kudos to M J Akbar for his column which was written in Arun Shourie's style (*The LIES! LIES! LIES! syndrome*, 11—17 September). Shourie's writings are always prejudiced, parochial and predilected. As the editor of a national daily, he should be neutral in his views. Akbar is right in saying that Shourie should not make his paper into a bulletin of the Opposition. Somebody had rightly said that often journalists and some newspapers behave like prostitutes of political parties!

Syed Moin Munawar, Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

■ Hats off to Akbar for his outspoken and unbiased article. And what a big fall for Arun Shourie! Readers are no longer carried away by his front-page outpourings in the *Express*. He may have been the cynosure of Indian journalism at one time, but today he is the butt of jokes for his circumlocution and partisan stand. He is more a Chandra Shekhar hater than a Rajiv hater. Strangely, the first Janata president has always been the target of Shourie's vitriol. If Shourie fails to read the writing on the wall, he will be relegated to the journalistic dustbin in the very near future.

One is proud of Akbar's uncompromising stand on the proposed Defamation Bill which has fortunately been dropped.

G.M. Ningoji, Yelburga (Karnataka)



Arun Shourie: under attack

■ One couldn't agree more with the observations made on Shourie's brand of journalism. With him at the helm, honest, balanced and neutral representation of facts seem to have taken a backseat at the *Indian Express*. Specciousness, vitriolic writing and personal vendetta seem to have become the order of the day at *Express* under Shourie's editorship. In a democracy newspapers have to play the role of a watchdog rather than become a mouthpiece of any party. But Shourie has set an ominous trend. If he thinks he is a 'serious thinker', he must immediately give up his journalistic pretensions.

G.C. Sahu, Bilaspur (Madhya Pradesh)

■ Bravo to Akbar for having called a spade a spade, albeit a little late. He couldn't have exposed Shourie in better fashion. It is a pity that Shourie thinks that he is voicing the views of the common man; on the contrary, he is motivated by a desire to get nominated for a parliamentary seat. He is more frustrated after the Janata Party refused him a ticket from Bombay.

The likes of Shourie can do immense harm to the credibility of Indian journalism. Akbar has done a great service by picking out the bad egg from the basket. May the tribe of yellow journalists like Shourie decrease.

Shridhar Vyas, Bangalore (Karnataka)

■ The columnist has gone out of the way to prove that the *Express* editor is the devil incarnate. It is difficult to believe that a person who was once a strong critic of the late Indira Gandhi and her government now has no qualms about singing praises of the government at the Centre. What is Akbar trying to achieve by maligning Shourie? Time alone can tell the story behind Akbar's outburst.

Soumitra Fouzdar, Ranchi (Bihar)

■ M.J. Akbar's credentials as a sycophantic, often communal, and at times ridiculously ill-informed columnist is now well established. The column has exposed another facet of his character—a deep sense of inferiority complex. Akbar may label Shourie as a pamphleteer, but the truth is that the *Express* editor has won recognition across the length and breadth of the country as one of the most upright and conscientious journalists in India. It must be difficult for Akbar to accept the fact that Shourie is regarded as the true champion of human rights and civil liberties. It is time he stopped maligning fellow professionals by pouring out vitriol in an undignified manner.

Sujit Ray, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ Ironically—whether Akbar realises it or not—his vituperative attack shows him to be just what he has accused Shourie of: destructive, scurrilous and hysterical. It only exposes his professional jealousy. It is also shocking that Akbar too has joined the band of R.K. Karanjia and others of his ilk in blaming Shourie of being responsible for the introduction of the Defamation Bill.

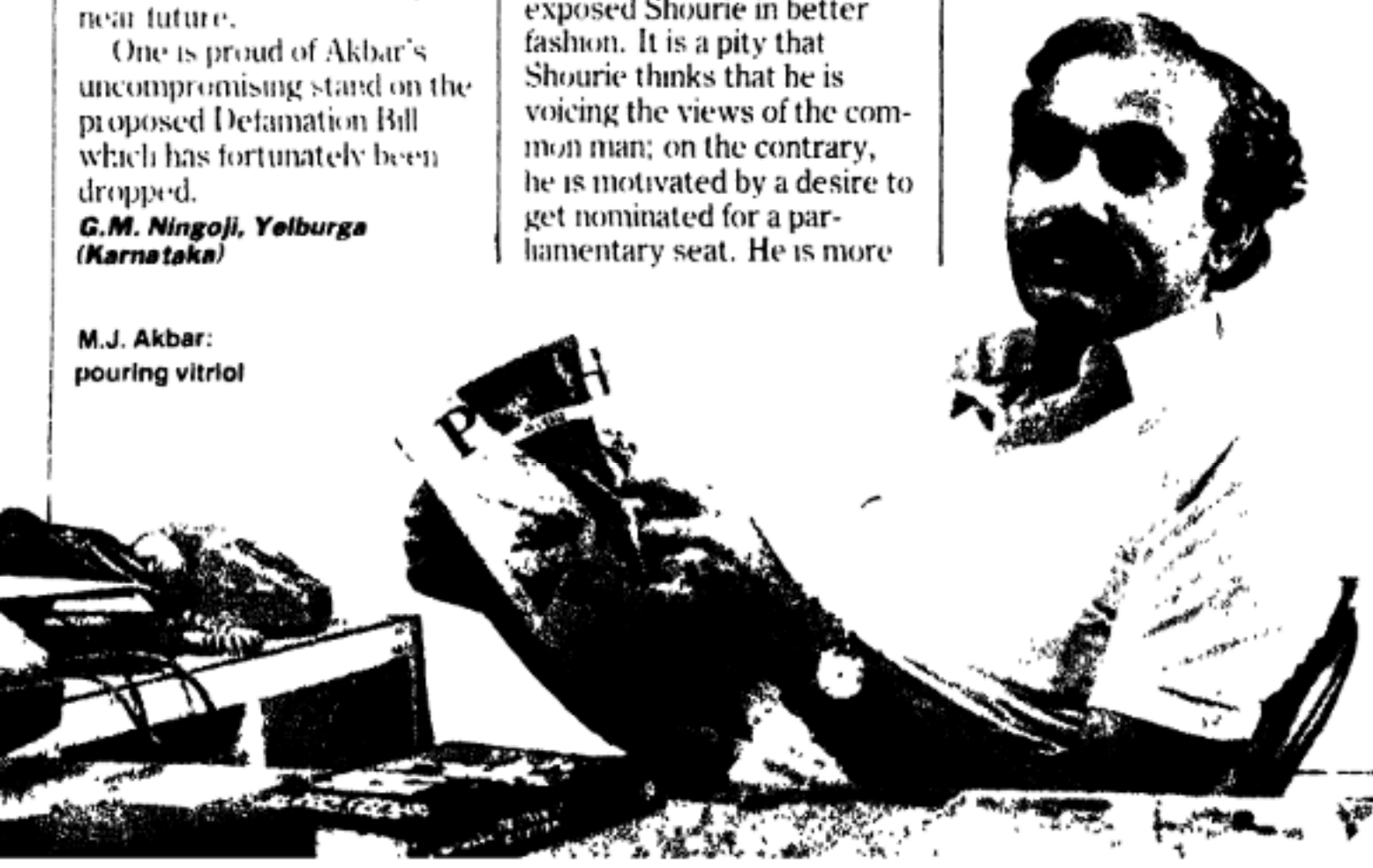
If the *Express* has gone berserk, as Akbar has alleged, the blame squarely lies with the government which has for long tried to use administrative muscle power to muzzle the newspaper. If there was a raging debate on the Bofors scandal, if Antulay had to resign, if the people are aware that Ajitabh Bachchan has acquired a flat in Switzerland by violating FERA laws, the credit—or to use Akbar's word, 'blame'—goes to the *Express*. It is time that dogs stopped biting dogs.

Jagdish B.C., New Delhi

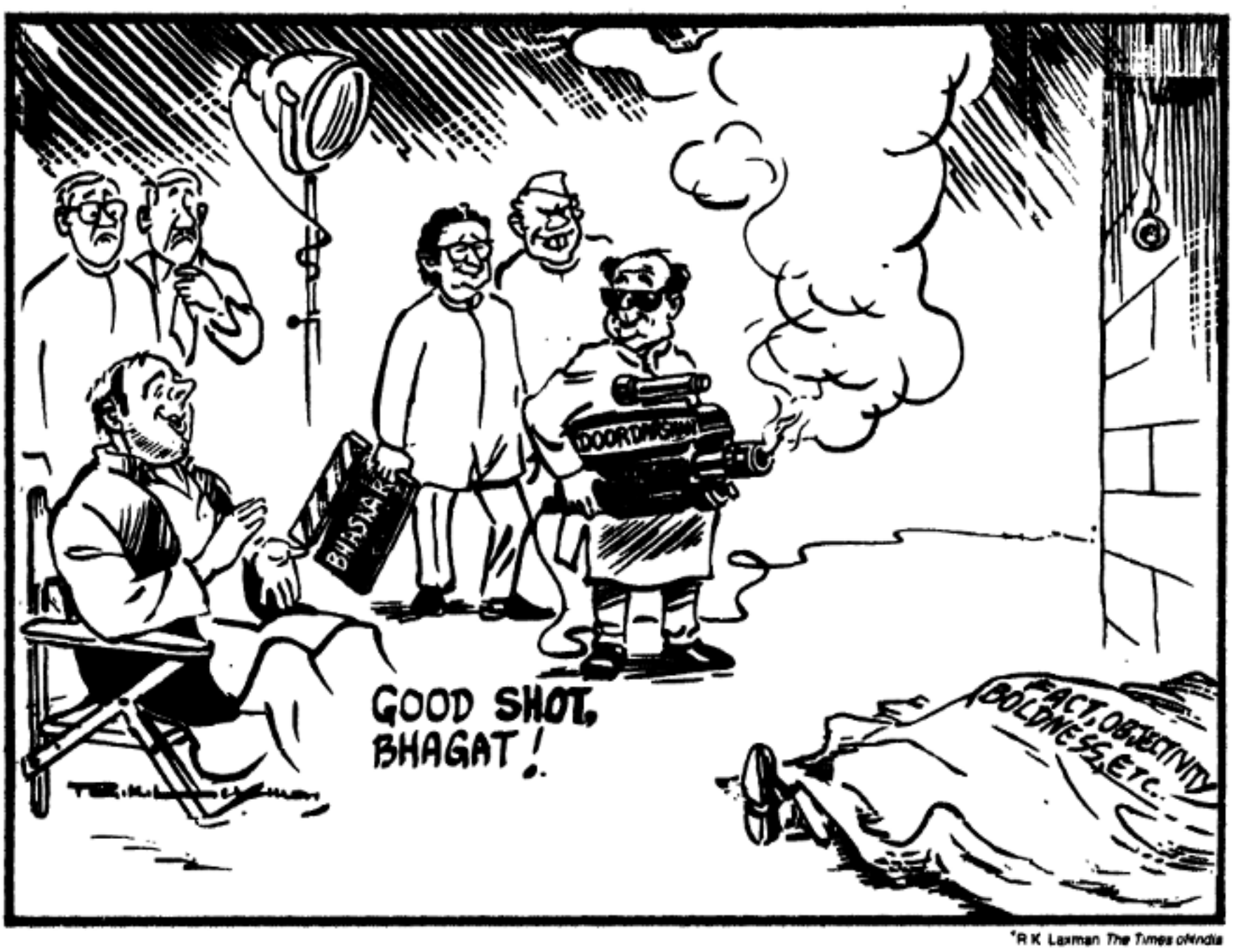
■ It is petulant on the part of Akbar to launch such a strident attack on Shourie simply because the *Express* editor happens to think differently. If anything, Shourie is doing a great service by using his powerful pen in goading the stalwarts of the Opposition in their efforts to form a credible and strong national alternative to the Congress. *Express* is perhaps the only newspaper in India which attacks the ruling party without any fear.

It is not in keeping with the stature of a journalist of Akbar's calibre to indulge in such mud-slinging to settle personal scores.

Sabu Joseph, Vaghamon (Kerala)



M.J. Akbar: pouring vitriol



*R K Laxman *The Times of India*

"

It is Pepsi socialism he (Rajiv Gandhi) is talking about and Pepsi self-reliance.

V.P. SINGH, *Jan Morcha leader*

Vishwanath Pratap Singh is not a National Front man. He is a Congressman, period.

JAY DUBASHI *in* Organiser

If anything happened to Rajiv Gandhi, Khalistanis and Muslims are going to attack us (Hindus).

BAL THACKERAY, *Shiv Sena chief*

These days we see a lot of ministers whose lifestyle changes after assuming office.

JATIN CHAKRABORTY, *PWD minister, West Bengal*

We (the CPI-M and the GNLF) have come to trust each other immensely.

H.B. RAI, *CPI-M MLA from Kurseong*

I am a four-day-old baby now in the party (Congress-I) after my readmission.

PRANAB MUKHERJEE, *former finance minister*

I have more faith in Mr Gandhi than his own party men.

LALDENGA, *former chief minister of Mizoram*

Last year, when I made my television film on India, they called me an Islamic fundamentalist. And now suddenly I am a *kafir*. Surely I can't be both at the same time.

SALMAN RUSHDIE *on the banning of his novel,* The Satanic Verses

There are no pleasures involved in politics; it is simply a duty to be performed.

JAYALALITHA JAYARAMAN, *AIADMK leader*

It was wrong on the part of the central leaders judge the loyalty of Sikhs to the nation on the basis of their loyalty to the Congress(I).

DARSHAN SINGH RAGI, *jathedar of the Akal Takht*

I may be a politician and a minister, but I have right to sleep like other people after 10 at night.

JATIN CHAKRABORTY, *PWD minister, West Bengal, on reporters calling him at night*

I think I have stopped falling in love. I met Jennifer in 1956 and that was my Waterloo. I am still in love with her.

SHASHI KAPOOR, *filmstar*

Extra-marital affairs are more common outside the (film) industry. Among my friends the husbands of at least ten are having affairs and they are not in the industry.

POONAM DHILLON, *filmstar*

"

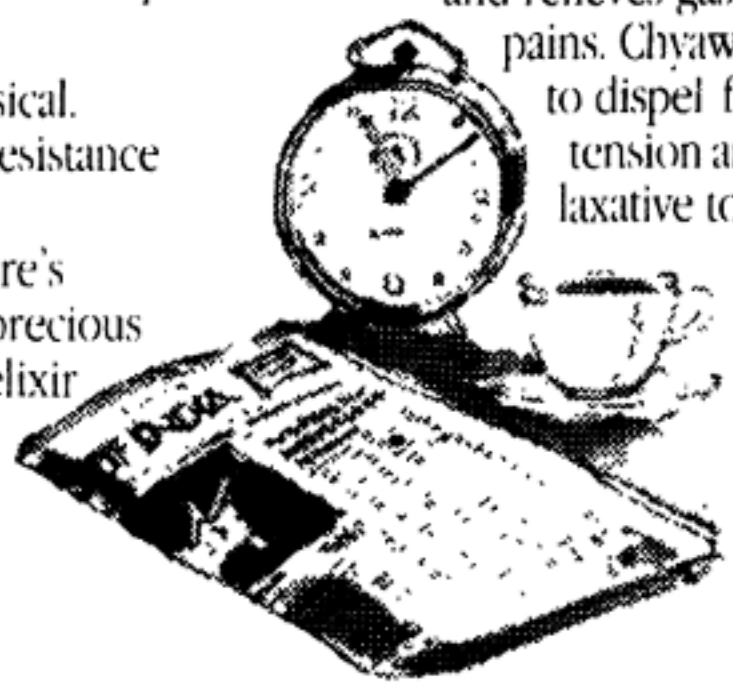
Your day goes something like this. Rush in the morning. Deadlines to keep. Meetings to attend. Targets to achieve. Snatched meals. Cups of coffee. After a hard day's work you get home. And all you want to do is sink into sleep. But you promised your wife an outing. So you keep pushing yourself. And the pressure builds up. Day after day.

Leading to fatigue -- mental and physical. Tension. Digestion problems. Low resistance to common ailments.

To cope with all this, you need nature's own formula, created with over 46 precious herbs. Chyawan Shakti - the secret 'elixir of life' recipe handed down by the rishis of ancient times. Brought to you by Dabur.

Prevents acidity and digestion problems

No more antacids and antiflatulence pills. A judicious blend of herbs like Akarkara, Lavanga, Madhu, and Mukta Shukti Pishti inhibits the formation of excessive acids, actually helps digestion, stimulates appetite and relieves gastric and intestinal pains. Chyawan Shakti also works to dispel flatulence caused by tension and acts as a mild laxative to encourage regular bowel movement.



SPECIALLY CREATED FOR

Chyawan Shakti – combats stress, revitalises mind and body

To help combat the effects of stress on your nerves, Chyawan Shakti has ingredients like Draksha, Ashwagandha, Akarkara and Gokshur which act as demulcents and tonics. It is rich in Kesar, the legendary 'royal stimulant' for physical vitality. Together with Abhrak Bhasma and several other herbs, Chwawan Shakti tones up the metabolism, helps contract organic tissues, aids blood circulation and feeds both body and mind with readily assimilable forms of energy. Thereby building up stamina and invigorating the mind.





Rich in Vitamin C to fight illness

Who needs orange juice!

Chyawan Shakti is full of the goodness of Amla – the richest known source of Vitamin C and nature's best defence against illness.

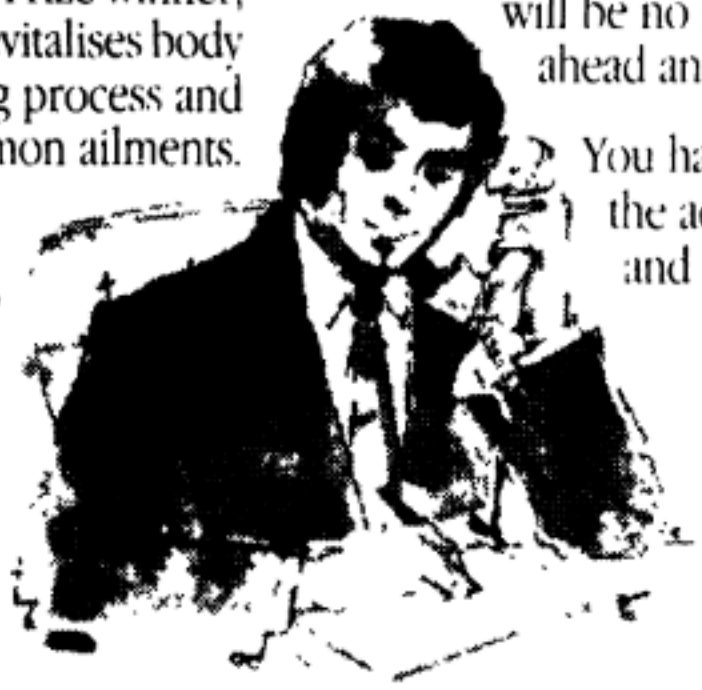
In fact Dr. Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize winner, proved that Vitamin C actually revitalises body tissues, slows down the ageing process and builds up resistance to common ailments.

Along with other herbs, Chyawan Shakti acts as a powerful immuno-stimulant enabling natural protective mechanisms in the body to operate more effectively.

Fountain of Youth

Besides Vitamin C, Chyawan Shakti supplies you with Iron, Calcium, Minerals, Magnesium, Phosphorus and acts as an all-round health tonic. Keeping you feeling young and raring to go. And since it is wholly natural you can be sure there will be no harmful side effects. So go ahead and give it a try.

You have nothing to lose, except the adverse effects of stress and strain!



OPLE WHO WORK HARDER



NEW

Dabur CHYAWAN SHAKTI



AYURVEDIC TONIC TO KEEP YOU GOING STRONG

Dabur INDIA LTD.

Harsha Bhawan, Block E, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110 001.

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

Fire in the camp

Coalition politics is the art of knowing just how far you can — or ought to — go with your neighbour. Cohabitation is difficult enough when you are young and the world is full of promises; when age has softened the bones and touched the mind with cynicism, alliances are a less romantic reality. You may have no option but to tolerate them, but happiness is another matter. After more than two decades of a relationship which has seen its depressing lows and dramatic highs, the joy has gone out of the alliance between the various kinds of leftists working under a common umbrella in West Bengal. The government of course will survive, but the party is, as it were, over.

The incident which became the last straw on an ageing camel's back was a story in the mass-circulated Bengali newspaper (and the flagship of our group), the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, which said that the colourful minister for public works in the present government, Jatin Chakraborty, had favoured a company called Bengal Lamps, after a nudge from chief minister Jyoti Basu. The catch: Jyoti Basu's son Chandan Basu was in the pay of Bengal Lamps at that time. The newspaper published letters to prove its point. Till date, no one has actually denied the story, though the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* has been branded by the chief minister as a public enemy for its temerity in daring to publish such stories. The first explanation offered was that there was nothing undue about the use of such influence, for Bengal Lamps was an ailing company and it was perfectly legitimate for the state government to buy lamps from this local manufacturer (actually, it is not totally local, as it has a unit in Bangalore, but it is a Bengal-based company). However, this and the many other explanations would have sounded far better if Chandan Basu's reputation as a businessman was a trifle better. Instead, it is a reputation which should legitimately embarrass a gentleman of integrity like Jyoti Basu. From the gift of an extremely expensive flat by a local business house, to the mismanagement of a string of small and medium-scale enterprises, Chandan Basu has been the subject of one misdemeanour after another. In a long and noble political career, this has been the one Achilles' heel of Jyoti Basu, to the extent that he has been forced to see his own CPI(M) unions protest publicly against Chandan Basu for not properly accounting for provident fund payments. Large and respectable enterprises have intervened periodically to bale out a mess left behind by Chandan Basu—and surely they would not have been so generous to the failed son of another man. Still, everyone has preferred to give this whole—and continuing—story a Nelson's eye, and for an excellent reason. Jyoti Basu was considered too valuable to West Bengal. And if the price was the inefficiency of a son's attempts at private enterprise, it was a perfectly acceptable price. Everyone in the media, for instance, knew of Chandan Basu's record, and everyone kept generally quiet. Perhaps rightly so—for who can deny that Bengal needs the stability and wisdom of Jyoti Basu?

The joy has finally gone out of the alliance between various kinds of leftists in West Bengal. The incident which became the last straw on the ageing camel's back was a story in the mass-circulated *Ananda Bazar Patrika* which said that PWD minister Jatin Chakraborty had favoured Bengal Lamps after a nudge from Jyoti Basu. The catch: Basu's son Chandan was in the pay of Bengal Lamps at that time

Jyoti Basu: paying for his son's commissions

Sandeep Shankar

And thus it might have continued if a senior member of the Left Front government had not decided to begin wielding a spanner in the works. He stood by the expose, and insisted that he had done nothing wrong since he had only acted on the advice of the chief minister (the advice incidentally was given in 1978). But then certain overzealous CPI(M) defenders decided



Jatin Chakraborty: falling out

to do Basu a favour and - predictably—ended up by doing him a terrible injustice. While Chakraborty was talking on the telephone to the Governor of the state, Nurul Hasan, some officious telephone operator, acting on the instructions of the powerful trade union front, known as the Coordination Committee, listened in, obviously to let the party know what had transpired in the conversation between the minister and the Governor. Worse, the tapper got caught: it was all too amateurish. An angry Jatin Chakraborty ordered the secretary in his department, a very senior civil servant, S.M. Murshed, to enquire into the incident. When he went to do what he had been ordered to do, Murshed was physically stopped. No one answered his questions. It was the kind of behaviour which might make even an innocent seem guilty. Rather than swallow the insult, Murshed took early retirement from the service. A civil servant whose rank was on a par with the chief secretary, Murshed was also the president of the state IAS Officers' Association. His decision created a predictable storm; nothing of the sort had happened before.

The war between Jyoti Basu and Chakraborty, in the meantime, gathered steam, even as those unhappy at the sight of two Front partners squabbling in public attempted to cool passions. But Jyoti Basu had obviously taken the matter too personally to be in any mood to forgive. He called Jatin Chakraborty a liar and demanded his head as the minimum price for the survival of Chakraborty's party, the RSP, in the Front. It is obvious that the RSP itself was in no mood for a confrontation with the CPI(M). It is perfectly true that the two middling brothers in the Left Front, the RSP and the Forward Bloc (the Marxists are Big Brother, the rest of the parties Small), had been on a confrontation course for a while against the CPI(M). In the last *panchayat* elections, they actually contested against each other, and the charges they traded were reasonably picturesque. Barely a fortnight ago, the Forward Bloc actually demonstrated against its own government, and the CPI(M) called a separate party bandh in pique. But despite all this, there was little question of any Front partner actually deserting the government. The smaller partners knew one thing: that they had no ability to swim alone. On the other hand, the CPI(M) has a lobby whose size has been increasing which believes that the time has come to convert the Left Front into a purely communist front. So Jyoti Basu's instinctive desire to take a hard line against the RSP found ready support in the Bengal party—which, in any case, is not in any position to challenge Jyoti Basu if he is determined to have his way on any issue. The Kerala party has, however, good reason for apprehension, because the coalition is far more fragile, and any shift in the balance could have serious repercussions. But such is Jyoti Basu's standing that he carried the central committee with him and got the permission to take action against Jatin Chakraborty, no matter what the cost. The RSP, long geared to submission, was virtually forced into a hollow-tough response: even the meek have some self-respect at the end of the day. On his part, Jatin Chakraborty showed no signs of any meekness. He has a most interesting background: he has been in his time an athlete, a boxer, a first-class law graduate and a memeber of the Anusilan Samity, a terrorist organisation which fought the British. He has seen jail often enough. He got to know Jyoti Basu years before Independence, and popular movements in 1958 and 1966 brought them close to each other. When they finally entered power, they soon became known as both personal and political friends. In fact, some senior ministers of the CPI(M) have in the last two decades taken umbrage against their own leader for what they believe to be favouritism shown towards Chakraborty. But all the personal bonhomie is now a matter of history. What exists is bitterness, and of a kind which could deal the severest blow the Left Front has suffered in terms of image since it came to power in 1977. The Front is only a coalition in name now.

The war between Basu and Chakraborty has gathered steam, even as those unhappy at the sight of two Front partners squabbling in public attempted to cool passions. But Jyoti Basu had obviously taken the matter too personally to be in any mood to forgive

One newspaper story—and one son—have done the damage.

But, presumably, only one of the two can be called a class enemy ■

The first encounter with photography, a hundred years ago.



A picture one hundred years old from the collection of Lala Deen Dayal, Hyderabad.



Thumb through your family photo album.
There are those glorious old photographs
that bring fond memories.
In black and white. Sharp and clear even
after sixty, seventy or hundred years.
The choice is quite clear.
When you shoot pictures for keeps,
shoot them on Black and White film.
You'll be glad you did.

Memories may fade with time.
Not Black & White pictures.

INDU

INDU B & W Roll Film and Bromide Papers

Stelo's – HPF 956 88 D

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Fizzy debate



The Pepsi-Cola debate has left me utterly confused. I seek clarification on a few points from both those who are for and those against it. Is it or isn't it true that fizzy drinks were given the lowest priority in our plans? If so, why has the government suddenly decided to give it so much importance and enter into a collaboration with a multinational concern when the country has plenty of excellent fizz available: Parle, Campa-Cola, Rogers—or whatever?

Why is it that if Coca-Cola was thrown out of the country ten years ago, Pepsi-Cola has been invited back to take its place? Anyone who has been abroad, particularly the United States, will tell you that Coca-Cola rates far ahead of Pepsi in the world market. Let both the ruling party and the Opposition answer this question. When George Fernandes (Janata) threw out Coca-Cola, he had the approval of the then minister of agriculture, Surjit Singh Barnala. Now the same Barnala enthusiastically supports bringing in Pepsi-Cola. And the Congress government may please also tell us something about its new-born enthusiasm for foreign fizz. I have with me the copy of a letter dated 12 July, 1979, which Mrs Gandhi addressed to the late Jathedar Santokh Singh who had set up a Campa-Cola plant in Punjab. It reads: "The owners of Campa-Cola (Messrs Pure Drinks of Charanjit Singh) have been made to suffer for no fault of their own by the Janata Party government and for purely political reasons. It is good to learn that you have installed a Campa-Cola plant. I hope this will go some way towards helping the company to stand on its feet and provide more people with what I am told is the best drink of its kind now in the market. I wish you all success in your venture."

What was good enough for Mrs Gandhi is obviously not good enough for her son Rajiv and his bright, young minister, Jagdish Tytler. They are also ignoring the fact that an enormous amount of research and development has gone into the fizz business since Coca-Cola was given marching orders and our leading producers, Romesh Chauhan (Parle) and Charanjit Singh (Campa-Cola) have established lucrative export markets in Africa, the Middle-East and even Europe. Neither on the score of R&D nor on rosy pictures of foreign markets do arguments in favour of Pepsi hold much water. The Pepsi deal gives our own R&D a bad chit and a setback to indigenous production.

We are told that Pepsi will give us the latest knowhow of making jams and fruit juices. Personally I have been eating good jams and drinking good fruit juices made locally for over half a century. They come from Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Assam. On my last visit to Bhutan, I saw their Druk plant with the latest machinery. Its products were fresher and tastier than any I had tasted abroad. Come to think of it, jams and juices made at home are often tastier and more wholesome than any available in the market.

The strongest argument put forward in favour of the new venture is that it will give employment to a large number of young men and women. What I would like to know is that if the same investment was made from indigenous sources, would it not give employment to the same number of people?

Do we march into the 21st century asking foreigners to tell us how to make jams and juices and junk food?

Coca-Cola

Why is it that if Coca-Cola was thrown out of the country ten years ago, Pepsi-Cola has been invited back to take its place? Anyone who has been abroad, particularly the United States, will tell you that Coca-Cola rates far ahead of Pepsi in the world market

PEPSI

TIT FOR TAT

Angry repartee between quarelling husbands and their wives has contributed richly to our corpus of humour. The following exchange is reported to have taken place between a couple. An irate wife yelled at her husband: "You are a very stupid man. Your brain is just full of *bhoosa.*"

The husband shot back, "Now I know why you keep eating my brain (*dimaagh khatee ho*). That is because you are a *gadhee*—a she donkey."

DYING WISH FULFILLED

S.K. Bhalla, an advocate of Delhi, has sent an anecdote illustrating the ingenuity of his fraternity. There was a man with lots of money in his bank. He was stricken with cancer and the doctors gave him just six months on earth. He had no relations and was eager to take his life's savings with him to enable him to live well in the next world. He consulted his friends and asked them how he could fulfil his wish. They told him it could not be done. But a lawyer (probably Mr Bhalla) said it was very simple. If the dying man transferred all his assets to the lawyer, he (the lawyer) would make out a cheque for the full amount and send it to him as soon as he died. This is exactly what he did. As soon as the man died, the lawyer made out a cheque in the name of the deceased's payee account. It was cremated with the corpse.

EARTHLY WISDOM

Teacher of a senior class of a co-ed school: "Can anyone define what the term classmate means?"

Bright student: "Yes sir, students who mate with each other in classrooms are known as classmates."

(Contributed by Neeraj Talwar, Dehra Dun)

Because men don't get pregnant does it mean contraception is a woman's problem alone?

Remember the first time you took a decision all by yourself and were prepared to face its consequences? That was the day you became a man. Being a man means shouldering responsibility. Not only for yourself but also for your near and dear ones. That's why, in any relationship, even if it is the woman who bears the consequences of carelessness, it takes a man to take care of her. To find the right contraceptive method — one that suits not only you, but also your partner. A method that does not involve a risk on her part or reduce the pleasure of togetherness for you. Is there such a method?

The contraceptive confusion

There are methods and methods. How do you find the one that is right for both of you? Some methods involve the tension of counting days (one could go wrong so easily), while others carry the risk of side or after effects. Or worse, the embarrassment of a clinical examination. Some depend upon the temperature for effectiveness. Surely there is a contraceptive method that's absolutely safe without the mess, the accompanying side effects or one that involves a lot of preparation? What you need is a safe, simple, sure method that is right for both of you.



The safe, sure condom

The condom is one of the safest, simplest and surest of contraceptives. It does not involve a visit to the doctor or a clinical examination. Nor does it mean surgery, pain or discomfort. Now thinner and finer than ever before, the condom protects without interfering with the pleasure. It's a man's contraceptive — the only one so far.

Kohinoor confidence

Ask for Kohinoor by name at your nearest chemist. One of India's largest selling condoms, Kohinoor gives you the confidence of knowing that it is absolutely safe. It is lubricated and made from the finest latex to give you a near natural feeling. Each condom is electronically tested for total safety. That's the Kohinoor confidence. Is it any wonder that millions of couples all over India are choosing Kohinoor as the safest, most practical method of contraception?

Kohinoor is from the people who understand your need for privacy, protection and pleasure. Who understand what being a man is all about — the responsibility and the privilege. Because being a man means caring for your woman.

KOHINOOR

Plan your family with Kohinoor confidence.

A Product

MAA COMMUNICATIONS LRCM 288

To be or not to be

Questions relating to dual membership plague the Jan Morcha

Ever since its inception, the Jan Morcha has been the centre of many a controversy, finding it impossible to escape the glare of the lights, which bring into focus its every move. Some controversies that threatened to split this high-profile organisation may have been caused, as Morcha members believe, by a systematic disinformation campaign. But many are entirely of its own making. As the storm which shook the Morcha on its first anniversary, over the question of dual membership and has still not abated.

Just when it appeared smooth sailing, V.P. Singh raised the sensitive issue of dual membership in an interview he gave to a tabloid, *Chauthi Duniya*, whose editor is amongst his more prominent advisors. In the interview, he declared that dual membership would not be allowed. Those who wanted that the Jan Morcha retain its identity after the formation of the new Opposition party (SJD) should not come looking for tickets from the latter. This assertion upset Morcha convenor Ram Dhan, who was at the forefront of the move to keep the Jan Morcha alive as a separate organisation. It was, to quote Satyapal Malik, "an ill-timed, unnecessary remark" and one that turned the Morcha's convention (called to celebrate its first anniversary) into a virtual battlefield. Dhan was not to be mollified and spoke out loudly and publicly against Singh. He was upset, said those close to him, at the tone of Singh's remarks and felt duty bound to make clear that he was not looking to him or the new Opposition group for election tickets.

The controversy, most Morcha members agreed, was regrettable. Arif Mohammad Khan maintained, that once the new party came into existence, the Jan Morcha would cease to exist as far as electoral politics was concerned. At the meeting, Arif said he would join the new party and ask Ram Dhan that he be allowed to leave the Jan Morcha. Arun Nehru emphasised that the Morcha had been formed to provide a credible front and once the new party took concrete shape, the Morcha would cease to exist. Nehru admitted that some wanted the Morcha to continue as a movement and be retained as a non-political forum. Satyapal Malik felt that the new party would make the Morcha redundant as far as electoral politics go and that most of the 17 MPs would opt to join the new party. But he maintained that there was no need for Singh or anyone else to raise the dual membership issue unnecessarily at this point of time.

The storm which shook the Jan Morcha on its first anniversary over the question of dual membership has still not abated. V.P. Singh declared that dual membership would not be allowed. Those who wanted that the Morcha retain its identity after the formation of the SJD should not come looking for tickets from the latter

Most Morcha members believe that Ram Dhan would have joined the new party without much protest, if it wasn't for V.P. Singh's needless assertions. Dhan, one Morcha MP said, only needed to be won over but "unfortunately events led him to dig in his heels unnecessarily". Ram Dhan was upset over being ignored by V.P. Singh. Moreover, Santosh Bhartiya of *Chauthi Duniya* has made him the target in many of his articles.

As for the ongoing Opposition confabulations, Dhan says he was not consulted on the formation of the steering committee. According to one senior MP of the Jan Morcha, Singh prefers to avoid than meet all those who differ with him on issues. "At present he is avoiding Ram Dhan, and meets him only when there is no way out," he said.

The present controversy has also raked up the old debate:the application of the anti-defection law. Most Jan Morcha MPs are still members of the Congress(I). Ram Dhan has claimed that while some could afford to pay the market rent for their houses, he did not have this





V.P. Singh, Ram Dhan and Arun Nehru at the launching of the Jan Morcha: an eventful year



Ravi Batra

FROM

RAJ & RAJ

The name people trust



A full range of furniture and equipment to enhance efficiency in your office

Invest in the best—Office Furniture and Equipment from Raj & Raj
Everything you need for your office to run smoothly, efficiently.
A complete range superbly finished, crafted from the finest steels
and using superior materials. To provide value for money. For years

RAJ & RAJ
(FURNITURE) PVT. LTD.

7 Camac Street, (Azimganj House) Calcutta-700017 Phone : 44-3392, 43-5221

Associates
- 18, Rabindra Sarani (Poddar Court) Calcutta-700001 Phone : 26-9443, 26-1408
- P-24, Manicktala Main Road, Near Manicktala Rly Bridge, Calcutta-700054, Phone : 37-9066, 37-8117
- 28/3A, Gariahat Road (Near Dhakuria Bridge) Calcutta-700029. Phone : 46-9539

iaa 3572



V.P. Singh with Opposition leaders: a strong presence

kind of money. And that crossing over to the Opposition would mean packing up and moving out of Delhi. This question has already been discussed threadbare by the Morcha. All its MPs have handed in their resignations to V.P. Singh, authorising him to submit these as and when he felt necessary. The unofficial understanding is that the resignation will be accepted at a later date. And that between then and the elections, the rents of those members who cannot afford them would be looked after by the new party or whatever alternative emerges at that point of time. Most Morcha members agree that it would be best to invite the provisions of the anti-defection law. "If we defy the Act and face the consequences, the Congress(I) will be exposed," says Satyapal Malik.

There is no doubt that the Morcha has finally decided to shut its doors on the Congress(I) and devote its entire effort to evolving a credible Opposition front. Arun Nehru explains: "We are working according to a timetable." In his view, there is time only to forge a workable Opposition alliance, or a new party. He sees this as a "reality" pointing out that the people will accept nothing else. The next elections will see a direct fight between a combined centrist Opposition and the Congress(I), he says, adding that all other fringe parties will be forced out of the fray. Satyapal Malik agrees, pointing out that, "We created a situation for uniting the Opposition and it will be ridiculous if we stay out of it. It is just not possible."

Some Morcha members are using the dual membership issue to exert pressure on Singh and ensure that the new Opposition party is secular. Referring directly to Shahabuddin, Arif Khan insisted that he should not be allowed to remain a party member if he refused to give up membership of Muslim organisations

Circumstances have forced the pace. The Jan Morcha has realised that the possibility of an immediate split in the ruling party is just a pipedream and that no Congressman has the guts to cross over at this stage. Says one Morcha MP: "We were finally forced to realise that individuals were not going to cross over and we should change our priorities." He believes that the Congress(I) will split in "chunks" nearer the elections.

Will the Morcha and the new Opposition party be able to reap the benefits of such a split? The answer from most Morcha members is a decided 'yes'. As one MP observed, "If these Congressmen had wanted to join a movement, they would have come over to the Morcha earlier. Now anyone who leaves the Congress(I) will do so with an eye to the elections and for them the Opposition party will be as much of an 'ally' as the Morcha could have been, perhaps even more." Senior Congressmen believed, until recently, that by confabulating with the Opposition, the Morcha had closed its doors to them. Today, they feel that a large number of dissatisfied members may cross over to the Opposition at an opportune moment.

There is no doubt that Rajiv Gandhi's constituency, Amethi, is very important in the Morcha's scheme of things. Arun Nehru has drawn up a plan to begin visiting it, along with Rae Bareli, once every month, November onwards. He denies that this amounts to



Enrolling Jan Morcha members. no place for dual membership

Jagdish Yadav



V.P. Singh with Arif Khan and Arun Nehru

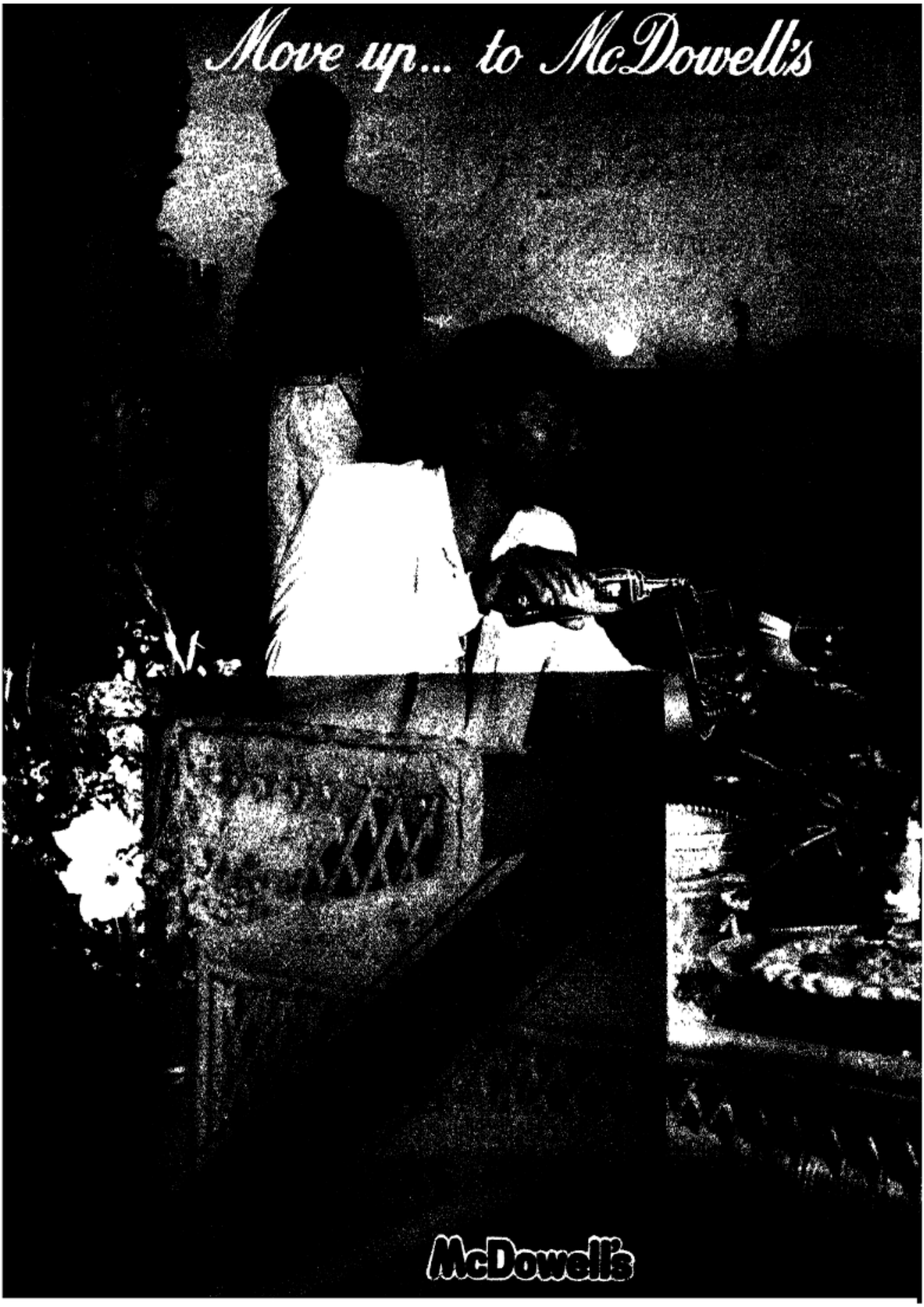
a total offensive saying, "I will just be visiting the constituencies, holding public meetings, and meeting the people." However, the intention is clear: to make things so difficult for Rajiv Gandhi in Amethi that he either withdraws or is defeated. Or to make him adopt a second constituency. There is no doubt that if Rajiv Gandhi withdraws from Amethi, it will be a major victory for the Morcha and the Opposition. As one MP declared, "Half our battle will be won, for any such move will completely demoralise an already demoralised Congress(I)."

Some Morcha members are using the current controversy over dual membership to exert pressure on V.P. Singh and ensure that the new party is secular. At the recent Morcha meeting, Arif Mohammad Khan is learnt to have impressed on V.P. Singh, that while he agreed that dual membership should not be allowed, the same rule should apply to those in the new Opposition formation who chose to retain membership of fundamentalist oganisations. Referring directly to Syed Shahabuddin, Arif insisted that he should not be allowed to remain a member of the party if he refused to give up membership of Muslim organisations. We should start with a clean slate, he is reported to have said. He was fully supported by all present. V.P. Singh nodded assent but did not make his views very clear.

Some members were of the view that the new party should pay more than lip service to the Jan Morcha's commitment to electoral reforms that curb not only money power but also state power. As one MP observed, "While we will all join the new party as and when it takes shape, we must know what it stands for." V.P. Singh was urged by the members to ensure that the Opposition unity talks did not lose sight of these aspects and that the new party made its stand very clear on such issues.

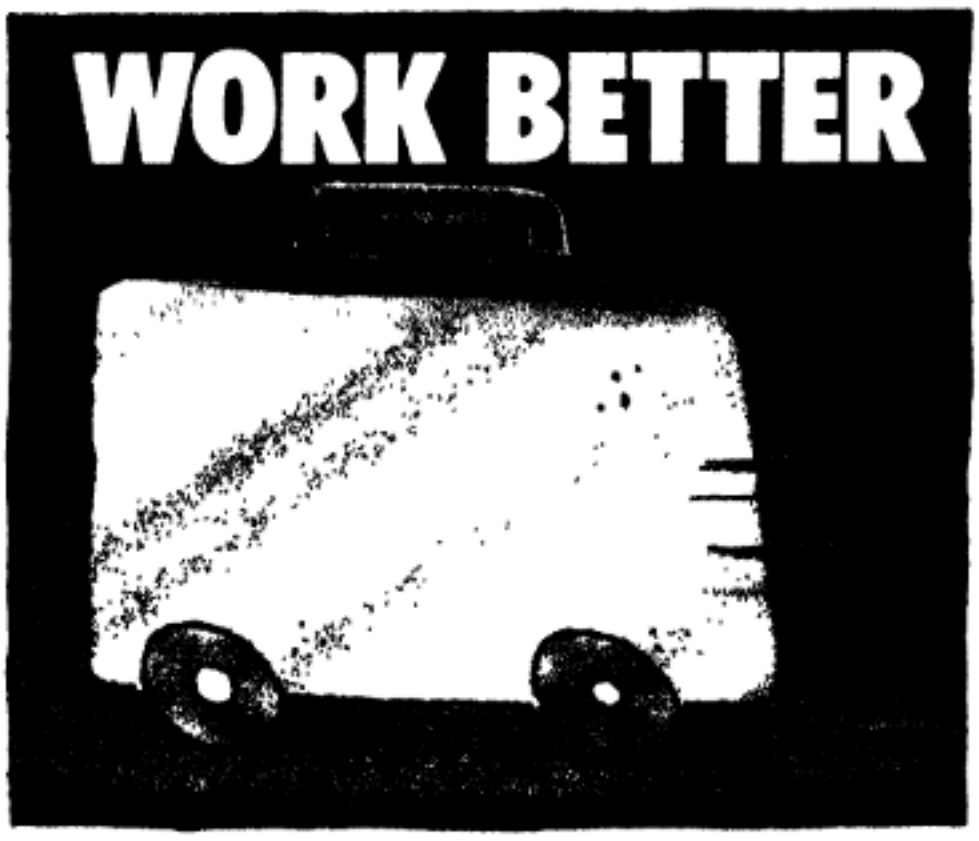
The Morcha, after a hectic one year, can pat itself on the back for having survived turbulent times. Priorities have been readjusted to changing events but the Morcha, as one of its senior members pointed out, has remained steadfast in its commitment for evolving a credible alternative. It is a strong presence in the ongoing talks for a new Opposition order and in the words of a Morcha MP, "Our strength lies in our ability to impose a collective will on all decisions, and our refusal to unquestioningly accept V.P. Singh's writ as law. We are a party of equals and although V.P. Singh is the accepted leader, our views will always remain as relevant as his."

Seema Mustafa/ *New Delhi*


Move up... to McDowell's
McDowell's







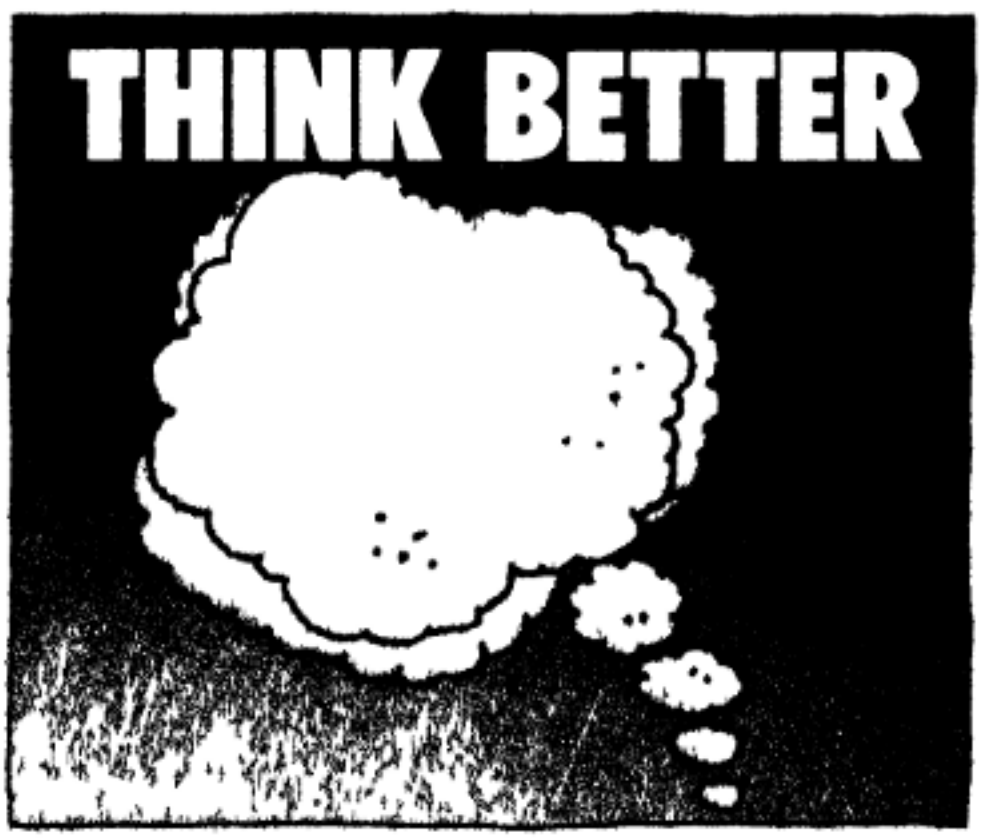




Fibre Foam Private Limited: Factories: Ballapatam, **Cannanore** 670 010 Kerala : Phone 78330 78408 **Nasik:** 61963
Sales Offices: Bombay: 221966 2879025 **Calcutta:** 207095 201871 **Guwahati:** 27109 **Madras:** 20837 21347 **New Delhi:** 352104 352422













HTA 6969

Sole Selling Agents: Intercontinental Marketing Corporation: C-9 Community Centre, Safdarjung Development Area, **New Delhi:** 110 016 Phone 651968 653908 **Ahmedabad:** 77742 76442 **Bangalore** 364042 363706 **Calicut:** 62715 **Cochin:** 352855 364119 **Madras:** 20837 25578 **Secunderabad:** 77035 823539 **Trivandrum:** 65437 **Visakhapatnam:** 53468

Take the world in your stride.



dinesh

Exclusives ▲ Suitings ▲ Co-ordinates ▲ Safaris

The choice of leading fashion houses, internationally

HI-COMFORT WOOL

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESS



Bhaskar Ghosh's exit suggests that as far as the government is concerned, it is not credibility but the tedium that is the message

It was a telephone call, he later said, that took his breath away. It also took the wind out of Doordarshan's sails. At 9.30 pm on 2 October, information and broadcasting secretary, Gopi Arora, called Doordarshan director general, Bhaskar Ghosh, to inform him that he was being transferred as additional secretary, culture, with immediate effect. Taken aback, Ghosh later woke his additional director general, Shashi Kant Kapoor, to tell him the news. Within minutes, the government's decision to transfer Ghosh was known to the Mandi House hierarchy. And at 1.10 am Gopi Arora was aboard an Air-India flight to Beijing, where he was going as a member of the Indian delegation.

The hasty exit of Ghosh is typical of Rajiv Gandhi's current style of functioning. Clouds of uncertainty had hung over Mandi House for weeks, but nobody there expected that the axe would fall so suddenly or without provocation. The following day when Ghosh arrived at his impressive fifth-floor office, his transfer orders had not yet arrived: What had happened, persistent callers kept asking him. The director general was his usual sober and reticent self.

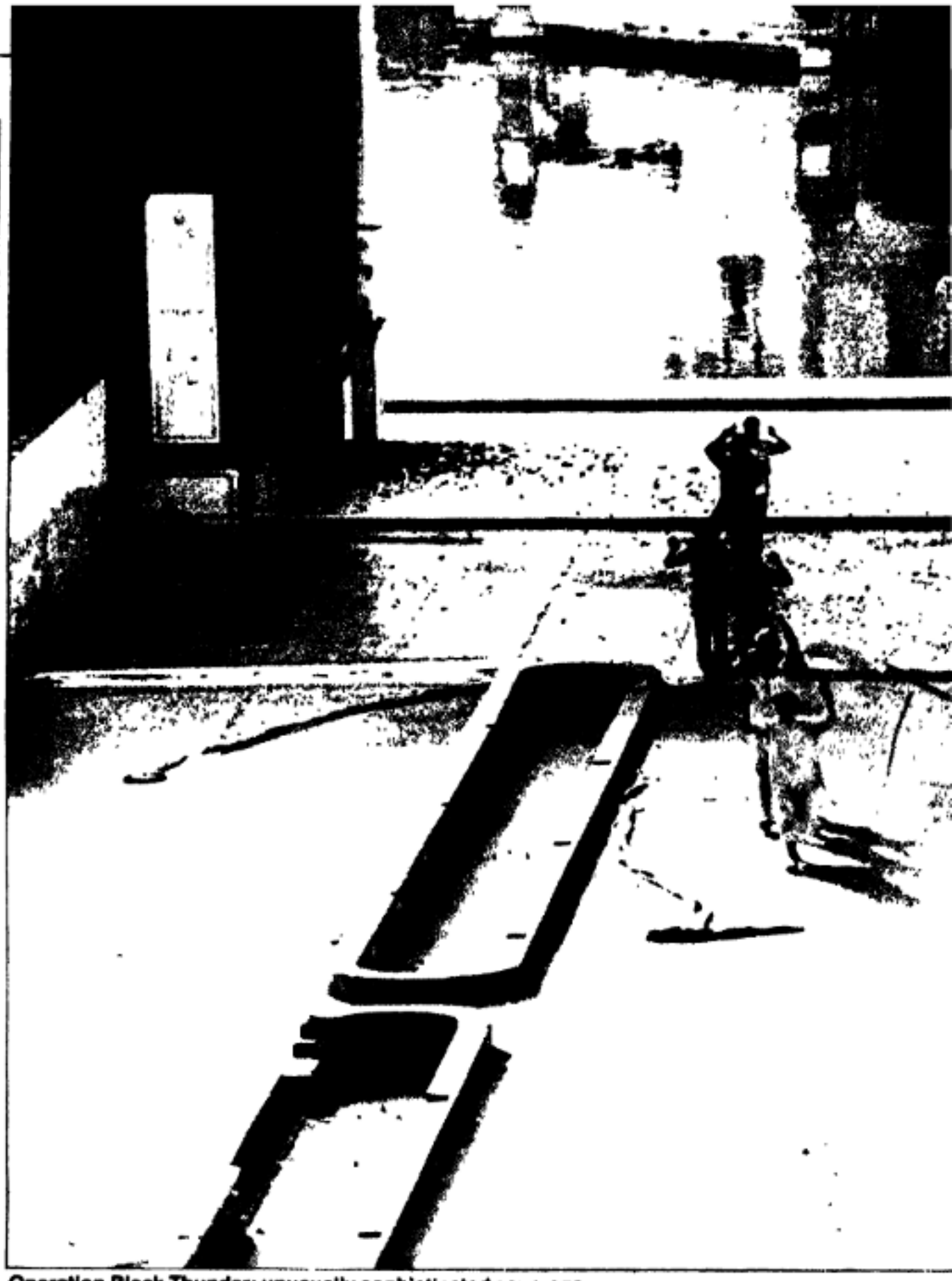
However, to a group of filmmakers

Former Doordarshan director general Bhaskar Ghosh: scapegoat?

and producers who paid him a farewell call that morning, Ghosh did use the word "scapegoat". To others, he confided, "Perhaps, I had annoyed some people." At 4.15 in the evening he attended farewell parties at the All India Radio, Doordarshan studios and at 5 pm at the Mandi House headquarters. And at 8.45 pm, during the Hindi news bulletin on television, the seemingly innocuous transfer of the director general to the ministry of culture was flashed on the national network.

The signals sent out by Ghosh's transfer were there for all to see. For months, the DG along with secretary Arora and adviser Suman Dubey had been working to refurbish Doordarshan's image. The attempts had backfired, partly because the Prime Minister and the Congress(I) party were embroiled in disclosure after disclosure, after each of which Doordarshan was called upon to set the record straight. The programmes that were mounted were seen as the opening up of Doordarshan; as evidence of *glasnost* on the small screen. Finally, it was the *glasnost* that backfired on Ghosh and his network. Ghosh's exit suggested that the politicians who had opposed the bureaucrats and their plans for TV had won.

Behind the abrupt end of Bhaskar Ghosh's tenure is Doordarshan's recent attempt to manage better the medium of television; to give its coverage a semblance of credibility. The strategy evolved by Ghosh and Arora, apparently, worked on three levels. For the past few months, Doordarshan had included news slots on controversial subjects, keeping a tight editorial grip on the content. It had also included a heavy dose of nationalism and patriotism on sponsored and commissioned programmes. Lastly, even in entertainment slots, what Mandi House was looking for was a strong social or religious theme. By controlling all these elements, the bureaucrats had carved out a television menu for the country, the like of which had never been sampled before.

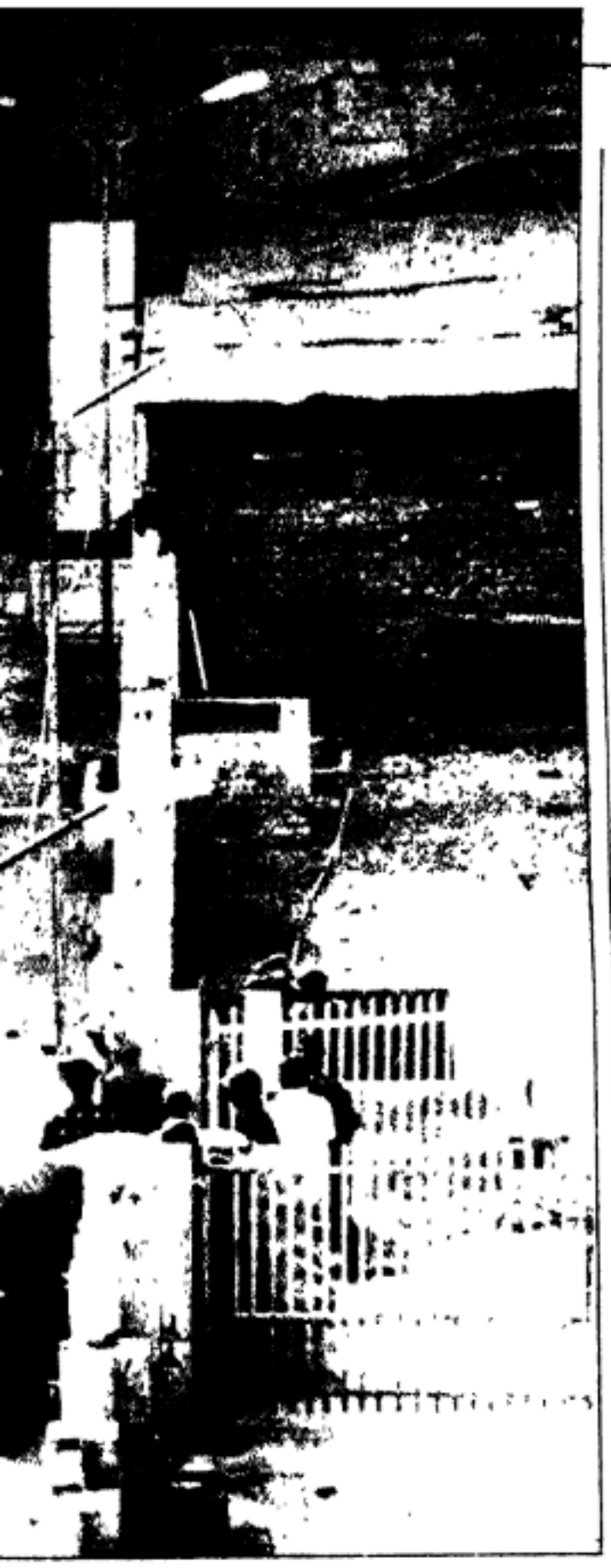


Operation Black Thunder: unusually sophisticated coverage



***Buniyaad*: heady feeling of nostalgia**

From early this year a conspicuous change of policy was noticed, specially in Doordarshan's current affairs programmes. In the absence of trained television correspondents, these key slots were handed out to private producers (who turned anchormen for Doordarshan) and print journalists. After Operation Black Thunder held to clear the Golden Temple in May, Doordarshan quickly mounted a half-hour detailed story on the countdown to the surrender of militants who had taken shelter in the shrine. Exclusive video footage, including that of Surjit Singh Penta's suicide, was borrowed from the



National Security Guard (NSG) for the programme. Even the TV newscasts with live coverage from Amritsar were unusually sophisticated. Nothing of this sort had been done for Operation Bluestar.

This time, however, Doordarshan even went to the extent of showing a three-second-long clip of *sewadars* removing a pail full of faeces and urine from the Harmandir Sahib. The decision to show the footage on television news was, reportedly, taken by the Prime Minister himself, who was conscious of its extraordinary visual impact. This was Doordarshan loosening its zealously-guarded editorial control, going further even than in the days of *Newsline* and *Janvani*. After *Ten Days in Amritsar*, other sensitive slots were handed out. There was a programme on *sati* produced by Mediastorm, a group of women activists; the famous Bofors programme and a very contentious *Focus* on the infamous Defamation Bill.

The discontent in political circles about this attempt to lend credibility to Doordarshan began simmering even before Mandi House got the flak for the two-part Bofors programme and the Defamation Bill *Focus*. There were earlier complaints about a comparatively "soft" feature programme on Goa produced by Ashok Raina. The state chief minister, Pratap Singh Rane, and H.K.L. Bhagat expressed their doubts as to whether the inclusion of a debate on nudity on Goa's beaches was at all necessary for Doordarshan. Senior Congress(I) ministers then objected to the manner in which the Opposition was projected in a *Focus* programme on Opposition unity. After the telecast of the programme, Bhaskar Ghosh is known to have told Ramesh Sharma, the producer: "If it had not been for the broad shoulder of the secretary, my head would have been on the platter."

Still, Mandi House continued distributing current affairs slots on what would have earlier been "untouchable" subjects. Vinod Dua was asked to clear the air in the Bofors controversy. Dua, who had earlier anchored *Janvani* and produced *Newsline*, decided to air the programme in two parts and postponed the second telecast to include the Bofors agent, Win Chadha. The Bofors programme, cited by television critics as evidence of *glasnost* on television, was seen by the Opposition as an unconvincing visual argument for the Congress(I). Dua was his incisive best demanding of Win Chadha: "Would you be paid Rs two lakhs a day only for changing tyres?" V.P. Singh, who had earlier refused to talk before the camera on the Bofors deal, was shown fumbling while pinning the microphone on his *kurta* and asserting that he was sure Amitabh Bachchan would stand for the Allahabad elections.

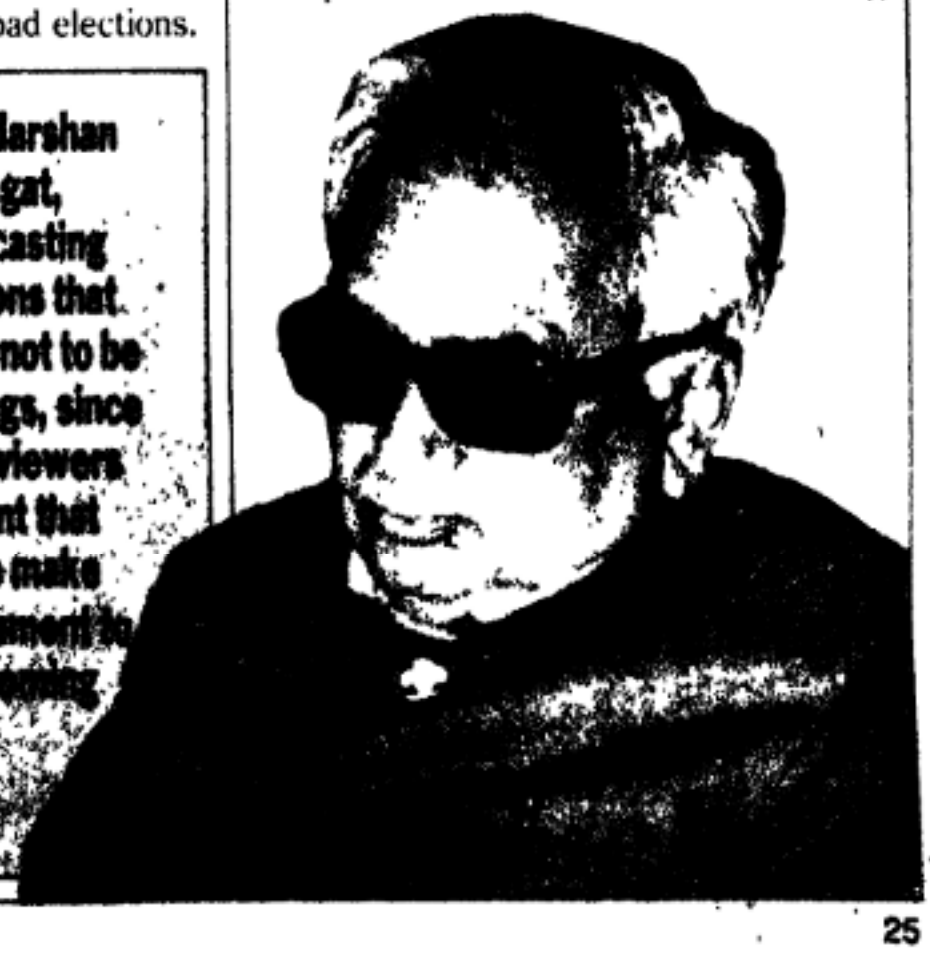
In a meeting with Doordarshan officials, H.K.L. Bhagat, information and broadcasting minister gave instructions that serious Hindi films were not to be shown on Sunday evenings, since it would make younger viewers unhappy. It was evident that Bhagat had decided to make television another instrument to be used for the forthcoming elections

A 34-minute interview with General Mayadas resulted in four minutes of TV-time and a 40-minute conversation Dua had with Ram Jethmalani was edited to five minutes. Both later protested to Doordarshan that they had been victims of biased editing; a charge that Dua and Ghosh deny, arguing that everybody's interviews were edited to fit into the broadcast.

The *Focus* programme on the Defamation Bill produced, again by Vinod Dua, drew more criticism because it featured no journalists from the *Indian Express*, *The Hindu* or *The Statesman*. It was, after all, because of recent exposés in these newspapers that the Defamation Bill had been introduced, complained the critics. Further, Dua included an evidently intoxicated journalist in his programme. Obviously, Dua got a bad press after the programme but his attitude remained as stubborn: "Let the press boycott me if they did not like the programme. Then they should also stop writing programme reviews. A television producer makes programmes for TV viewers not journalists."

Therefore, when the announcement of Ghosh's departure came, there was already a major debate in political and media circles as to whether the *glasnost* was worth it anyway. It was very well having a Ghulam Nabi Azad face-to-face with Ajit Singh on TV as during the Allahabad mid-term elections, but weren't programmes that pretended to be 'objective' much more insidious than those that were obvious propaganda?

Within the Congress(I), however, even this limited objectivity was seen as going too far. Politicos rushed to Rajiv to complain that Doordarshan was allowing



access to his enemies. Still, the axe may not have come so quickly or so suddenly had it not been for successive slip-ups made by Doordarshan in the past few weeks. The most prominent was the gaffe committed while covering the Vigyan Bhawan function to celebrate the golden jubilee of the *National Herald*. On 9 September, television viewers were surprised to hear anti-Defamation Bill slogans during the Hindi news bulletin. The following day it was revealed that the crew covering the function—the coordinator of the camera unit, Man Mohan Singh, cameraman Jeevan Dogra and the sound recordist, D.K. Ray—were unceremoniously transferred from the Delhi Kendra.

As the protests mounted, the Doordarshan newsroom received instructions to call off the policy of parity. Projection was the name of the game again. Therefore, in recent news bulletins, Doordarshan has carried as many as five separate clips featuring the Prime Minister. In one instance, the Prime Minister was speaking to a delegation from Haryana in Race Course Road which informed him how women were raped and people harassed in Devi Lal's Haryana. Commented TV and film critic Iqbal Masud: "If the Defamation Bill had been enacted this was the kind of scurrilous comment which could have come under its purview."

Despite the new enthusiasm to project the Prime Minister, there have been occasions when it has backfired. Rajiv Gandhi has mixed up his lines, for instance, and said that relief should be distributed to the *padosis* (neighbours) instead of *rishtedars* (relatives). On other occasions, he has seemed puerile, asking Delhi flood victims such innocuous questions as whether they had got enough *roti* to eat, or the people of Punjab, if their children had passed examinations.

The coverage of the 23 September one-day visit of the Prime Minister is a case in point. There was a nine-minute clip in both the news bulletins (in fact, the capsule in the English bulletin would have been longer if the newsreader had not forgotten to read two pages of the script) with a half-hour special report to follow. In the process, international events like the developments in Burma and the Olympics took a backseat. Even the President's broadcast to the nation on the eve of Independence Day was treated in a cavalier manner and not even included in the headlines of the English bulletin. H.K.L. Bhagat had to tender an apology in the Lok Sabha for this lapse.

Combined with all this were the efforts of politicians to scuttle the opening-up of Doordarshan. H.K.L. Bhagat, the information and broadcasting minister, made his populist plans clear during a meeting he called in Shastri Bhawan for the Doordarshan top brass. During the meeting, Bhagat gave instructions to the officials not to show serious Hindi films on Sunday evenings since younger viewers would be unhappy. He added that Doordarshan should also include such programmes which would please the servant class "since they are also the voters of Delhi". It was evident that Bhagat had decided to make the television one of the instruments to be



The hasty exit of Ghosh is typical of Rajiv Gandhi's current style of functioning. To a group of filmmakers and producers who visited him, he confessed that he might have been made a scapegoat

No attempt at distortion

Bhaskar Ghosh on the objectivity of Doordarshan's fare

To some extent, the tenure of former director general Bhaskar Ghosh coincided with the expansion and sophistication of Doordarshan. Excerpts from his last interview as DG:

SUNDAY: One gets the impression that the television network is already gearing up for the 1989 elections. Is there a move in this direction?

Bhaskar Ghosh: There is nothing we are doing to prepare for the elections. But when the time comes, naturally, we will have a lot of work to do. It is too early to speculate but I think the programmes will be on the lines of what we did for the 1984 elections—the Prannoy Roy type of programme.

What, in your opinion, is the impact of television on elections?

I don't think there is any question of impact since the programmes are put out after the polls are over. Since there are no programmes before polls, television cannot be said to jeopardise anybody's interests. There are specific provisions laid down by the Election Commission for television and we follow them exactly.

But, generally, if a known political figure backed by all the hype that goes on during campaigning gets on a platform and speaks to a crowd of people, a direct one-to-one relationship is created. Such a

used for the forthcoming elections

An indication of the shape of things to come on the small screen was given by the minister during two quick press conferences he addressed in Bombay Giving figures of expansion he said that with a Rs 500 crore outlay for television and radio the number of television transmitters would increase from the present 363 to 423 by the year 1990 Also that Doordarshan was aiming for an 18 hour telecast schedule by the end of the year and was hoping to increase the reach of television to 80 per cent of the population

What was all this expansion and reach of television going to be used for? Commented Shashi Kumar, chief executive of P11 TV "We will have more of the staple diet we are seeing on television On the one hand, you have modern nationalism being sold for a premium and on the other you have retrograde



Protest against Defamation Bill subject of contentious *Focus* programme

I think, is more effective than what appears on the box. So, in comparison, I would tend to discount the effect of television unless it goes out of the way to promote a point of view by clever editing and control of programmes You can mount a political campaign, use advertising techniques of repetition and create a build-up on television But Doordarshan has never done this and I do not think it ever will.

But isn't there an overdose of nationalistic and social themes on television?

I have never thought about it like that but the unity and integrity of the country is something that needs to be put across because of the tendency to pull the country in different directions. The problem of Punjab and some of the other movements, for example. Therefore, the unity and integrity of the country, which is inviolable, needs to be stressed and we have been trying to underscore this. But, on the other hand, it would not be right to say that there is a political message in all our programmes. It is the last thing which guides us in the selection of programmes.

Has Doordarshan consciously devised a Punjab package to virtually combat terrorism on the screen?

In Punjab, we need to recognise that apart from terrorism, the terrorists are using newspapers to propagate their ideas. What they are propagating is a distortion of the *Guru Granth Sahib* and this is percolating down to young people. One way which we can counter this propaganda is through the power of television. Not by putting out harangues by people but through the medium of drama, films This is one of the areas where Doordarshan plays a very major role.

The editorial control in the current affairs slots is very obviously pro-government. Do you think programmes like Focus and Aaj Kal enjoy the credibility of viewers?

There is no attempt to slant anything in a current affairs programme. I think it is part of our job to present what the government is doing in a manner which is not misunderstood. Very often, government action does not suit some people and gets distorted. Here we have a responsibility and duty to present the position of action as it is. In a *Focus* programme, like the one on Bofors, there was no attempt to distort anybody's viewpoint. The issue of the Bofors contract, by the time it came on television, had become very clouded and we cleared the air and set the record straight.

programmes like the *Mahabharat* and *Ramayan* ' Added scriptwriter and media critic, Amit Khanna 'Every medium presupposes manipulation I am not against this fact, but against the way it is being done by Doordarshan In Kerala, people are already protesting against the disparity by switching off their television sets The rejection rate of Doordarshan's programmes will go up in other parts of the country also "

The knee jerk attitude exposed in the functioning of Doordarshan fits in perfectly with the policy of commissioning adopted by the directorate Though the commercial revenue from sponsored programmes and spots had increased from a mere Rs 77 lakhs in 1976 77 to Rs 140 crores in 1987 88, Mandi House recently devised a plan by which it could keep a check on the quality of the programmes and a control on their editorial content Said Bhaskar Ghosh when the concept of commissioning was first introduced "The BBC has a lot of in-house productions and they also commission programmes This is roughly the way we want to function The existing system when a serial is approved on the basis of a pilot is inherently wrong '

Bonus to policyholders climbs a higher peak.

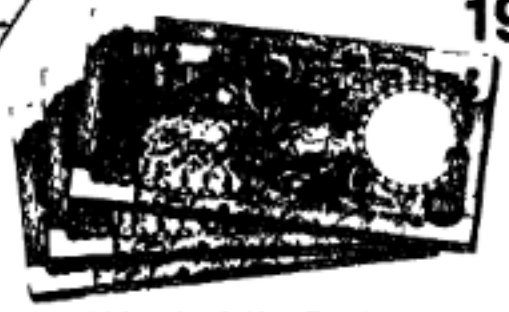


1988



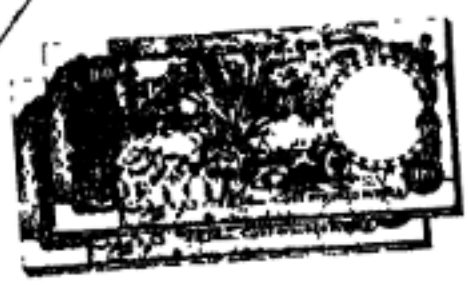
Whole Life Policies
★**Rs. 77.50**
Endowment Policies
☆**Rs. 62.00**

1987



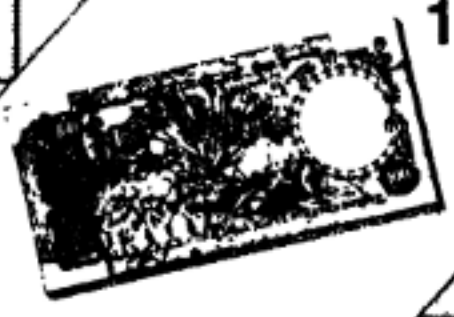
Whole Life Policies
★**Rs. 72.50**
Endowment Policies
☆**Rs. 58.00**

1986



Whole Life Policies
★**Rs. 65.00**
Endowment Policies
☆**Rs. 52.00**

1985



Whole Life Policies
★**Rs. 55.00**
Endowment Policies
☆**Rs. 44.00**

★ ☆ per Rs. 1000 sum assured per year.

The present bonus increase comes over and above the substantial increases in the recent past. Bonus in the last 5 years has grown over 82%.

LIC has been making continuous efforts to improve the return to policyholders. Through more dynamic funds management, conservation of business, reduction in the cost of operations and increase in productivity at all levels.

The new bonus rates, as a result of the valuation as on 31st March 1988, are:

Whole Life Policies
Rs. 77.50 per Rs. 1000 sum assured per year

Endowment Policies.
Rs. 62.00 per Rs. 1000 sum assured per year.

And Final (Additional) bonus, too, for eligible policies

A life insurance policy is now more attractive than ever before

So, plan your further life insurance today!

Life Insurance Corporation of India
In the service of the people

The BBC parallels rang hollow when Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan* received an unprecedented extension because Mandi House buckled under political pressure. The serial was extended for the second time to include the Luv-Kush episodes. From early October, Doordarshan also put on B.R. Chopra's long-awaited *Mahabharat*. The obvious target was electoral: the Hindu vote in general for *Mahabharat* and the Harijan vote for Valmiki's *Ramayan*.

Despite the religious overkill, Doordarshan did commission some programmes on national leaders or others that had a subliminal message of unity and integration. While earlier, the Partition scenes were chopped from *Buniyaad*, Govind Nihalani's *Tamas* was allowed to let viewers relive the traumatic days of Partition. After *Tamas*, there have been serials like *Amir Khusrau*, pitching for Hindu-Muslim amity; and a 13-part autobiographical serial on the life of G.B. Pant (made by Prakash Jha), among others.

The real test of commissioning comes with Shyam Benegal's 52-part *Discovery of India*. When Bhaskar Ghosh first commissioned the serial, he thought of getting it sponsored. Eventually, Doordarshan has ended up spending over Rs 4.5 crores of its own on the television extravaganza which will begin on 14 November. The investment will be recovered by selling spots before and after *Discovery*. Benegal told SUNDAY on the serial's sets in Bombay': "No doubt India has developed and progressed a great deal but we have not been able to distribute these things." He refuted charges that the serial was too expensive by Indian standards, claiming, "Ideally I would have liked to spend six times the amount being spent now."

Together with *Discovery of India*, an entire package of programmes has been cleared by Doordarshan to coincide with Pandit Nehru's centenary, including Manju Singh's serial on the former Prime Minister's associates, *Remembering Nehru*. Two other slots awaiting clearance are Pradeep Krishnan's serial on Nehru as a statesman and Ashok Raina's animated series on Nehru's letters to Indira Gandhi.

The other bulky package cleared by Bhaskar Ghosh concerns Punjab. Both the former director general and secretary G.K. Arora felt that the existing communal problems made Punjab an action ground for Doordarshan. Consequently, as many as 39 programmes have been cleared, which include some like Vinod Dua's on the widows of Punjab and Sanjay Kak's short features.

The programmes on Nehru and on Punjab will be interspersed by theme productions of Kailash Surinder nath, the Bombay commercial filmmaker, who recently produced *Torch of Freedom* and *Ek Sur* for television. The films made under the aegis of the Lok Sanchar Samiti have received a good response from viewers but there is criticism of the barrage of patriotism on television.

Most media watchers agree that the change of the director general augurs badly for the medium. Said Shashi Kumar, "I am sure current affairs programmes will be made in future only on subjects as Indian textiles and modern methods of banking." Added Iqbal Masud: "The people who are running television today have a very short-sighted view of its dangers and possibilities. What we see is a justification of the *sati* culture which may lead to fascism. And Amit Khanna expressed his despondency with the warning: "The Congress(I) does not know what it can achieve through television. We are heading for a media decay in which the masses will continue to watch *Ramayan* and only ten per cent will watch the TV news."

During the rest of 1988 and the election year of 1989, the Congress(I) will turn the throttle on the great propaganda machine it set on the roads in the early Eighties. There will be a plethora of serials on national leaders and, no doubt, there will be several sponsored programmes of the standard of *Himalaya Darshan* or *Gan Devata*.

The television infrastructure in the country achieved its present form after 1980 when Mrs Indira Gandhi announced the transmitter-a-day programme. The 1982 Asian Games gave an impetus to Doordarshan because colour transmission was introduced. However, as Ashok Raina says, "The Asiad was just an accident. The intention of the government, even then, was not to entertain or educate the people. It was a deliberate exercise to use the medium more powerfully for propaganda than before."

In 1985, when Doordarshan first opened its floodgates to outsiders, the social messages came on strong. Through the prompting of the then secretary, S.S. Gill, came the first Indian soap opera *Hum Log*. "Using the aesthetic values of the Hindi movie to entertain and draw tears, the serial claimed it was retailing the themes of family planning and non-alcoholism. *Buniyaad* recreated the months before Partition and built up a heady feeling of nostalgia among the older generation of viewers. There were also a host of such other serials as *Rajani*, *Ek Kahani* and *Kabir*, which brought a degree of professionalism into the entertainment slot but owed their entry into Mandi House to their didactic content.

On the political front, the 1984 elections became the real test for the electronic medium. The battle, of course, was won by the Congress(I) on the day of Mrs Gandhi's funeral itself when the television camera kept returning to the distraught face of Rajiv Gandhi standing silhouetted by the pyre. From that day till mid-way through his term as Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi became the hottest television star. He also had the good fortune that none of his opponents possessed: telegenic personality.

For its part, the government recently

I&B secretary Gopi Arora: refurbished Doordarshan's image



In the recent past Doordarshan has featured news slots on controversial subjects keeping a tight editorial grip on the content. Sponsored and commissioned programmes saw a heavy dose of nationalism and patriotism. Bureaucrats had carved out a



-times were made for it!



took serious steps to re-evaluate the direction of Doordarshan. The first was a breakfast meeting hosted by the Prime Minister for a group of 'experts', which included Amita Malik, Vinod Dua and Alyque Padamsee, on 15 February. This turned out to be a brainstorming session of sorts with the Prime Minister making a strong case for the regime's attempts at trying to bring professionalism into the service. Significantly, he brushed aside the obvious suggestions that functional autonomy for both Doordarshan and All India Radio be attempted immediately.

While most people who attend breakfast meetings and the like with the Prime Minister come back claiming that he is very receptive to their ideas, very little actually changes in Doordarshan. The problem is simple: Rajiv Gandhi wants to improve only the *functioning* of the network; most independent observers wish to change its *character*.

Those who saw in the brief period of *glasnost*, a loosening of controls were deceived. It was never the government's intention to make Doordarshan a free or fair medium. As Ramesh Sharma says: "In my opinion, there was never *glasnost* on TV—there was only a whiff of air moving towards *glasnost*. We can never open up TV that way."

The problem was that with an election coming up, Rajiv Gandhi feared that his most potent electoral weapon had lost its sting. Cracks about 'Rajivdarshan' made him worry that Doordarshan had less credibility than ever before. In 1984, the novelty of the national network and of colour had been enough to keep viewers glued to the box. But now, with the propaganda reaching new heights, they had simply turned off.

The move towards *glasnost* was initiated because of this. The intention was to give Doordarshan the impression of being 'fair' without actually ceding any control. It was hoped that slick, sophisticated programming, some of which would even knock the Congress party, would re-awaken interest in the medium. Once Doordarshan had both watchability and credibility on its side, then it could be used again for propaganda once the elections came around.

The problem with this approach is that while it is suitably Machiavellian, it fails if its executor lacks political will. And so, Rajiv Gandhi used to a medium that only relayed its master's voice, suddenly lost his nerve when he realised that this *glasnost* ploy meant that his enemies would appear on his pet TV network and call him names.



Watching *Ramayan*: hugely popular

It didn't help either that Doordarshan became a political shuttlecock. Ministers long to use TV news to attain a national stature for themselves. In the old days, they would get away with ringing Mandi House and demanding that TV crews be despatched to film them handing out sewing machines to war widows or whatever. Under the new *glasnost* policy, Doordarshan began to refuse to put them on the air. Soon, Rajiv had his fill of complaints from those who felt that their anti-apartheid demonstrations had been inadequately covered or their walkabouts not given enough time on the news.

Much of the opposition was personal. Some ministers (among them, former broadcasting minister, Ajit Panja) resented Bhaskar Ghosh and kept suggesting to Rajiv that he had CPI(M) links or was insufficiently loyal. Others had it in for secretary G.K. Arora, who they thought had grown too powerful. So Rajiv was told that Arora had made his peace with V.P. Singh and was a fifth-columnist who was misusing TV.

Ironically, the very programmes that critics regarded as insidious were now used to back up the Congress(I) case. While the Opposition had been annoyed by Prannoy Roy's use of the phrase "good news" while referring to Congress(I) victories in the election night broadcast after the Allahabad by-poll, Congress(I) members claimed that it was actually an Opposition-sponsored show. Why, they asked, had Allahabad been given so much importance if the party's policy was to treat it as just another byelection?// Why, asked Ghulam Nabi Azad, had Ajit Singh been allowed to humiliate him on TV? There were objections also to the Bofors programme on which Arun Singh had come off best. Surely, said Congress(I) members, he was a man who had betrayed Rajiv. And so on.

Mandi House buckled under political pressure and gave *Ramayan* a further extension. From early October it also put on B.R. Chopra's long-awaited *Mahabharat*. The obvious target was electoral: the Hindu vote in general for *Mahabharat* and the Harijan vote for Valmiki's *Ramayan*

The first sign that the Prime Minister had lost his nerve in the face of this mindless criticism came on 1 September when he appointed a ministerial committee, headed by H.K.L Bhagat and including Santosh Mohan Deb, Shivraj Patil and R. Prabhu to examine the working of Doordarshan. It is a sign of how bad things had got that at a stormy Cabinet meeting, even Bhagat (whose idea of good programming is that which wins votes) threatened to resign over criticism of the TV network.

From then on, it was only a matter of time before the axe fell on Ghosh, though to the world at large, the decision came as a considerable surprise. Says a senior civil servant: "When the Prime Minister overrules a key aide (G.K. Arora) and a close personal friend (Suman Dubey, the I & B ministry's adviser) to fire a competent officer, he is clearly rattled."

And rattled he is. As things seem to get more and more out of control, Rajiv Gandhi is reacting by destroying the very tools that could have got him out of this mess. It is bad enough for India that the television *glasnost* was always a bit of a con. But it is worse for Rajiv that he couldn't even carry that off. Finally, the way things are going, all Doordarshan will be able to convey is that the tedium is the message.

Ritu Sarin/New Delhi and Bombay

GUEST COLUMN

S.S. GILL

Credibility and *glasnost*

The quality of news bulletins of a TV organisation is supposed to determine the level of its professional ranking. For instance, the mainstay of the BBC's reputation is the excellence of its news services. Doordarshan devotes less than 15 per cent of its air time to news. Yet, this small chunk serves as an index of credibility of the entire set-up.

The common TV viewer in India believes that Doordarshan news bulletins are house magazines of the government, concerned primarily with boosting the Prime Minister's image. This not only makes for dull news but also robs it of balance, objectivity and credibility. The common viewer also wonders at the government's inability to appreciate that this sort of overkill invariably proves counter-productive and badly hurts both the Prime Minister and his government.

How does one explain this sort of insensitivity on the government's part? The reasons are both complex and amusing, and show how large bureaucracies acquire a life of their own, responding only partially to the signals received from their rulers. Actually, Indira Gandhi was quite alive to the dangers of over-exposure, and so is Rajiv Gandhi. After returning from one of her foreign tours, Mrs Gandhi told me that though it was springtime in the countries she visited and children playing in the parks made a lovely sight, Doordarshan cameras remained fixed on her all the time, despite her asking the cameramen to record interesting vignettes of how people lived and enjoyed themselves in other countries.

The edifice of credibility is built brick by brick, with a lot of patience, labour and tolerance. But a single act of wanton indiscretion can bring it tumbling down

In 1985, Octavio Paz delivered the Nehru Memorial Lecture in Delhi. The next morning when I happened to meet Rajiv Gandhi, he complained that whereas the people wanted to see the great poet and hear what he had to say, Doordarshan mainly focused the camera on him and reported his introductory remarks. There are several such instances that I can cite from my personal experience.

Then how is it that this message does not travel down the line and things continue in the merry old fashion? I think there are two basic reasons for this phenomenon. First, Doordarshan has nursed, over the years, an ethos of self-protective timidity which discourages initiative and frowns upon enterprising news reporting. This attitude is reinforced by the all-pervasive cult of sycophancy, which promotes the belief that the rulers only like flattery and attention. Such an impression is greatly strengthened by some ham-handed actions of the establishment.

What happened in Patna is a recent case in point. In a live programme on AIR a kid happened to say, *"Gali gali mein shor hai, Rajiv Gandhi chor hai."* This was an unfortunate occurrence and discretion demanded it be buried quietly to avoid attracting notice. After all, how many people tune in to an afternoon radio programme from Patna? But no. The chest-beating loyalists had to show to their leader what a sacrilege had been committed and start a witch-hunt to prevent recurrence of such an outrage. And what was the outcome? On the one hand, the incident got the widest publicity and the head of a university vice-chancellor rolled in the bargain. On the other, the incident sent very intimidating signals to AIR and Doordarshan's news-desks. Nothing could have been more short-sighted and self-defeating than the manner in which this episode was handled.

The second basic reason why even the Prime Minister's perceptions of over-exposure fail to make much impact is that contradictory messages get transmitted to Doordarshan. Considering his heavy schedule, one wonders how

Mandi House: more loyal than the king?



often the Prime Minister watches news on TV. He mainly gathers his impressions from people around him. And there is no dearth of "well-wishers" who keep feeding him with all sorts of imaginary and exaggerated stories of dark conspiracies and plots being hatched against him, and how the same should be countered through powerful media campaigns. With a trusting Prime Minister, this not only results in the distortion of perspective, but also lack of balance in the reporting of even innocent events. And whenever the PM happens to complain of over-exposure, he is promptly assured by his cronies that the people love to watch their beloved leader on television!

Rajiv Gandhi himself is an exceedingly media-conscious person and has created a formidable publicity outfit for himself. His instincts in this field are quite sound and it was at his instance that *Janvani* was started. The amount of grilling that some of his ministers were put to on this programme was a refreshing change from the earlier touch-me-not attitude. The televising of *Yes, Minister* was also suggested by him. During that phase of *glasnost*, the current affairs feature, *Newsline*, mercilessly exposed the misrepresentation made by three chief ministers during the PM's visits to their states (the CMs later complained bitterly to the information minister against this "betrayal"). *Sach ki Parchhaiyan* was ruthless in its exposure of corruption and inefficiency in various government organisations. The affected parties represented to the PM that such an approach would hurt the government's image and harm the party. But despite all these exposures, no Doordarshan official was pulled up and, on balance, the credibility of both the government and Doordarshan was enhanced.

It is again a measure of the PM's sensitivity to the importance of official media that led him to appoint Gopi Arora, his top aide, as information secretary. And he did bring about a welcome change in Doordarshan's news and current affairs programmes. Reviewing the number of delicate issues discussed on Doordarshan, there is a widespread impression that the winds of *glasnost* are again blowing through the corridors of Mandi House.

But this second phase of 'openness' on Doordarshan suffers from an unfortunate constraint. As a result of various scandals and controversies which have erupted over the last 18 months, a lot of iron has seeped into the soul of Rajiv Gandhi. This seems to have lowered his tolerance level and sharpened confrontationist tendencies. As the mood of the master gets quickly transmitted to the official media agencies, one notices an unnecessarily strident and partisan note creeping into Doordarshan's news-bulletins. I shall make my point by citing two recent instances.

When Gen. Zia conferred the honour of Nishan-e-Pakistan on Morarji Desai, Doordarshan not only reported the news but launched a lengthy diatribe against Pakistan's sinister motives and the inappropriateness of Desai accepting the award. Viewed objectively, Gen. Zia was only reciprocating our action in conferring the Bharat Ratna on Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan 40 years after independence. Moreover, Desai was a highly respected and upright statesman and it was presumptuous to advise him in this manner.

The second incident concerns the reporting of Sanjay Singh's alleged involvement in Syed Modi's murder. Sanjay Singh has not yet acquired national stature and the episode did not involve any important issue. At best, the matter could have been reported just once, with emphasis on the tragic death of a national champion and not on Sanjay Singh.

The point I am trying to make is that a news-bulletin is meant to report news in as fair, faithful and unbiased a manner as possible. But when a story is laced with slanted comments and personal animus, it violates the norms of objective reporting and compromises the credibility of the source. If the government has a particular axe to grind, there is always the current affairs slot available to it.

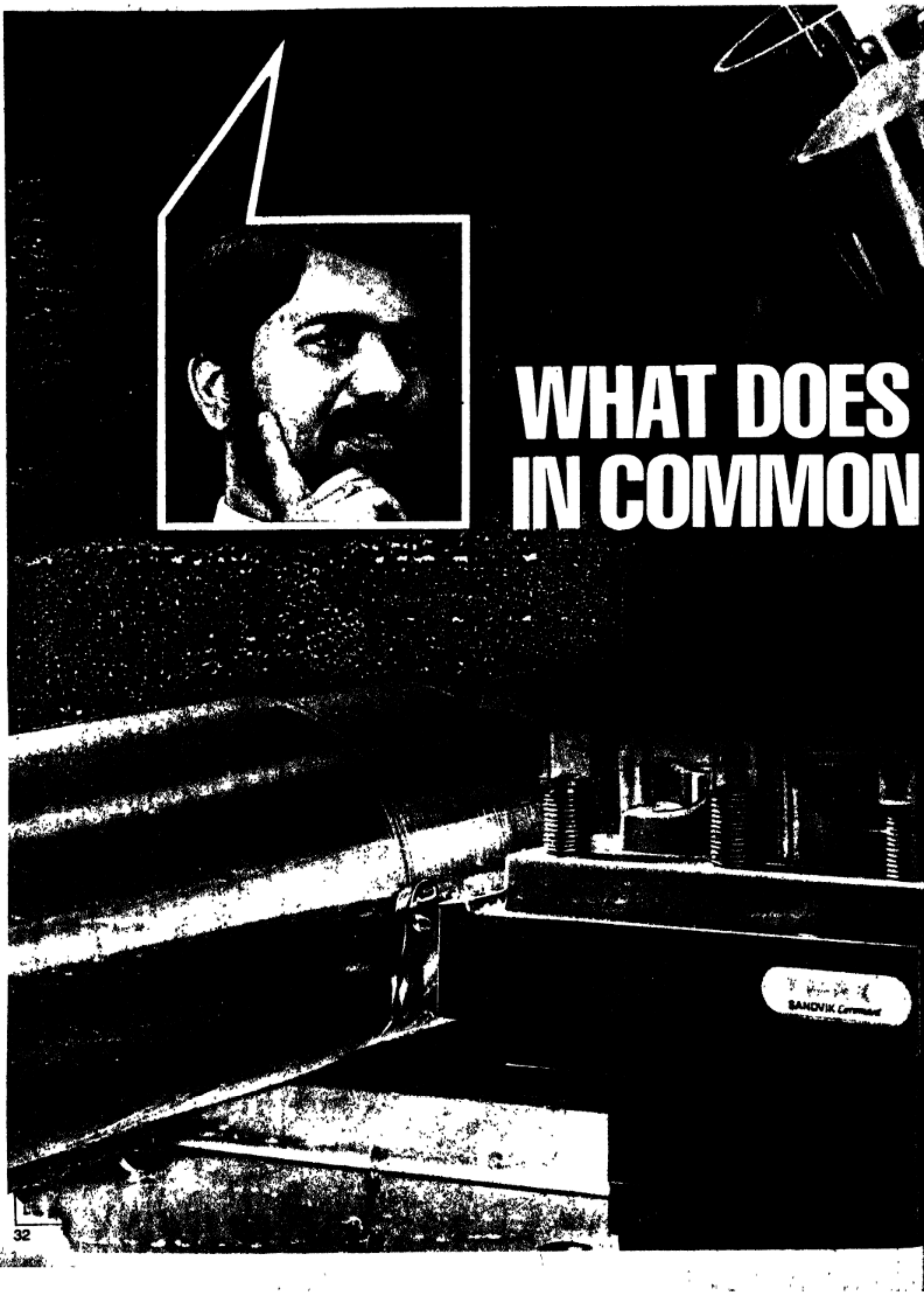
The edifice of credibility is built brick by brick, with a lot of patience, labour and tolerance. But a single act of wanton indiscretion can bring it tumbling down. The question of credibility becomes relevant only in the democratic context. But democracy does not have a very pretty face: it is marked by warts and freckles. And the essence of democratic temper lies in learning to love that face.



Janvani programme: started at Rajiv Gandhi's instance

Doordarshan has nursed, over the years, an ethos of self-protective timidity, which discourages initiative and frowns upon enterprising news reporting. This attitude is reinforced by the all-pervasive cult of sycophancy, which promotes the belief that the rulers only like flattery and attention

S S Gill is a former secretary of the information and broadcasting ministry


WHAT DOES
IN COMMON
SANDVIK



SPRAY DRYING.

In both cases the principle involves the projection of a liquid under high pressure into a chamber where instantaneous drying takes place, leaving a powder. For milk powder this is the end.

METAL CUTTING HAVE WITH MILK POWDER?

For tungsten carbide, this is the beginning.

Do you know that modern metal cutting tools can contribute upto 20% in increased productivity, even though they are less than 2% of the production costs? At Sandvik, the search is on to make that little piece of carbide work better for you. Resulting in tools that cut faster. A lot faster. And last longer too.

On the materials side this implies a search for new carbide substrates and bonding materials.

On the designing side it is the search for new geometries.

On the coatings side it is the search for new, and better wearing, coating formulations and thicknesses.

That's right, this is material science working at the frontier level. That's the level we're comfortable with at Sandvik Asia.

SANDVIK

SANDVIK ASIA LTD.

The Science.
The Technology. The Commitment.

Contract SA 53.88

Verse or worse?

India's democratic stance is undermined by the ban on Rushdie's
The Satanic Verses



Photograph Courtesy The Sunday Times

If Mohammad will not come to the mountain then the latter must move its ponderous mass to dance attendance on the Prophet—so says the adage. And yet, the latter-day defenders of the Prophet's own faith consider his authority fragile enough to rise up in arms against a mere work of fiction, *The Satanic Verses*. Much to the chagrin of author Rushdie, publisher Penguin/Viking, and those who believe in freedom from censorship, the Indian government has given in to pressure from prominent Muslim leaders and imposed a ban on the novel.

The reverberations here and abroad have been loud enough. Says Zamir Ansari of Penguin Overseas, Delhi, "We will consider all possibilities, including that of going to court. Our legal advisors are looking into the matter. This is censorship, it is preventing people from reading something they might want to read. And Penguin has always fought any censorship in any country."

No doubt the bigwigs in Penguin UK are also putting their heads together to come up with a strategy to counter the ban against a book they have acquired for a whopping advance, and from which they fully expect to make handsome profits. Together with Rushdie's agent Andrew Wylie, they have been promoting the book at the recent Frankfurt book fair.

Though Penguin Books India is not directly affected by the loss of sales of Rushdie's book, editor and publisher David Davidar can't help bemoaning this decision on the part of the government. He is convinced that "the book would have sold quite a bit in India, particularly the paperback edition." Nor can he see a book like this sinking into obscurity and the ban being forgotten.

According to some experts, there was a minor blunder on the part of Penguin UK in relation to this ban. Given that Syed Shahabuddin made his public statement demanding the ban before the book had come out in the UK (it was launched on 26 September), it would have been good strategy to quietly export lots of copies to India and flood the Indian market with a simultaneous release. In that case the government too might have considered the ban impossible to enforce. Or there could have been a simultaneous Indian edition—as Rupa had done for Rushdie's earlier book, *Shame*.

The primary issue, however, is not that of marketing/distribution—particularly in a supposedly democratic country like India. It is ironic to have the Prime Minister revoke the universally condemned Defamation Bill only a few days before imposing a ban on a book that has clearly not been read, whose contents have not been analysed. Though it is normally the job of the home secretary to make decisions on controversial

Controversy's child

Salman Rushdie is no stranger to controversy. *Midnight's Children*, his second novel and the one that made his reputation, was distinguished by offensive references to Indira Gandhi (called "the Widow") and her son Sanjay. At first, the government did not notice but four years later, Mrs Gandhi sued and had the offending reference deleted from future editions.

His third novel *Shame* was about Pakistan and even-handedly succeeded in destroying both Zia and the Bhuttos, on whom it was based. Pakistan banned it and a reference to the Zia-character's retarded daughter was considered in poor taste. Rushdie said he didn't know that the real Zia had a retarded daughter till after *Shame* was finished.

He then involved himself in controversies in his own country, Britain. He used his literary eminence to take a political stand against the Falklands War, for which he was reviled and became a noted Thatcher-baiter. A TV programme, on which Tariq Ali and he featured the "discovery" of a "great American artist," was universally denounced by serious art critics, and a non-fiction account of a journey through Nicaragua (*The Jaguar Smile*) was criticised for naivety. Most recently, a TV film on India (*The Riddle of Midnight*) met with hostility.

Through it all, nobody has denied Rushdie's great literary gifts, or questioned his undeniable sincerity. And India is now the only democratic country to ever have banned one of his books.

books, reliable official sources have said that this decision was probably taken by Rajiv Gandhi himself. It seems too much of a coincidence that the ban order was announced immediately after he returned to Delhi from Tamil Nadu.

At the daily press briefing of the external affairs ministry on 5 October, the spokesman for the external publicity division, Aftab Seth, said that he was not aware of any ban order. At 8 pm the same day the decision to ban the book was announced. Contacted later by SUNDAY, Aftab Seth said, "I was aware that a ban on the book was being considered. But I was not aware of the fact that it was going to be imposed that (5 October) evening."

And what of the man most directly affected by the blue pencil of censorship? "The Indian government is going to embarrass itself by imposing this ban," said Salman Rushdie, who was in Edinburgh promoting the book. "A lot of organisations are taking it up with them. The international PEN (a body of authors and translators) and Index on Censorship, London, are sending telegrams to the President of India."

Rather in the grand manner of a prophet himself, Rushdie added, "I forgive them (the Indian government) for it, and I hope they raise the ban." But he has no forgiveness for Syed Shahabuddin and his ilk who rail against a book, without reading it, who don't even shrink from misrepresentation. Referring to his interview in SUNDAY, the 41-year-old author declared angrily, "Shahabuddin has totally twisted what I said there. It is a plain distortion of my statements, and simply shows who is lying."

Well-known Pakistani writer and left-wing intellectual Tariq Ali also expressed his shock at the Indian government's willingness to kowtow to the fundamentalist lobby. "This ban," he said, "is absolutely scandalous and shocking. It shows the deformed siege mentality of those who claim to speak on behalf of Indian Muslims."

Book Trust, the administrators of the Booker Prize for which *The Satanic Verses* has been shortlisted, has duly registered horror and disapprobation. But there is no inkling as to whether the ban will tip the balance in Rushdie's favour, weighting literary merit with a measure of sympathy. Were this to happen, and should Rushdie become the one and only Booker two-timer, it would simply illustrate yet another adage —it is an ill wind that blows no one any good. Satan and God could both benefit from the publicity.

Chitrita Banerji with reports from Shrabani Basu/London

COMMENT

To read or not to read



Until it is read, a book is only a collection of pages defiled by printer's ink. It has no value to those who are not readers. And most people are not readers, particularly of literature. People can be drafted into the army against their wishes, they can be indoctrinated politically by their parents, they can even be forced to dig graves—but no man can be forced to read a book. Not that it is a heinous crime not to be a reader. Every human being has the right to remain ignorant. But it is downright immoral to prevent people from reading what they want to read, to snatch books away from them.

Those who occupy the topmost positions of power may not read too many books, but they are certainly afraid of books. They seem to feel that books contain something in a secret code language which could one day oust them from power. That is why people who govern countries wish to confiscate controversial books. They refuse to learn a fundamental lesson of history—that it is easier to bomb city after city and destroy them totally than to suppress one book. It is in the nature of books—the more you try to suppress them, the more they'll spread like wildfire. Till today, not a single book has been successfully shoved out of existence. When Dostoevesky was banned in the Soviet Union, it only made him all the more popular. East Pakistan declared it was forbidden to read Tagore. As a result, the Bengali Muslims made such a cult of reading Tagore's poetry and singing his songs that later when Bangladesh became independent, it was a Tagore song that was chosen as the national anthem.

The government of India has displayed the same kind of stupidity by banning Salman Rushdie's newly published novel, *The Satanic Verses*. Rajiv Gandhi has not even bothered to read the book. His grandfather would at least have done that much. And as for Shahabuddin and his cohorts, who created all the ruckus about banning the book—they too have admitted that they haven't read it. It is only on the basis of reviews that they decided that there could be something objectionable in the novel.

Salman Rushdie's book is written in a style that is half-realistic, half-symbolic. It is a melange of light-hearted badinage and philosophical explorations which is in keeping with modern literary trends. The story moves freely between the realms of the past and the future—which is why relevant questions about history and religion have been raised. It is true that the life of one of the great religious prophets of the world *has* become part of the story, though names and references have been changed. But how does that constitute evidence that the faith of a religious community has been treated with contempt? Is faith so fragile that the mere perusal of literature will damage it irreparably?

This is not a book meant for those who are religious bigots. Nor do politicians in India today seem to display much interest in literature. Had Shahabuddin and his pack not made such a fuss, this book would not even have been noticed by those who have no love for literature. Those who have read Salman Rushdie's previous books and enjoyed them, will definitely make a point of reading this book. They will manage to get hold of it, despite the government's ban. And irrespective of their personal religious convictions, they will only enjoy the book for its literary merits, they will not rouse the rabble to riot.

At one point in the novel, Rushdie writes, "From the beginning men have used God to justify the unjustifiable". Many in our country continue to do so even now. When shall we as a nation become truly adult?

Sunil Gangopadhyay

Sunil Gangopadhyay is one of the foremost writers in India today.



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

Muzzling the bureaucracy

When Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi began his rounds of talks with the 400-odd district magistrates and collectors in the country, the stated purpose was to find ways to make the benefits of administration reach the common man in the countryside. It was something novel, and many thought that the Prime Minister was sincere in his message to the district officials: act fairly and fearlessly for the good of the people.

But at least one person was sure that it could only be another gimmick. And that person is Bhagwat Jha Azad, chief minister of Bihar. The way he transferred Manoj Srivastava, district magistrate of Arrah, is clear evidence of that.

Jha did not even care to ask the chief secretary to tell Srivastava that he was being transferred. He sent a wireless message to the district superintendent of police (DSP) to ask Srivastava to vacate his post immediately.

No doubt, Azad has the power to transfer a district magistrate but the arrogance and utter lack of propriety he has shown by effecting it through a message flashed to the DSP, who ranks below the district magistrate, will be hard to match.

Srivastava's fault was that he was so conscientious an officer that he did not allow local touts and Congress(I) agents to corner government contracts, and this offended K. K. Tewari, who had the distinction of losing his central ministership for having abused Giani Zail Singh when he was the President, and getting it back for no apparent reason after Zail Singh retired. Tewari is supposed to be cultivating Arrah for the next polls and so is greatly interested in showering patronage in the district.

For Azad—who has been sent to Bihar by Rajiv Gandhi to "manage" the next general elections in Bihar—Srivastava or, for that matter, any official does not matter when it comes to promoting "party interests". In fact, he reportedly told the Arrah lawyers' deputation, pleading for the cancellation of Srivastava's transfer order, that Tewari could not win the election if Srivastava continued to be Arrah's district magistrate.

And his lack of sensitivity can be judged from his remark when he was told that all that Srivastava had done was not to allow the money meant to benefit the people to be frittered away. Azad said: "It is the government's money!" Apparently he is not even aware that the government gets the money from the people and it is supposed to be spent for the good of the people and not for the benefit of his party.

The fact that thousands of people in Arrah protested against the transfer — several thousands squatted on railway tracks to voice their anger—showed that Srivastava is an exeptional officer. Indeed, his reputation is such; as development commissioner in Ranchi, he had earned praise from the then deputy Planning Commission chairman, Manmohan Singh, for his "model work" in the tribal area. Even in his initial years at Patna, he did pioneering work in the social welfare department. But his reward has been one transfer after another.

Srivastava's case is a challenge to what Rajiv Gandhi wants to do—if he is sincere—in making district administrations responsive to the people's hopes and aspirations. Word about Srivastava's fate must have reached other district magistrates in the country. How many among them will now dare to do honest, independent work knowing that they run the risk of offending their political masters? Already, district magistrates and other officers are tending to go along with the party in power in alloting projects, however small, and in settling land disputes. Now, even keeping away party touts from making illegal money will be treated as indiscretion as the Srivastava episode has shown.

The Planning Commission has urged the states not to transfer able collectors from their posts for at least five years so as to ensure efficient implementation of developmental projects. The Union home ministry's directive is to keep them in their posts for at least three years. But people like Azad see no meaning in such exhortations.

In fact, Bihar is one of the worst states in this regard. According to a study, seventy per cent of its IAS officers did not stay in a post for more than a year. The study also notes that transfers are more frequent in an election year.

The home ministry, which is in charge of the IAS cadre, should take a closer look at this aspect of whimsical transfers under political pressure if administration at the grassroots level is to improve. Most chief ministers do not want to take any chances that might inhibit the style they have come to acquire in serving political needs. The study says that "it is hard to think of a better way to kill motivation and enthusiasm than by frequent transfers, which incapacitate field organisation of government".

Not long ago, an IAS officer from Karnataka said that his was a tribe of gypsies and that "merry-(misery)-go-round of transfers" goes on continuously. This is even more true of Bihar, though Haryana is said to be the worst. (West Bengal is said to be the least afflicted by this disease.)

The behaviour of Tewari and Azad—and others of their type—shows that what they want is a committed bureaucracy committed not to any values or norms but to the good of the party, even if that means indulging in nefarious activities.

These are the people who give a bad name to the Congress(I). But since Rajiv Gandhi is dependent on them for support against dissenters in the party, he gives them a free rein. In view of this, his talk of justice and development at the grassroots level cannot but sound hollow.



Bhagwat Jha Azad: Insensitive

The behaviour of K. K. Tewari and Bhagwat Jha Azad shows that what they want is a committed bureaucracy—committed not to any values or norms but to the good of the party, even if that means indulging in nefarious activities

VIMAL





Grindlays. Such a pleasure!

Banking, Grindlays believes, should be one of life's conveniences.

Which is why, while Grindlays offers every major service the best international banks offer, there are some specialised services only Grindlays offers.

Each designed to make banking a pleasure.

Because by improving the quality of banking, we believe, we could ultimately improve the quality of the way you live.

Grindlays Bank

Member ANZ Group

Contract GB 79.88

Paying to the gallery

Chemould has come a long way from the days when it was an obscure concern that manufactured picture frames



Gandhy in front of a painting by Ranbir Singh Kaleka: proud patron



(From left to right) Kekoo Gandhy, Mulk Raj Anand at the anniversary: Indian art has come of age

When Kekoo Gandhy set up a factory for manufacturing picture frames in the near-wilderness of Marol many years ago, no one thought he would become the guiding spirit behind one of Bombay's classiest art galleries. But over the last 25 years, the name Chemould has become better known for an eclectic collection of modern Indian painting than for any of the frames that contain or embellish those paintings.

Housed within the precincts of Bombay's Jehangir Art Gallery, the Chemould celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary last September with an exhibition of the works of 17 Indian painters working at home and abroad. And both the turnout and the sales provided further illustration of a recent trend—art has become big business even in India. The first-ever Christie's auction of Indian paintings at the Taj, Bombay last December was surrounded by an unprecedented degree of publicity and media hype. So was the recent CRY (Child Relief and You) exhibition at the Jehangir Art Gallery—even the Prime Minister felt compelled to make time for the show in the middle of a packed schedule. And the Chemould's quarter centenary too, drew the attention and presence not merely of the cultured and the cognoscenti, but also of the moneyed and the glitterati.

Though many may deplore this trend—particularly the genuine art lovers and those who are on the bottom rungs of the collectors' ladder—though



Khorshed Gandhy at the inauguration of Chemould's 25th

The main purpose served by galleries like Chemould is that they save the artist from the galling experience of self promotion and advertisement.



Falling Figure by Tyeb Mehta recognition long overdue

many may feel that the media hype has led to price tags which are way above the real value of the paintings people like Kekoo Gandhy see the current trend as long overdue The years of hard work on the part of artists and gallery owners has given art the status it occupies today says Gandhy

He recalls the old days when art had a mystique that few could penetrate Buying art was as much a select process as the understanding or appreciation of art And those who did combine the resources to acquire works of art as well as the desire to do so, were few and exceptional Banking magnate Sir Cowasji Jehangir was one of those He spent between Rs 7 8 lakhs to build the Jehangir Art Gallery in memory of his son who had died in an accident in London But moneyed though he was, Cowasji Jehangir never flaunted the opulent lifestyle that goes with art collecting today.

"At lunch, for instance," says Kekoo Gandhy, "all that this merchant prince would order would be an omelette and a bottle of soda. After finishing half the bottle, he would put the marble stopper back in the bottle to have it later." It was this frugality of habit that made possible the munificence he showed in public life Well-established artists like S H Raza (now living and working in Paris) owe much to him

Today's art collector is neither frugal in lifestyle, nor concerned particularly with the understanding of art and artists Works of top Indian artists are now to be found in the homes of celebrities like Harsh Goenka (who plans to have a gallery at his headquarters in Ceat Bhavan) Gurcharan Das of Procter and Gamble Jyotsna Seth of Great Eastern and Dattaraj Salgaokar, the young Goan industrialist Chemould's recent anniversary show was electrified by the operations of a garment exporter from Delhi—Indira Dhody Like a cool businesswoman making a deal, she flew in to Bombay, bought up a dozen paintings and vanished once again Unthinkable in the days of yore!

Despite the seeming vulgarity of such a coldly acquisitive approach, Kekoo Gandhy, his wife Khorshed and daughter Shirin feel that Chemould has made a vital contribution to the promotion of art for the artist's sake They think back to the bleak scene of the early Sixties when the Bombay Art Society was being frowned upon

Ganga's Pageant by Vivan Sundaram middle school of art



WHY AN ALLW
IS WORTH
SAVING FOR

LLWYN IS IN A CLASS BY ITSELF

A refrigerator is an important investment. One that you need to save and plan for. Yes, an Allwyn costs a little more.

Because, an Allwyn offers you a lot more for that little extra you pay for it.

Take a look at the features that put an Allwyn in a class by itself. And, you will agree it's a bargain at any price .

ITACHI DESIGNED COMPRESSOR

For silent, smooth and trouble-free efficiency .

O VOLTAGE STABILISER NEEDED

Because it is built to take voltage fluctuations from 170 to 250 volts in its stride .

OLL BOND FREEZER

For quicker ice, fresher vegetables and fruits.

ELF DRAINING SYSTEM

For non-messy and quick defrosting at the touch of a button.

TORES MORE

Allwyn has the highest crispator/chill tray volume among all refrigerators.

LIM, TALL AND ELEGANT

It occupies lesser floor area than others.

IDE RANGE

Allwyn comes in 165 and 300 ltrs double door and single door models with a choice of attractive colours.

ONFIDENT 7-YEAR GUARANTEE

For years of trouble-free service.

ATION-WIDE SERVICE NETWORK

For prompt service at a phone call.

LLWYN OFFERS A UNIQUE PROTECTION CONTRACT*



ALL SINGLE DOOR ALLWYN REFRIGERATORS BEAR THE ISI MARK

ALLWYN



** For further details please contact your nearest Allwyn Area Office.*

An Allwyn is for always

HYDERABAD ALLWYN AREA OFFICES: Ahmedabad Ph. 463181, Bangalore Ph 238885, Bhopal Ph 64122, Bhubaneshwar Ph. 52271, Bombay. Ph. 4927575, 4927586, 4934178, 4921051 Calcutta. Ph: 440437, 446853, 433576, Chandigarh, Ph: 41941, Cuddapah Ph: 2230, Ernakulam Ph 368002, Gauhati. Ph 32691, Ghaziabad. Ph. 843204, Hydrabad. Ph: 43407, Jabalpur. Ph: 22665, Jaipur Ph: 65729, Kanpur. Ph: 245249 Karnal Ph 2480, Madras. Ph 861401, Nagpur Ph. 45125, New Delhi. Ph: 734740, 730715, Patna Ph: 32745 Pune. Ph: 39029 Vijayawada. Ph. 62544, Visakhapatnam Ph: 61652

MAA COMMUNICATIONS/HAL/B/88

by many because it was dominated by non-Maharashtrians. Sales of art at the Jehangir Art Gallery too had dropped from Rs 1,50,000 to less than Rs 10,000.

Once he had managed to rent space there for the grand sum of Rs 10 per month, Kekoo Gandhy formed the All India Association of Fine Arts, with himself as the general secretary. This was a bit of a jolt for the organisation that had dominated the art scene till now -- the All India Fine Arts and Crafts of Delhi which happened to be controlled by the art elite of Calcutta. Illustrious names like Lady Ranu Mukherjee, Sir Ushanath Sen, Maulana Azad and Humayun Kabir formed the backbone of this established society.

But Kekoo Gandhy was not a man to be easily intimidated. He foresaw the inevitable power struggle and decided to get his own reinforcements from Calcutta. He got eminent people like Dr Niranjan Roy, head of the Indian Society of Oriental Arts, art critic Dr D.C Ganguly, writer Sunti Kumar Chatterjee, and others like Paritosh Sen, Gopal Ghosh and Rathin Moitra to recognise his own organisation.

Legitimacy and respectability ensured, Gandhy took the advice of poet and critic Nissim Ezekiel and organised an exhibition at their frame shop on Princess Street. So successful was the show that the shop became an important rendezvous for artists. "Scientists like Homi Bhabha would come there looking for frames and would spend hours talking to the artists in my shop," says Gandhy. Conversations led to buying and selling, art began to acquire a new professionalism, and Gandhy launched his gallery Chemould at the Jehangir.



(From left to right) Arun Bose, Sanat Kar, Mrs Brij Thapar, Cynthia Hargate: at the inauguration of Gallery Chemould in Calcutta

The anniversary show has been modest by many standards, but it has been true to the spirit of the gallery in representing the three stages of development in modern Indian art. The old school was represented by Bhupen Khakhar, Tyeb Mehta and S H. Raza, the middle school by Vivan Sundaram (nephew of art luminary Amrita Sher-Gil) and the new school by Vijay Shinde. In all, the works of 17 painters were on display.

(From left to right) Lady Hirabhai Jehangir, V.V. Oak and Kekoo Gandhy: smiles of achievement



Over the last 25 years, Chemould has become better-known for its eclectic collection of modern Indian painting. The gallery has made a vital contribution to the promotion of art for the artists' sake

The main purpose served by galleries like Chemould is that they save the artist from the galling experience of self-promotion and advertisement. Like interpreters, they bring out the artist's work for inspection, approval or rejection by the buyer and the public. M.F. Husain, for instance, found a venue for his paintings in the Chemould for 20 years, before he shifted to the Pundole Gallery. And in 1969, it was the Chemould that held the first Husain retrospective. In the early years, when Husain had not yet acquired the reputation of being the top artist of India, he was an expensive proposition for any gallery since he was in constant need of money. But true to their commitment to the cause of art, Chemould stood by their artist.

When artists in Calcutta started feeling the pinch from the late Sixties onwards—social and political conditions not being the most conducive to the bourgeois processes of buying and selling of art for private collections—once again Chemould actively stepped forward to help. They invited artists like Bikash Bhattacharjee to come to Bombay and display their works. The Rotary club also supplemented these efforts by arranging for the artists' accommodation in the homes of Rotarians. One show of works by Ganesh Pyne, Sunil Das, Somnath Hore and others netted a total of Rs 25,000—a not inconsiderable sum in those days.

Even today, the link with Calcutta remains. And while the art scene is experiencing the cold silver touch of big business, the warmth and understanding between artists, promoted by galleries like the Chemould, also continues to bloom —a testimony to the efforts of gallery-owners like Gandhy.

Olga Tellis/Bombay

Sharad Joshi's Pawar play

The peasant leader's agitational agenda has the chief minister worried

MAHARASHTRA

As an agitational strategy, it must rank as a masterstroke. One that can't fail to catch the nation's attention. On 12 December, peasant leader Sharad Joshi plans to take the cotton growers' battle against the synthetic lobby to the doorstep of its most visible representative—Dhirubhai Ambani. On that day, cotton farmers will cordon off Reliance's sprawling industrial complex at Patalganga and prevent any consignment of synthetic fibre from leaving the plant. The date is invested with significance—for, on 12 December, 1930, a 16-year-old millhand, Babu Genu, was crushed to death by a truck carrying foreign textiles when demonstrating against the import of fabric.

Joshi's impatience with Delhi's lack of response to his four-year agitation demanding remunerative prices for cotton lint has obviously increased sharply. Addressing a farmers' rally at Kolhapur on 2 October, he explained that Patalganga was chosen because Reliance is close to the Rajiv Gandhi government. He said that Ambani could secure advantages for the synthetic fibre and yarn industry by simply making a phone call. Arguing that these concessions are granted at the cost of the six lakh cotton-growers in the state, he came down heavily on the new textile policy, which he said encouraged the unlimited use of synthetics as against cotton.

Joshi is now engaged in making arrangements for farmers from the cotton-growing districts, which lie in the Raigad region, to come to Patalganga. Says a Joshi sympathiser: "Patalganga is a long way away from Raigad, but then it is not as far off as Delhi."

Dhirubhai Ambani is only round two in Joshi's agitational agenda. Starting 14 November, the birth date of Jawaharlal Nehru (who Joshi refers to as "the brown sahib who started the great Bharat-India divide"), farmers will stop the movement of levy sugar from the cooperative sugar factories. The protest will highlight the illegal deductions made by the sugar barons in the price of cane and demand that the various expenses incurred by cane-growers to transport and store cane are adequately compensated.

This is the first time that Joshi is rallying around the small peasantry to confront the sugar barons. Earlier, protests against the sugar barons by Joshi's Shetkari Sanghatana largely consisted of demonstrations before government bodies, like the *zilla parishad* and the collectorate. Now the battle is being taken to the doorsteps of the sugar factories.

Joshi's increasingly confrontational stance, coming as it has just a year before the next elections, is expected to pose a tremendous challenge to the three-month-old Pawar government. Already, his Karz Mukti Andolan—under which farmers have demanded to be released from debts through filing insolvency petitions—has caused Pawar a few headaches. About two lakh farmers from all parts of the state have filed petitions (involving a total debt of Rs 12 crores) and the courts are in a quandary over how to deal with such numbers. Joshi expects that the petitions will number one crore by next October and claims that they will become an important issue in the next elections.

For his part, Pawar has ridiculed the Karz Mukti programme of the Sanghatana. He has appealed to farmers not to lose their self-respect by filing insolvency petitions. He has also pointed out that insolvents will not be eligible for further loans from banks and cooperative societies. But Joshi's ability to rally around the farmers has more than demonstrated his popularity amongst them. Says the peasant leader: "Pawar will have to decide whether he is with Rajiv Gandhi or the farmers of Maharashtra, because the interests of the farmers and those of Rajiv Gandhi are not the same."

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*





Sharad Joshi: mobilising farmers; (inset) Sharad Pawar: threatened

Arresting news

Will Attinderpal Singh's capture reveal new truths about Mrs Gandhi's assassination?

PUNJAB

The arrest of Attinderpal Singh, the 31-year-old president of the Khalistan Liberation Organisation (KLO) in Patiala, represents more than just a major breakthrough for the security forces in Punjab. It is a bonus for the Special Investigating Team (SIT) constituted to inquire into the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. Headed by retired IPS officer S. Anantram, SIT has been working all along on the premise that the conspiracy to assassinate Mrs Gandhi involved more than just her killers Satwant and Beant Singh.

According to police and SIT sources, Attinderpal Singh's initiation into terrorism coincided with his interest in assassinating Mrs Gandhi. Singh, who worked as a press superintendent with the *Hitavada* newspaper in Bhopal, became a hardcore terrorist after Operation Bluestar, in June 1984. He succeeded Bhai Amrik Singh as the president of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) and later owned responsibility for the July 1984 hijack of the Indian Airlines plane to Karachi. It was around this time that he made contact with Simranjit Singh Mann, the former IPS officer who resigned in protest against Operation Bluestar.



Attinderpal Singh: plotted to kill Mrs Gandhi?

In August 1984, Attinderpal Singh is believed to have plotted to assassinate Mrs Gandhi when she visited Kanpur to address a convention of the Uttar Pradesh Congress(I) Committee. She was to be shot by a sophisticated weapon with telescopic sights but the conspiracy was called off for lack of a suitable gun.

The question that engages the investigating agencies is to what extent Attinderpal Singh was involved in the plot hatched by Beant Singh. It is reliably known that he was kept fully abreast of the conspiracy in the former Prime Minister's residence and was in touch with Beant Singh. He also had several meetings with Simranjit Singh Mann in Calcutta and Bhopal.

The only obstacle which prevents SIT from implicating Attinderpal Singh and Mann in a supplementary chargesheet is that it has been able to link them with the other conspirators only before the Gandhi assassination. A day before the assassination, Singh crossed over into Pakistan, where he trained Sikh youth in the use of arms for a couple of years. He returned to India several times though, usually staying in the Golden Temple and masterminding terrorist attacks. These are said to include the February 1988 blasts in district courts in different parts of Punjab, the attack on the Haryana Roadways bus at Panchkula in August the same year and the explosions in Delhi that followed soon after.

It was in February this year that he founded the KLO after merging the Saffrons Tiger Force (STF), the Rangreta Force (RF) and the Khalistan Armed Force (KAF).

Singh's arrest on 5 October, along with his secretary Paramjit Singh, by the Punjab police may provide fresh evidence in the Indira Gandhi assassination case. His interrogation could well reveal that the conspiracy ran much deeper.

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*

Beant Singh: links with Attinderpal?



All worked up

The campaign to secure a "fair deal" for unemployed youth threatens to intensify

GUJARAT

Is Gujarat going Assam's way? A question many political observers in the state are asking after the vigorous 17-day campaign launched by the youth wing of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM)—the youth wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)—to "secure a fair deal for (the majority) Gujaratis". Called Gujarat Nyaya Abhiyan or "Campaign to Seek Justice for Gujarat", it was ostensibly aimed at checking the growing number of non-Gujaratis employed in central and state undertakings as well as private companies set up with the help of government money.

According to Bharat Barot, president of the Gujarat BJYM, his organisation has been fighting to secure a fair deal for Gujarati job-hunters for almost a year now and the call for a statewide campaign was a response to the urging of the jobless youth, who have run out of patience. (There are 12 lakh unemployed men and women registered in the state's employment exchanges; of them 5.8 lakh are educated.)

During the 17-day stir, Barot organised about a thousand street-corner meetings in most towns of the state as well as gatherings on college campuses. The BJYM's effort to "apprise the youth of the seriousness of the situation" ended with the holding of a convention of 5,000 youth and a mass signature campaign on 10 October. On the next day, a memorandum submitted to chief minister Amarsinh Chaudhary threatened that the agitation would be intensified—through blocking traffic on roads and disrupting oil supplies to the state's refineries, etc.—if the situation is not redressed.

Barot argues that Gujaratis and Gujarati-speaking people are underrepresented in public-sector undertakings like ONGC, IPCL and government organisations like the income-tax department and customs. "Ninety per cent of the IAS officers in the state are non-Gujaratis," he claims.

Barot's views are echoed by many trade union leaders, who have complained time and again of the stepmotherly treatment meted out to Gu-



Amarsinh Chaudhary: coping with parochial sentiment

jaratis in private companies financed by the state government. The Janata Party, the main Opposition grouping—especially state president Chiman Patel—has often pleaded with Chaudhary for a better deal for jobless Gujaratis. If Patel is to be believed, even peons are brought in from places like Rae Bareli and Dehradun on political recommendation.

Barot is keen to clarify that the movement is not parochial and that it aims at assisting all those—irrespective of nationality—who have resided in the state for the past 15 years. In the past, the BJYM has burnt effigies, held demonstrations outside ONGC and other public-sector undertakings and organised "runs for jobs". But what won the most applause was the formation of the Rojgar Adhikar Sangh, the volunteers of which have already collected the signatures of one lakh jobless Gujarati youth all over the state.

The drive has had an impact on the state government. It has sought information from government undertakings and organisations on the percentage of Gujaratis each employs. "Once we have the statistics, we will know whether the situation is as alarming as it is made out to be," says one high-ranking official. Recently, the government instructed the chief secretary and some other top officials to instruct heads of state-run organisations to give preference to Gujaratis for jobs.

But Barot is not satisfied. "Everything is still on paper and Gujaratis continue to run from pillar to post for jobs in even class three and class four categories," he says. The BJYM seems unlikely to call off its agitation and the movement may well gather momentum in the days to come. Whether it will grow into a full-fledged Assam-type agitation is, of course, a matter too early to speculate on.

Mahesh Trivedi/*Ahmedabad*

The politics of caste

Violence inspired by the Vanniar Sangham rocks the state

TAMIL NADU

The campaign launched a year ago by the Vanniar Sangham, to secure 20 per cent reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the community, has taken violent turns time and again. Last fortnight, a clash with Harijans near Madras city resulted in a man being clubbed to death.

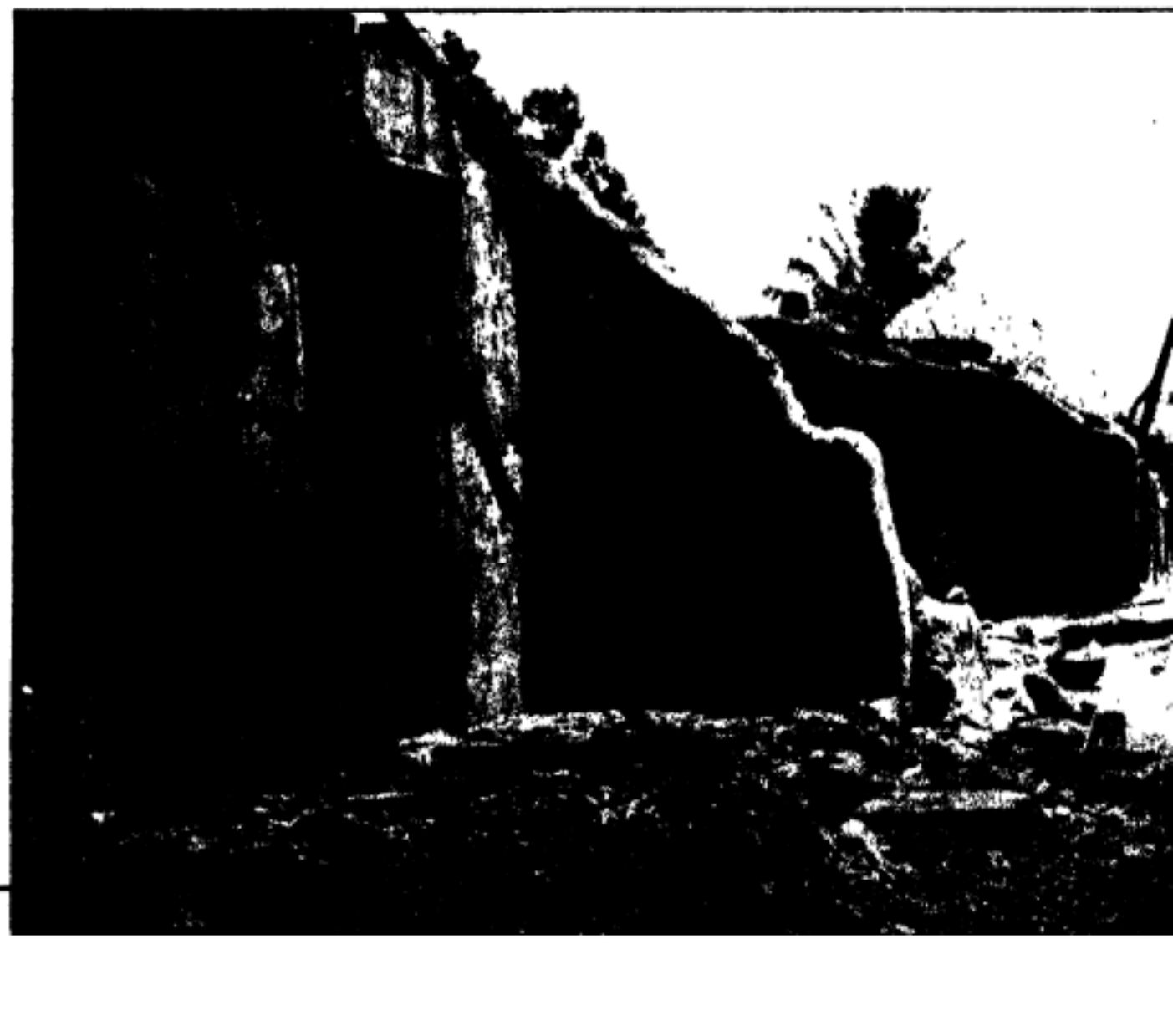
This has been followed by a spate of violent incidents. On 3 October, police had to open fire on a 500-strong mob of Vanniar arsonists near Villupuram, who undeterred by tear-gas shells had set fire to a lorry and stoned a police convoy on the Madras-Tiruchi highway, injuring twenty policemen in the process. Ten agitationists also received bullet injuries. Traffic was disrupted when huge trees were chopped and placed across the road by Vanniar men.

The same evening, violence erupted in the Vanniar-dominated South and North Arcot and Chingleput districts. Declared the state Governor's adviser G.V. Ramakrishna: "No fresh incidents have been reported since Tuesday (4 October) evening...except for some stray attempts to set up road-blocks." The situation, according to him, had become near-normal, three days after the violence near Villupuram.

But reports from the districts told an entirely different story. The Vanniars had set fire to 70 Harijan houses at Agaram village near Virudhachalam. Says Tamil Nadu inspector-general of police (law and order) K.K. Rajasekaran Nair who camped in Tindivanam to supervise police action aimed at quelling the violence: "We have in all taken into custody 90 men in South Arcot district and fifty more in Villupuram for indulging in violence." Vehicular traffic has been restored and mobile patrolling organised in certain villages identified as "sensitive".

The genesis of the present round of violence lay in the poll-boycott call given by the Sangham to protest government inaction on the demands of their community, which constitutes 30 per cent of the state's 50 million population. Consequently, no political party was allowed to hoist flags or address meetings in the Vanniar-dominated areas. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was especially marked out for harsh treatment. Says Sangham president and former IAS officer S. Subramaniam: "The DMK government had done great injustice to our community and we cannot allow that party to come to power once again." But

Harijan houses burnt by Vanniars: escalating violence



for all that it was a Congress(I) flag, hoisted by the Pondicherry health minister at Thiruvalambadi village, about 170 km south of Madras, which was pulled down by Sangham activists. The police had charged the miscreants and hence the arson.

Subramaniam, however, denies the entire incident. He says the Sangham is not overly concerned about the Congress(I), "because it has no mass strength. It is not a party to reckon with. Our boys are bent upon removing only the DMK flags." He further alleges: "The DMK is instigating the Harijans to attack us."

But eyewitness and police accounts have it otherwise: the Vanniars being made out the villains of the piece. Harijan leader V. Balasundaram demanded that Sangham leaders be jailed under the Goondas Act (which empowers the government to imprison people for the maximum period of a year without trial).

What is most intriguing is the government inaction in this regard. Asks Dravida Kazhagam (DK) general secretary K. Veeramani: "There is no political interference, at least overtly, now that there is Governor's Rule. So what prevents the police and the administration from taking effective steps to stop this violence?"

The government has basically two options to explore. Either it can view this as a social problem and call Sangham leaders to negotiate their demands, or it can treat it as a simple law and order problem, to be dealt with by stern police action.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*



Gadgil gets to work

The Congress general secretary begins collating suggestions to restructure the party's policies and programmes

CONGRESS(I)

Reports of committees set up to usher in basic changes in party functioning, policy and programmes have a notorious habit of gathering dust. The most recent case being the fate of the report submitted by the Uma Shankar Dixit committee, which looked into the question of "bogus memberships" in the Congress party. Cynics feel that the recommendations of the recently-constituted, five-member core group headed by V.N. Gadgil to restructure the policies and programmes of the party will go the same way.

But Gadgil, who staged a political comeback as AICC(I) general secretary following his unceremonious exit from the information and broadcasting ministry in October '86, remains cheerfully optimistic. Already hundreds of suggestions have begun pouring in from partymen, some from senior members. The committee will also provide a platform for grassroots workers to air their views on issues of national importance.

Gadgil is to be assisted by Vishvjit Prithvjit Singh, Pawan Kumar Bansal, Jayanti Natarajan – all Rajya Sabha members – and Mrs Ambika Soni, the glamour girl of the Sanjay Gandhi era and former general secretary of Congress(S), who returned to the party fold two years back.

What kind of restructuring does Gadgil have in mind? Four concepts—democracy, secularism, socialism and planning—are fundamental to the party, Gadgil feels. "We are not changing concepts. The contents of these concepts—whether they require any change after 40 years—is something we are exploring," he says.

In August this year, Gadgil met Rajiv Gandhi to discuss the different problems facing the party. "He asked me to prepare an action plan." Soon afterwards, late one night, he was summoned to Race Course Road. Several AICC(I) general secretaries were also present. "The Prime Minister asked me whether I would be interested if I were entrusted with this task of finalising the party's policies and programmes as AICC(I) general secretary." And so the committee came into being.

Gadgil explains that the committee will focus on four main themes, which have been subjects of heated debate in recent AICC(I) sponsored seminars and discussions. These are: electoral reforms, Panchayati Raj, party organisation and economic programmes (or the 20-point programme). The All India Congress Committee will have four sessions in different parts of the country before the general elections and each will be devoted to one of the four themes. The first one, scheduled to take



V.N. Gadgil: optimistic

place in November, will focus on electoral reforms and the last, which will be held on 14 November (Pandit Nehru's 100th birth anniversary) in Allahabad, will form the basis of the party's election manifesto.

Work is on in full swing to collate suggestions on electoral reforms, the first topic on the agenda. The Prime Minister himself is taking keen interest in the committee.

Vishvjit Prithvjit Singh, the portly Rajya Sabha member who is on the committee, claims that it encourages worker participation in the party's policies and programmes. "The whole idea is to make them feel they have a key role to play. They suggest electoral reforms. We tell them 'OK, tell us how to do it'. We (committee members) are just postmen. We collect ideas, collate them and send them to the Congress Working Committee. Or get an idea from the

CWC and toss it to the grassroots workers for discussion," explains Singh.

To explain how the committee functions, Gadgil notes that four documents — suggestions made by the Election Commission on electoral reforms, suggestions made by Opposition parties, report of the AICC(I) group on electoral reforms at the recently held workshop (6, 7 September) in Delhi and a note prepared by members of the Gadgil committee analysing different aspects of the electoral process like the role of money power, voter list accuracy, problems of non serious candidates, etc., have been circulated to all the Pradesh Congress Committees.

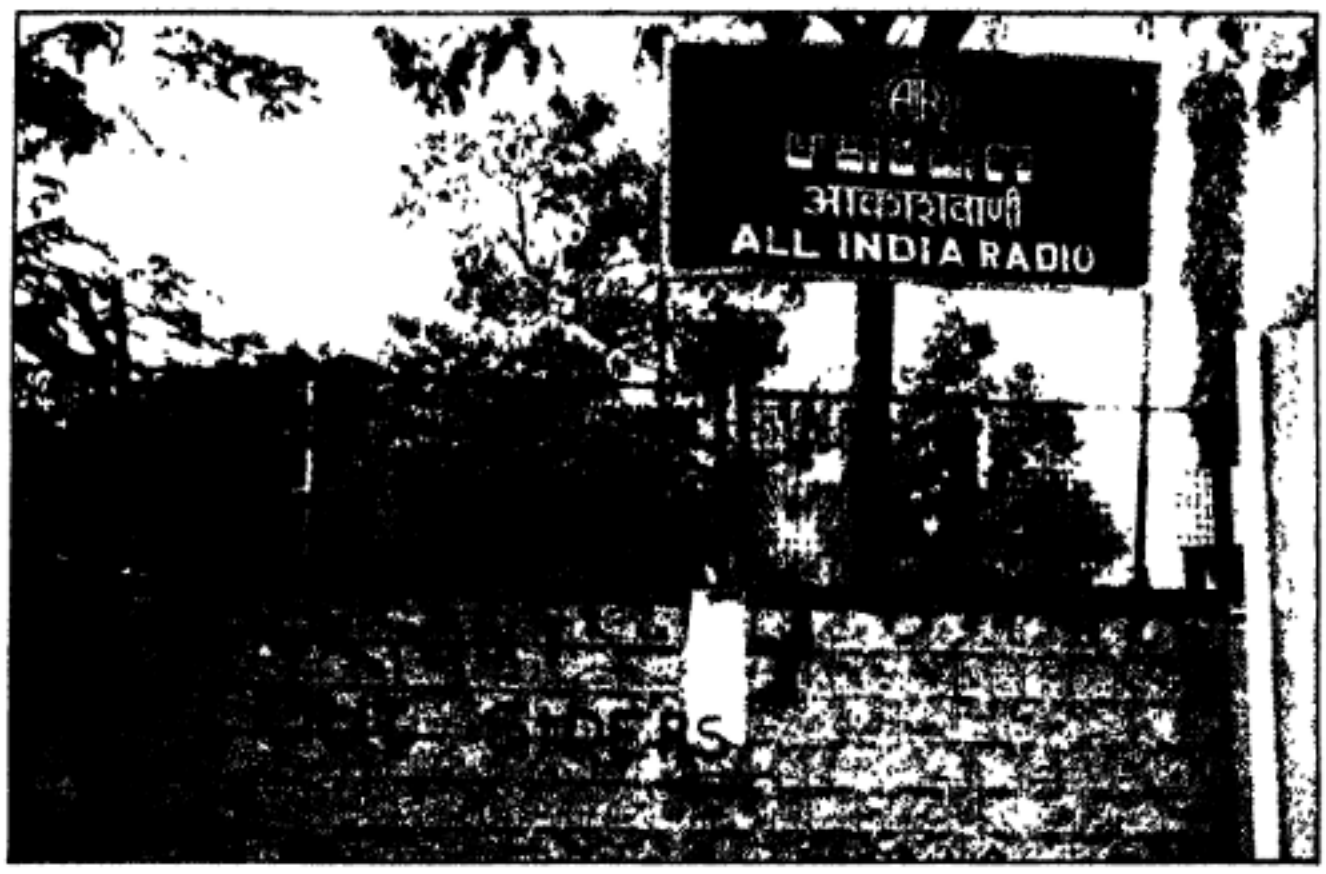
Most of the Pradesh Congress Committees have already sent in their reports on the recent discussions on electoral reforms. The committee will submit its final report to the Congress Working Committee by 5 October, says Gadgil. After that, the committee will start working on 'economic programmes', the subject of the AICC(I) session, scheduled to be held in February next year.



Uma Shankar Dixit: will Gadgil's report meet the same fate?

The political significance of the committee lies in the fact that it provides a forum for Congressmen dissatisfied about particular programmes of the party. "Debates and discussions have so far been confined to the Congress Working Committee and the AICC(I)," points out a committee member. Now the high command seems to be realising the need to involve lower level workers. Hence, the recent series of workshops, seminars and the creation of the Gadgil committee. But will the promise of electoral reforms, economic uplift, etc. remain only a promise?

Patralekha Chatterjee / *New Delhi*



Akashvani, Bangalore: target of Kannada activists

AIR hijack

Kannadiga activists capture the Bangalore station of All India Radio

KARNATAKA

Radio buffs who tuned in to the early morning broadcast of Akashvani Bangalore on 2 October were in for a rude shock. Suddenly, the *Geetharadhana* programme (of devotional music) went off the air to be replaced by anti-Hindi slogans and speeches. It was only much later that they realised what had happened. Activists of the Kannada Ranadheera Pade, a militant pro-Kannadiga outfit, had broken into the AIR station and taken control of the announcer's cabin. The slogans continued for a full 10 minutes and were stopped only after the police arrived following the Akashvani staff summoning help. The intruders were arrested and charged with unlawful assembly, armed dacoity and trespassing.

The activists gained entry to the announcer's cabin by jumping over the back wall, making their way to the cabin through a maze of corridors. They took charge after frightening staff members by brandishing toy guns, fake bombs and real knives. The police believe that the operation owed its success to the inside information provided by R.S.N. Gowda, an AIR programme officer and Pade chief, who was among those arrested. Gowda, however, says he was not involved and points out he was not even present on the day the incident took place.

This was not the first time that Kannada activists captured the government media to voice their objections. On Independence Day in 1983, the citizens of Bangalore could not watch former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi addressing the nation on TV as members of the Writers and Artistes Guild sneaked into the office of the Electricity Board and cut off power. Telecast was also disrupted on 31 January this year, when anti-Hindi activists locked out Doordarshan staff and cut short the screening of the teleserial *Ramayan*.

But it is not only the Hindi question which bothers the Pade. It also objects to the fact that Tamilians and other 'outsiders' obtain employment in the state while hundreds of Kannada youth remain unemployed. After the incident, Gowda held a press conference where he threatened to set fire to the employment exchange.

Gowda's militant posture was defended by noted literary critic, Professor L.S. Seshagiri Rao, who is an executive committee member of the Writers and Artistes Guild. He says, "The idea of breaking into the AIR station and broadcasting slogans may seem shocking, but it is unfortunate that it has become necessary."

Threatens Gowda: "If the central government fails to take corrective steps to safeguard the interests of Kannadigas, the Ranadheera Pade will continue with its sabotage work in central government offices."

Will the government take his threat seriously?

Prakash Belawadi/*Bangalore*

Electronic warfare

India and Pakistan are outdoing each other to equip themselves with electronic weapons, but will these be effective in actual combat?

DEFENCE

India and Pakistan are racing to equip their armed forces with new-fangled electronic warfare weapons. But how effective will these bits of sophisticated systems be during actual warfare? In the Iran-Iraq war, aircraft equipped with the most sophisticated electronic sensors failed to locate each other and most air battles were conducted visually and with aircraft tearing into each other in the old dog-fight mode. Will the story be any different in the aerial war between Pakistan and India?

Air force planners in both the countries think it will. And they have been buying up whatever systems they can lay their hands on. Pakistani air force's pride is the Silacs system: a second generation computerised system for locating, identifying and tracking enemy aircraft. This system was discarded by NATO in 1978 and installed in Pakistan four years ago. This is essentially a computer-controlled communications system that links radars to a centralised command where a 'real time' radar map is displayed. The system is supposed to dramatically speed up decision-making and is touted as being responsible for the Pakistani air force's success in shooting down two Afghan air force planes.

The Indians, too, are not far behind in the field. As far back as in 1974, the Indian government revealed an ambitious Adges programme—the plan envisaged the setting up of an 'air defence ground environment system' all along the country's borders. From January 1974, production of indigenous air defence equipment started at the Bharat Electronics Ltd's factory at Ghaziabad. India began installing high-powered radar of Italian design. And more recently, Thomson-CSF of France was contracted for the supply of at least four three-dimensional radar stations and the construction under licence of five more such stations. The Indian air force has linked up these radars to centralised commands in the same manner as the Silacs system. The Adges system is larger and far more elaborate than anything Pakistan can muster, chiefly because the Indian programme envisages indigenous production instead of expensive imports.

But all these expensive radars might not count for much during actual combat. For, both the Indian and the Pakistani air forces know the shortcomings of conventional radars, specifically the 'blind zone' created by the curvature of the earth. Because of this, most air forces in the world have developed tactics of flying into enemy territory fast and low, barely a couple of hundred metres over tree-top level. The only way to spot such low-flying aircraft is to mount 'look down' radar on other aircraft. This is one reason why Pakistan has been clamouring for the AWACS.

If the long range radars are not going to be able to spot enemy intruders, air defence will largely become the responsibility of close-in missile systems from the Soviet Union and most of these are guided to their target by fire-control radars. Even the American surface-to-air missiles with Pakistan are similarly guided. Some of the missiles have infra-red homing systems that guide the missile during its terminal stage to the hot aircraft engines.

Both radar and infra-red guided missiles can be confounded. Most attack aircraft today are fitted with electronic counter-measure (ECM) devices. These highly expensive appendages—called pods—fitted onto aircraft can tune in to frequencies of radars and then emit electronic noise to 'jam' the enemy radars. Pakistan, for instance, has fitted ALQ-131-ECM pods on some of its aircraft. The pod can be re-programmed for specific mission requirements and its digital computers help in analysing radar threats and directing an optimum jamming programme. The Indian air force too has equipped itself with similar gadgets.

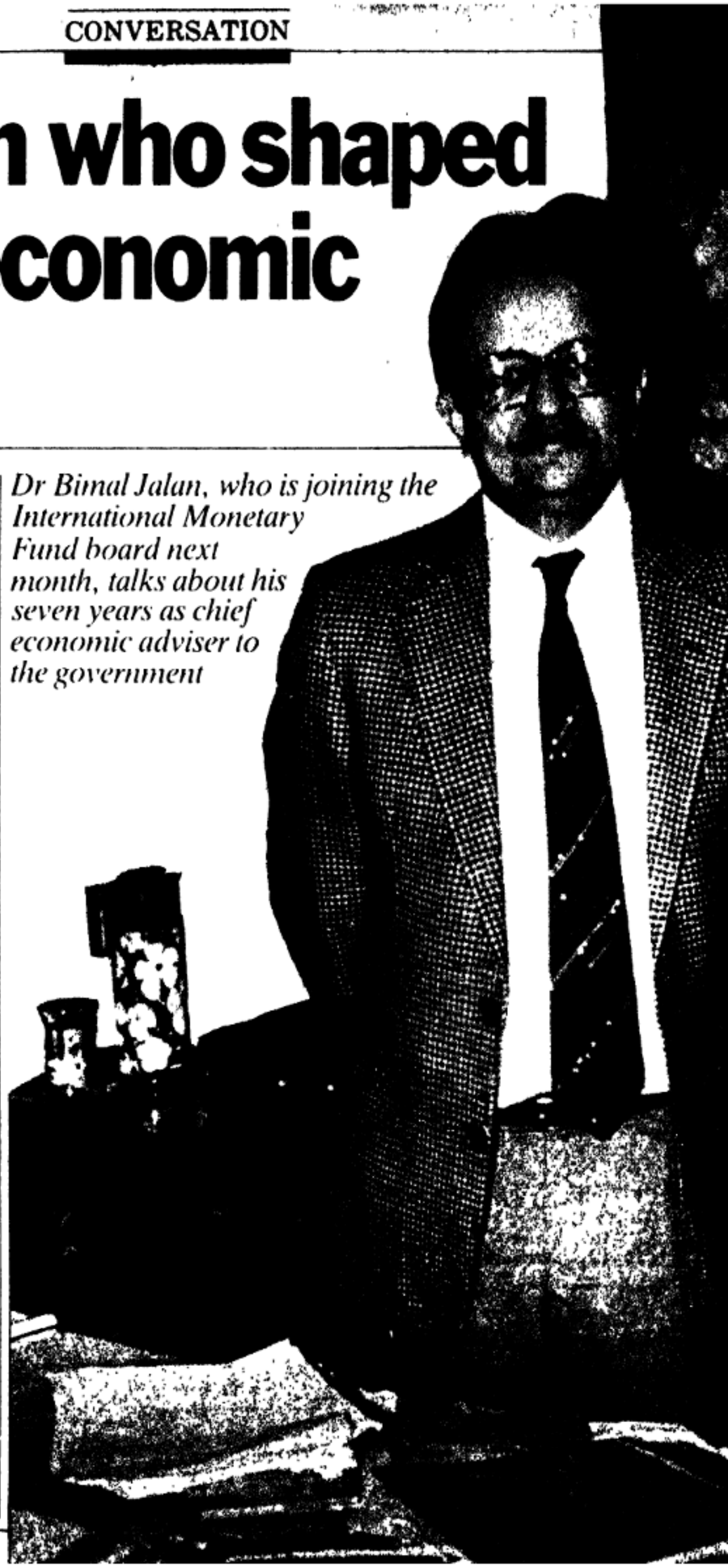


MIG-21s take off during a 'practice interception mission': state-of-the-art technology

Even infra-red guidance systems can be confused by heat flares. All the sophisticated electronic warfare systems, radars and missiles can at best make life difficult for pilots but not impossible. In the next air battle, both sides will try their best at the very start of hostilities to knock out each others' radar and other electronic warfare systems through the use of anti-radiation missiles. From that stage onwards, it will be warfare in the old style. Even speed will not matter much. For, pilots cannot fly at speeds of more than about a 1,000 kilometres per hour during attack and interception phases. What will matter is the agility of the aircraft and the pilot's skill.

Indranil Banerjie/*New Delhi*

The man who shaped India's economic policy



Dr Bimal Jalan, who is joining the International Monetary Fund board next month, talks about his seven years as chief economic adviser to the government

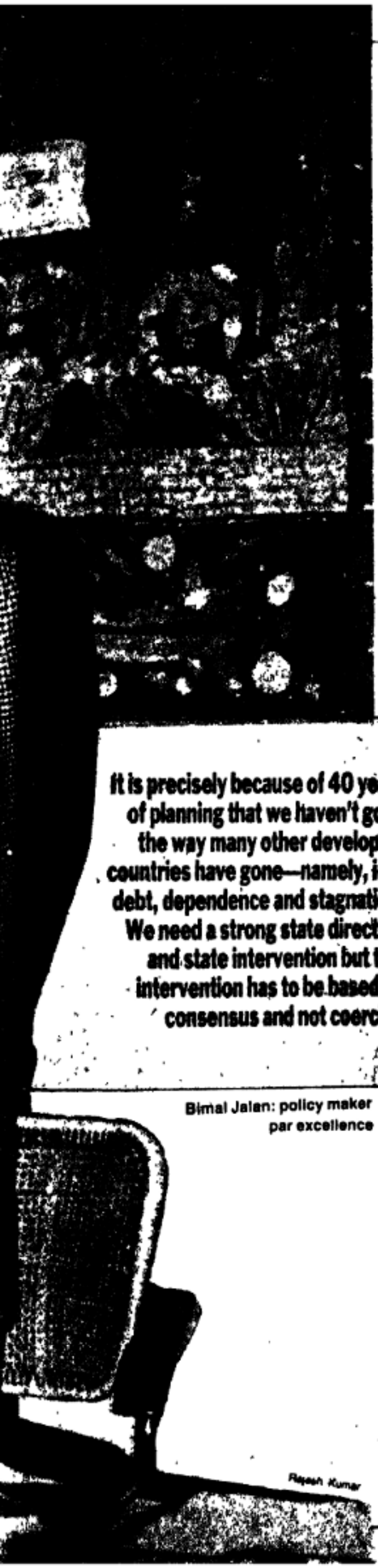
Amidst a bevy of bureaucrats he was the odd man out: a quiet, unassuming professional occupying one of the most powerful offices in the country. For seven long years, through tumult and change, Dr Bimal Jalan survived as chief economic adviser to the Union finance ministry. And Dr Jalan did not merely survive but he prevailed.

Dr Jalan leaves his office at the end of October to move on to Washington DC and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) board. But many of the changes he helped bring about as one of the most important voices in the finance ministry are irreversible. Government attitudes towards the economy and industry in particular, will never be the same again.

The old school of thought about a hands-on, detailed and rigid style of economic management, which Dr Jalan inherited, today stands discredited. The new name of the game is intelligent indirect control that attracts rather than compels economic forces to move in line with national goals. His years also saw a marked shift in the methods of government control over the economy, new initiatives for industry and a new mood of innovativeness.

One reason why Dr Jalan succeeded is his horse sense. Unlike other economists of his age, he never assumed away ground realities. He was an academic blessed with a grounding in realpolitik and a feel for the complexities of the Indian economy. A lot of this has to do with his background.

Dr Jalan was born and brought up in Calcutta, at a time when the city was still the commercial capital of the country. His father was a reputed solicitor and his family had long been associated with Bengal politics. His grandfather, I.D. Jalan, had been the first Speaker of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly and subsequently minister for law and local self government in successive ministries till 1967



Bimal Jalan: policy maker par excellence

Rajesh Kumar

It is precisely because of 40 years of planning that we haven't gone the way many other developing countries have gone—namely, into debt, dependence and stagnation. We need a strong state direction and state intervention but this intervention has to be based on consensus and not coercion



Bimal Jalan's predilections were, however, in different directions. He graduated from Calcutta's prestigious Presidency College and thereafter, in the tradition of all good Presidency scholars of that time, went on to Cambridge and then Oxford. He taught briefly at Presidency College and the Delhi School of Economics. And in 1973 he joined the government as economic adviser to the Union finance ministry. Subsequently, he was appointed economic adviser to the industry ministry. During 1979-81 he was posted at London as director of the Commonwealth Secretariat. By then Dr Jalan had been marked for the charmed circle.

In 1981, Mrs Indira Gandhi appointed him chief economic adviser to the finance ministry, a post that had earlier been held by people like Dr Ashok Mitra, Dr Manmohan Singh, Dr V.K. Ramaswamy and Dr I.G. Patel (at present the head of the London School of Economics). Two years later, he was given successive additional charges as special secretary, banking secretary and secretary, economic affairs. He was just 42 years old at that time and the appointments made him the youngest ever secretary to the Government of India.

Those were heady years that now Dr Jalan looks back on with nostalgia in this exclusive interview to SUNDAY. *He talks about the decision-making process and the issues that have preoccupied the finance ministry in recent years. Excerpts:*

SUNDAY: What are the economic principles you consider most important in India?

Jalan: India is unique. What distinguishes it from most other developing countries is that it is large and that it is democratic. Our political history and institutions are very different. None of the existing economic models can be transplanted in this country. We have to evolve our own economic policies. One of the lessons I have derived is that you cannot be dogmatic in our situation.

What exactly have we learnt from experience?

After Independence we launched a new programme of development. Now we need to review our experience of the last 40 years. There is, for instance, a good theoretical case for industrial licensing in this country in the sense that our resources are limited and must be directed to areas which will be of greatest relevance to our economy. This thinking has guided our policy for 35 years or so. In practice, however, in several cases this led to pre-emption of capacity, certain wrong decisions, mismatch of supply and demand, high costs and rigidity in industrial structure. This is also the lesson of experience in China and the Soviet Union. Consequently, we had to respond by modifying our approach to industrial licensing. We now feel that much greater freedom is required at the plant level to decide on the output mix, to diversify and bring about technical improvement and modernisation. This does not mean that we give up direction of the economy; it means shifting from detailed, centralised, physical and administrative controls by the bureaucracy to financial, parametric and fiscal direction.

Similarly, in the area of import policy, there is a good theoretical case in a poor country to say that somebody sitting in Delhi must allocate every bit of foreign exchange. The experience has been that this kind of physical and quantitative allocation has often created shortages, led to the emergence of blackmarket premia and, in the end, has not saved much foreign exchange. A much better system is to regulate imports through high duties and tariffs on low priority products and confine the system of quantitative allocation to bulk imports. If we don't want something to be imported it is much better to stop it totally or impose very high tariffs rather than rely on detailed administrative scrutiny.

What kind of economic philosophy do you personally subscribe to?

I do not like to give myself labels. I regard myself as a moderate who shares the perceptions of most Indians about our social and economic priorities. The primary task, as Pandit Nehru said, is the creation of a just society with just means. I believe we have to make our economy grow faster, we have to reduce poverty, we have to make the economy serve the interests of the majority and we have to be self-reliant.

There is a broad consensus in the country on the grand principles of economic policies. But we must come down from grand principles to brasstacks and make our policies work. As an economist in the government, I regard my primary job as helping in working out policies which can actually achieve these objectives without any dogmatic or ideological hang-ups. The primary task now is to worry about the nitty-gritty and to devise policies which actually work on the ground.

But don't you think it is better to choose a clear-cut direction in economic policy as Mao did or Mrs Thatcher is doing now?

I believe we have to suit our economic policy to our political institutions. India is a democracy which China is not; we are a poor country which Britain is not. Our policies have to be based on a broad national consensus, which naturally implies moderation, and at the same time, these have to work in the interests of the majority of our people who are poor and do not operate in the marketplace. We need a strong state direction and state intervention but this intervention has to be based on consensus and not coercion.

What about the feeling that after 40 years of planning, it is time to scrap these institutions and government control?

In my view, it is precisely because of 40 years of planning that we haven't gone the way many other developing countries have gone —namely, into debt, dependence and stagnation. We need planning and government direction but the instrumentalities of control have to be different and much more flexible and sophisticated. We must recognise the limits of policing. Economic policy is as good as its administration. An idea may be sound but if it does not work, it may do more harm than good.

How has economic policy-making in this country evolved with the times?

In the last 15 years, we have gone through some very difficult periods—droughts, oil shocks, upheavals in the international monetary and financial systems and some political upheavals. But India has been able to cope with these developments relatively well, contrary to the expectations of most observers. This is due to the imaginative use of macro-economic policies and prompt response to developments as they occur.

For example, the package of measures adopted in 1974-75 to tackle rising inflation and problems created by the first oil shock paid dividends within two years. After the second oil shock and the drought of 1979, a prompt decision was taken to accelerate the programme for indigenous oil production. Our oil output increased from 11 million tonnes per year to 30 million tonnes during the Sixth Plan. More recently, large investments in the power sector and special efforts to bring about improvements in the working of the infrastructure sector has shown increases in the efficiency of this sector. Then, during last year's drought, the government kept the budget deficit under tight control, took advance action to start employment programmes and, most important of all, organised the release of nearly 20 million tonnes of foodgrains. As a result, inflation during 1987-88 was about 10 per cent compared to 22 per cent during the last drought (1979-80).

The export sector's progress requires much greater attention. It is more profitable for Indian manufacturers to concentrate on the domestic market rather than on the export market. This is perhaps the result of tariff policies that favour the import of components for domestic manufacture



Despite all this, we see that employment, which is supposed to be a priority objective, has stagnated in the organised sector during the past four years.

There is a basic dilemma that developing countries face. Increasing productiv ity and productive employment requires high capital investment which, in turn, can also prove to be labour displacing. Much of the investment in the infrastructure sector is capital intensive. If you have an expanding labour force, the only way perhaps is to take care of unemployment through increased investment in agriculture and agro-based village and small industries. Our policies have to strike a balance and this is not easy to achieve.

But the government seems to have focused all its attention on the organised sector...

When you are changing something, the object of change becomes the centrepiece of debate. It does not mean that other things were not being looked into. There are absolutely no clear answers to every problem. There are no absolute truths in economics and we have to learn as we go along.

Have there been any dramatic changes in the industrial sector?

The first major difference that I notice today is the unprecedented growth in the capital market. Seven years ago, companies were raising no more than Rs 100 crores or so each. Now companies are raising as much as Rs 4,000 crores from the market.

Overall industrial growth rates too have risen sharply. We have had an average of 8 per cent annual growth in the last four years, which has not been achieved since the mid-1960s. Moreover, the ability to handle large projects has improved. Today, for instance, we are taking the same time to set up 800 MW projects as we used to set up 110 MW projects in the past. Industry seems to have grown up.

Have concessions like tax exemptions and duty waivers favouring certain companies benefited consumers or spurred greater investment by the favoured companies?

The experience has been varied. I would rather not go into the specifics of this issue as it remains a matter of current debate.

Have liberalisation, reduced duties on components, easier foreign collaboration norms and other such policy steps made Indian industry more lazy and less innovative?

It really depends on whether industrial policy in a particular sector has increased competition or reduced it. In sectors where more units are being set up and where the monopoly powers of existing units have been curbed, all units are having to work harder to maintain their market share. The critical question is the degree of competition or monopoly, and not norms or levels of duty.

But we see increased competition only in certain sectors of industry.

Government policy *per se* has not favoured certain sectors over others. What really has happened is that in

certain sectors—for instance, the capital goods sector—both licensing and collaboration policies were already quite relaxed. In certain other sectors—like electronics and two-wheelers—licensing and collaboration policies were liberalised only recently. As a result, most changes have taken place in the recently liberalised sectors and these get noticed the most.

It seems that the capital goods sector has suffered.

This is one area where we have learned. As far as the capital goods sector is concerned, there was indeed some adverse impact because of relatively low rates of duty on project imports for a couple of years. The argument that lower duties would reduce project costs and the Indian capital goods industry would in any case be protected through quantitative controls, proved to be faulty. There is some evidence now that the direction of investment shifted in favour of imported equipment because of lower costs.

The import duties on project imports were therefore raised in the 1987 Budget and a number of promotional measures were also introduced for the modernisation of our capital goods sector. There is evidence now that the demand for Indian capital goods has picked up substantially. This is a good example of learning from experience.

How has the other priority area, the export sector done?

During the last 18 months, exports have been doing very well. But I am not happy about the progress. This is one area that requires much greater attention and we have to push more of our industry in that direction.

What about the theory that liberalised imports would automatically, albeit after a time lag, help boost exports and bring about a gradual balance in the trade account?

There is nothing automatic about the processes for decreasing the balance of payments deficits. It depends on the policies selected and, to my mind, manufacturers have tended to concentrate more on the domestic market instead of the export market.

Why do Indian manufacturers prefer the domestic market?

The economic explanation is complicated. The reason probably lies in the fact that the import of components is relatively cheap whereas the effective protection for imported final products is high. This creates a bias in favour of production for the domestic market based on the import of components.

Let us say that a product X is allowed to be imported at a duty of 200 per cent and its components are imported at 50 per cent duty. The domestic manufacturer of product X can therefore sell in the domestic market at a price which is 200 per cent more than the international price but pays only 50 per cent more than the international price for his components. If he were to export, he will only get the international price plus some cash assistance and duty drawback (which would offset the duty paid on components). It is obvious that it is more profitable to sell domestically rather than export.

Our liberalised trade policies seem to have sent imports skyrocketing. Is it advisable to continue with it?

The point is not that we are importing more than we need to but that we are exporting less than we should. In relation to our gross national product, our import-export sector is very small even now. India's exports, for example, amount to just about 6 per cent of GDP compared to 11 per cent in the case of China.

What are the dangerous trends in the economy?

An important priority, which successive finance ministers have themselves highlighted, is the need to check the growth of non-plan expenditure and save more. This is a difficult problem to tackle in practice. Because all government expenditure benefits someone or the other. But there is no doubt that if we want to strengthen the economy we have to invest more and this can only be done if non-developmental expenditure is curtailed.

What about the government's growing internal debt?

The severity of the problem depends entirely on the use we put our borrowings to. If borrowings are productively used, servicing the debt is no problem. If, however, borrowings are undertaken to meet consumption expenditure we will get into difficulty. To the extent that our revenue deficit has been rising and we have had to borrow to meet the deficit, we have reason to be concerned.

Should a poor country like India be exporting food items?

Why not? The important point is to grow enough food to meet our requirements for consumption, for building our reserve stocks, our public distribution system and food-for-work programmes. If after meeting these requirements we have a surplus, there is no harm in exporting food in a good year, just as we import food in a bad year.

How do you look back on your years as chief economic adviser?

The best part was the feeling of involvement with the country's problems and that, in some small way, one was able to contribute to the formulation of economic policy.

What is your next assignment all about?



Government policy *per se* has not favoured certain sectors of industry. In sectors where more units are being set up and where the monopoly powers of existing units have been curbed, all units are working harder to maintain their market share. Most changes have taken place in the recently liberalised sectors and these get noticed the most

I shall be representing India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan on the board of the International Monetary Fund. The IMF is charged with the responsibility of surveillance over the international monetary and financial system, and in addition it provides credit to countries with balance of payments difficulties. In its latter role, most of its borrowers are developing countries. India, along with other developing countries, has been trying to provide a greater developmental focus to the activities of the IMF. My task would be to continue this.

Are you happy about your new assignment?

I am happy to have a break. This will provide an opportunity to reflect on our own experience and also to learn about other countries. Perhaps it will help me to do a better job when I come back to Delhi.

Interviewed by Indranil Banerjie/ *New Delhi*

HALDIA PETROCHEM

Horns of a dilemma

More than Centre-state politics, the contentious project appears to be stalled over the pattern of financing

It is the most talked about industrial project in West Bengal and supposedly the most prestigious, the biggest and the most controversial. But there is a catch: the project does not exist—and probably never will !

The Haldia Petrochemical Project has come to symbolise the West Bengal government's industrial ambitions—in this case, thwarted ambitions. The state government has, for the past few years, been claiming that this project will breathe fresh life into the state's putrescent industrial sector, that it will provide employment to 1.5 lakh workers and that it will spur the establishment of hundreds of ancillary units. The only hurdle between this promise and the beatific future, the state's Marxist bosses claim, is the Centre's pusillanimity.

And true to form, West Bengal's Marxists have been using the issue to bolster their thesis about the Centre's evil designs to push West Bengal to the brink. In the March 1987 Assembly elections, the Centre's refusal to approve the project was made a major issue. And, more recently, on 2 October, chief minister Jyoti Basu claimed that there had been no response from the Centre on the Haldia project.

On the face of it, it is a simple dilemma: a confrontation between an insistent state and a recalcitrant Centre. If, however, Union finance ministry files are to be believed—the West Bengal government, incidentally, does not believe them—then the dilemma is as complex as the configuration of this giant petrochemical concept.

The real problem revolves round the financing of this project, which is estimated to cost at least Rs 1,470 crores. The point is that the West Bengal government feels that it cannot or should not invest the entire equity requirement of the project. In 1981, the state government had asked the Centre to invest 40 per cent of the equity and when the Centre refused, it roped in R.P. Goenka (*see box*). But Goenka also seemed far from keen to invest more than a relatively minimal amount.

Although the project had been cleared as a matter of policy by the finance ministry a few months ago, the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), which was told to loan the bulk of the funds objected to the financing pattern of the project. In August this year, the IDBI, after consultations with the Union finance ministry, pointed out that the high debt:equity ratio proposed by Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd (HPL), the joint sector company floated by the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) and the R.P. Goenka group, would make the project totally non-viable. Given the prevailing international prices of the petrochemicals proposed to be manufactured at Haldia, IDBI pointed out that the loan servicing burden would be unduly high and would push the company into the red.

The IDBI and the finance ministry suggested a way out of the impasse by telling HPL to split their ambitious project into two parts. In the first,





R.P. Goenka: left in the lurch?

HPL was told to set up three downstream units for the manufacture of high density polyethylene, polypropylene and styrene. This phase would use imported ethylene and cost about Rs 880 crores to set up. The IDBI argued that the money that WBIDC and R P. Goenka had promised to invest would be adequate for a project of this size.

In the second stage, it was suggested that Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Ltd (IPCL) be involved for the setting up



S.B. Chavan (left) and Jyoti Basu: quiet deal ?

of a naptha cracker unit. The size of the naptha cracker—1 39 lakh tonnes per annum—was considered to be uneconomical and a larger plant size was suggested. The second phase of the petrochem complex would also produce end products based on ethylene and propylene.

On 13 September this year, IDBI chairman S.S. Nadkarni said that HPL had agreed to this formula and was preparing a revised proposal. The finance ministry heaved a sigh of relief. And by end September it seemed as if the politics of the petrochem complex had finally been laid to rest.

On 4 October, however, chief minister Basu threw a fresh spanner in the works. While publicly [illegible]

The complex events

December 1976: West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) files application for the establishment of a petrochemical complex at Haldia.
November 1977: Letter of intent issued to WBIDC.
January 1981: West Bengal government requests participation of Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Ltd (IPCL).
March 1981: West Bengal government asks Centre to be 40 per cent partner in project.
February 1983: WBIDC and state government agree to submit revised project feasibility report.
February 1984: WBIDC submits revised report.
June 1984: Centre says it cannot participate in either the Haldia or the Kawas (Gujarat) petrochem projects.
September 1985: R.P.Goenka roped in and a joint venture company, Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd (HPL), floated.
October-November 1985: HPL requests a change in the product-mix.
March 1986: Letter of intent transferred to HPL.
July 1986: Centre approves seven foreign collaboration agreements sought by HPL.
April 1987: HPL seeks permission to manufacture polypropylene.
August 1987: Centre approves proposal for polypropylene manufacture.
February 1988: Centre asks HPL to renegotiate terms with foreign collaborator for polypropylene manufacture.
June-July 1988: Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) raises objections to certain aspects of the project, including the low level of equity contribution by the R.P.Goenka group.
August 1988: Union finance ministry suggests that the project be implemented in two phases.
September 1988: IDBI chairman says HPL had agreed to implement the project in two phases.
September 1988: Union finance ministry takes policy decision to give the project financial clearance provided it is implemented in two phases.
4 October, 1988: Chief minister Jyoti Basu tells finance ministry that the project cannot be implemented in two phases. Basu later tells newsmen that he had not received any proposal on Haldia from the Centre. Finance ministry agrees to hold a high-level meeting on the issue in mid-October.

proposals on the splitting up of the project, Basu privately told Union finance minister S.B. Chavan, that his government was not agreeable to a piecemeal approach to the project. Basu insisted that the project be sanctioned in one go and not in phases. Chavan was also requested not to disclose anything to the press at this juncture pending a final agreement between the Centre and the state.

On the face of it, it is a simple dilemma: a confrontation between an insistent state and a recalcitrant Centre. If,however, finance ministry files are to be believed—the West Bengal government, incidentally, does not believe them—then the dilemma is as complex as the concept

The latest turn of events could well hold up the project indefinitely. According to senior finance ministry officials, the West Bengal government is trying to add a fresh twist to the Haldia saga. The state government now is faced with three options: first, to go along with the two-phase proposal; second, to ask R.P. Goenka to shell out more money as equity; or to bring in a second partner. Union finance ministry officials suspect that in view of R.P. Goenka's limited resources, the state government might be tempted to rope in an industrialist with far greater resources. Nobody is guessing who that industrialist is but if the Haldia project is being held up it is not simply because of Centre-state politics.

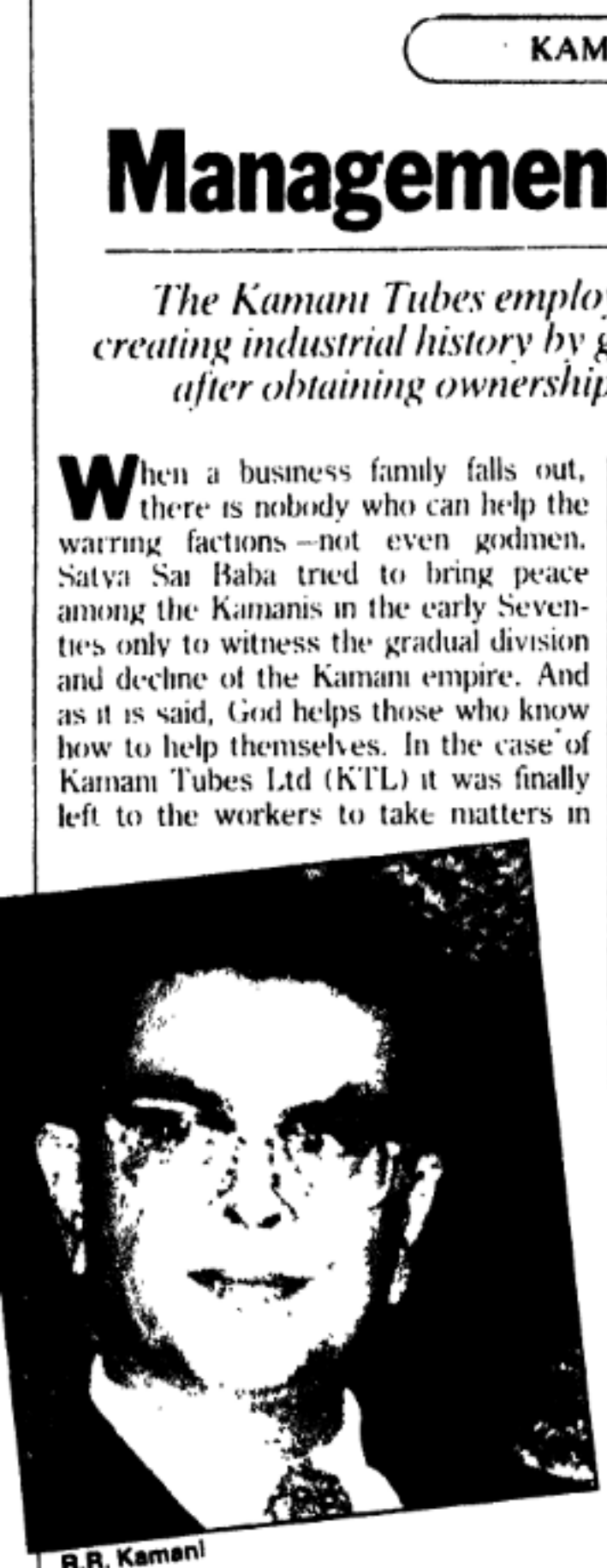
Indranil Banerjie /Calcutta

KAMANIS

Management by workers

The Kamani Tubes employees are on the threshold of creating industrial history by gearing up to begin production after obtaining ownership of the troubled company

When a business family falls out, there is nobody who can help the warring factions—not even godmen. Satya Sai Baba tried to bring peace among the Kamanis in the early Seventies only to witness the gradual division and decline of the Kamani empire. And as it is said, God helps those who know how to help themselves. In the case of Kamani Tubes Ltd (KTL) it was finally left to the workers to take matters in



R.R. Kamani

their hands and ensure the reopening of their long closed factory after a historic battle which perhaps has no precedence in India's industrial history

With the owners engaged in a fratricidal war, the workers of KTL were forced to take their case to court and also build public opinion through the press. The architect of the workers' historic four-year battle was D. Thankappan, working president of the Kamani Employees Union. And the crowning glory came on 20 September this year when the Kamani workers marched into the KTL factory at Kurla in Bombay. It all became possible after the Supreme Court's unprecedented decision to transfer the ownership to the workers. While the workers have technically taken over KTL, they have now to wait for the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), which has been appointed by the Bureau for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), to work out the mechanics of transfer of KTL to the workers' cooperative.

But how did KTL come to such a pass? The founder of the Kamani group, P.R. Kamani, 60, had, on 12 October, 1972, called in his family members to the boardroom to announce that he desired to retire to Sai Baba's *ashram* and that he was appointing his second brother R.R. Kamani as his successor and chairman of the Kamani group. But the elder Kamani never made it to Whitefield in Bangalore—for he died within two hours of his announcement after a massive heart attack.

All was well with R.R. Kamani standing by his four brothers and P.R. Kamani's son, Ashish. But only for a very short while for, within a year, the brothers Kamani fell out. It was thereafter a bitter fratricidal war which ripped the empire apart. Even mediation by the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai could not prevent a carving up of the group.

As part of the deal worked out by the court, the workers will have to pay Rs 96 lakhs to the Kamanis for the 9.6 lakh shares held by them. (Incidentally, the KTL shares have not been traded on the Bombay Stock Exchange for the last few years.) The workers' cooperative has a membership of 600 who have already contributed Rs 2000 each from their provident fund, which has brought in Rs

Ashish Kamani



The Kamani Tubes factory: a new experiment

Sherwin Crasto Indian Post



12 lakhs. According to Thankappan, the workers' cooperative is trying to organise another Rs 60 lakhs from the urban cooperative banks. Says he, "The bankers are interested in seeing whether there will be a qualitative change in managerial practices under the workers. While the managerial structure will be as per the directives of the BIFR, we hope to strike new relationships between management and government departments, management and bankers and also with clients."

Thankappan is confident of getting the money by this month—at 15 per cent interest with a six month repayment holiday. He expects stock audit and assets audit to be complete by 15 October, after which maintenance and reconditioning work in the plant will begin. Trial production in KTL—which has been closed since 1984—is expected to begin in the third week of December and actual production by January 1989, according to the schedule worked out. The production schedule envisages the manufacture of 80 tonnes of non-ferrous tubes and 100 tonnes of non-ferrous tubes.

The IDBI has now to constitute a committee comprising a representative each from the State Bank of India, IDBI, state government and BIFR to undertake the stock audit, effect the transfer of the shareholding to the workers, and appoint a new board. The Articles of Association too will have to be amended under the new dispensation besides formulating the by-laws of the workers' cooperative.

With the owners engaged in a fratricidal war, it was finally left to the workers of Kamani Tubes to take matters in their hands and ensure the reopening of their long closed factory after a battle which perhaps has no precedence in India's industrial history

Indeed, the KTL experience has become a benchmark for Indian industry and its progress is being watched keenly to see whether the experiment succeeds. In a way the Supreme Court judgment has placed an immense responsibility on the KTL employees. Says Thankappan, "We will have an opportunity to show to the world that workers in new India are capable of managing their own affairs and shaping their own destiny. It is an opportunity to establish that when workers are inspired by an ideal they can produce the best."



D. Thankappan: triumphant



The KTL experiment means a great deal even for the trade union movement in the country. Says Thankappan, "In the event of our succeeding, the trade union movement will be stepping into a new creative phase. One can almost hear the footsteps of the new era."

And what about the Kamani Employees Union which has ushered in the 'takeover' of the company? Thankappan visualises a bigger for the role in the future and discounts any suggestion of the union being disbanded. For long the central government has been talking about workers' participation in management and struggling to give the concept a concrete shape. The Kamani employees have gone one better: it will be management by workers!

Olga Tellis/Bombay

Ambanis to join L&T board

As was widely predicted, Dhirubhai Ambani has made takeover tycoon Manu Chhabria eat humble pie. Recent acquisitions by the Ambanis and their associates have given them a 12 per cent stake in the engineering giant Larsen and Toubro worth a cool Rs 100 crores. To consummate the "grand



Dhirubhai Ambani: success

and unique" alliance—and also to finally put at rest all the corporate speculation,the L&T chairman last week invited the Reliance boss to join the company's board.

Two nominees of the Ambanis—Mukesh and a Reliance professional—are expected to take their places on the L&T board shortly.

While this is the first takeover coup of the Ambanis, what is significant is that they have outbid heavyweights like the Aditya Birla group and the Hindujas. Given the high market price of the L&T equity, even the aggressive Chhabrias could sweep up a mere 1.5 per cent of the L&T stake. And to prove their point further and tie up all loopholes, the Ambanis are proposing to buy up an aggregate of 6 million L&T shares.

SRF's hire purchase thrust

Shri Ram Fibres Finance (SRF) is pulling out all the stops to climb to the top of the hire purchase business. The company which already offers hire purchase for a range of products from trucks to portable generators is now putting together a plan to offer finance for the purchase of secondhand cars on hire purchase. At the same time the company is also stepping up its drive to collect deposits from the public. It is already getting almost Rs one crore each month as deposits and has overshot its own targets.

Metal Box seeks buyer

Metal Box India is in a serious bind, what with its parent, Metal Box plc of the UK, unwilling to bale out the Calcutta-based subsidiary. The latest news from Barlow House is that the company is up for sale. It has asked the government to find prospective buyers for the foreign holdings in the company.

Metal Box's woes really began when it failed to see the coming changes in the packaging industry. And this blue chip multinational had been carrying one of the best paid workforces in the country. Perhaps the B.M. Khaitan group had initially thought it was a good buy, and even roped in Vinod Krishna from Shalimar Paints to turn the company around. Krishna may be rung his earlier statement that "Metal Box was the biggest challenge offered by the private sector".

A swap deal

There have been interesting developments on the Dunlop front. R.P. Goenka and his former protege Manu Chhabria have been battling it out for quite some time now to untangle the Dunlop



Chhabria (left) and Goenka

ownership issue. And just when business circles were preparing to witness fireworks, the two seem to have struck an interesting deal: swapping Dunlop and Bayer.

Both Goenka and Chhabria are on the Bayer board as chairman and director respectively, and together hold 10 per cent of the equity. As part of the deal to hand over control of Dunlop to the Chhabria brothers, Manu Chhabria will hand over his stake in Bayer to Goenka.



Question: What do flop actors do? Answer: Take up good causes. So, Shatrughan Sinha is championing the case of the Bihar earthquake victims. Declared the double-bore grandiosely that if the government helped, he would organise several star nites to raise funds for his suffering fellow Biharis. Said Shatru: "Four crores is a small amount when glittering stars come on stage."

Shatru's memory, like that of the general public, is short indeed. Or he would certainly have remembered the fiasco that was the Shatrughan Sinha show in America, a few years ago.

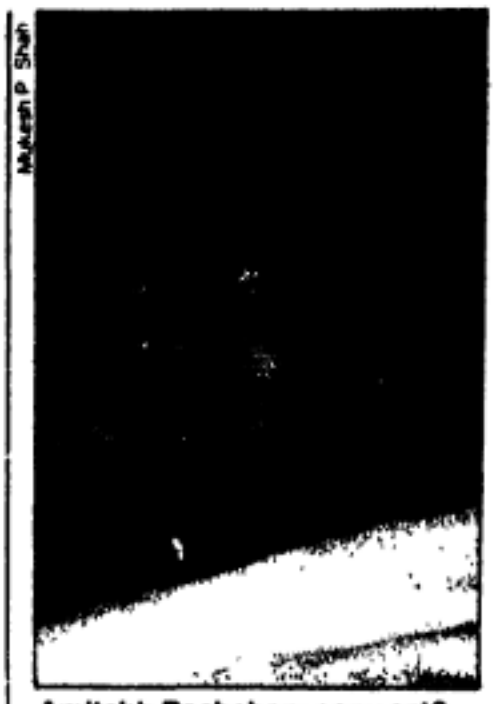
Ram (the divinity,not Arun Govil) was, or so goes the legend, reincarnated as Krishna to mop up the evil that remained in the world after the Ayodhyan prince was through. The Coongress(I) Ram, not one to be left behind, has also decided to play Krishna (as the next logical step in his mythological journey), in producer Madhaviah's *Sri Krishna Leela*. Mother Yashoda is dream middle-aged woman Hema Malini and Anant Nag (how the mighty have fallen!) is the screen Narad. Priya Tendulkar sure had a lucky escape, what?

Sanjay Khan really is over the hill. Even the last word in sex appeal, buxom Sonam, fails to turn him on. All he can say about the leading lady of his latest starrer, *Sarzameen*, is that she is totally brainless (how very perceptive, Mr Khan!). Asked whether Sonam appealed to him, he replied testily: "Sex bomb, is she? Huh. She is dumb and can follow no instructions, is sloppy and bumps into furniture while walking." The upshot of it all is that Sonam is no longer the star of his movie.

Not that the lady gives a damn. "I know I am good," she shrugs,"and I don't need a Sanjay Khan to prove it." All it needs, no doubt, are her very obvious assets.


Ajoy Mitra

Shatrughan: all for a good cause


Mukesh P. Shah

Amitabh Bachchan: copy cat?

This is guaranteed to make the angry not-so-young man even angrier. Yes, we are talking about the video cassette *Copy Cat*, currently the rage on the Middle-Eastern video circuit. The cassette intersperses scenes from old Dilip Kumar starrers with those of the same ilk performed by mega-star Bachchan and shows up the latter, without a shadow of doubt, as an ace imitator. What's more, the great mumbler of Indian cinema comes off as the better actor. The cassette is expected to hit the home market soon and Bachchan, they say, is spending sleepless nights.

Sonam: dealing with doubting Khans


Harom Polwal

Some females have all the luck. Take Hema Malini, for instance. She enlisted lyricist Maya Govind's help to flesh out the characters in the series of ballet performances that she put up all over the country, recently. The help was in lieu of the princely sum of Rs 25,000. Fair enough, you would think, only Maya would not accept the payment. All she would settle for was an idol of Lord Krishna. Maybe Gulzar picked the wrong girl to play Meera!


Dharamraj

Hema Malini: the wrong Meera

We suppose this had to happen. Cine stars are now faced with competition from their own producer-directors. Not content with doing their thing behind the camera, today's megaphone-wielders are giving their leading men a run for their money when it comes to hogging publicity.

Past master at this game is B. Subhash, who cavorts around in a T-shirt which proudly proclaims: "I am the man who makes people *Dance Dance* (the name of his film)." Subhash is also grievously offended if he goes unrecognised at public places.

Aamir Khan (B. Subhash's new hero) had better watch out. ■

QUESTION: WHEN are Rs 300 worth more than Rs 2,000? Answer: When you attend a rock concert at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium

Or, at least, that was what most persons in the high-priced seats of the **Human Rights Now Concert** in Delhi on 30 September seemed to think After the supporting acts had finished, several prosperous jet-setters abandoned their Rs 2,000 seats and rushed on to the lawns where for Rs 300, punters could stand up and watch the likes of Peter Gabriel, Sting and Bruce Springsteen perform

Leading the exodus to the lawn was Bombay star-son Sunjay Dutt, who showed



Rakesh Sinha

Narasimha Rao: Hindi chauvinist?



N Prasad

Vengsarker: back at the helm

Ahmed, Menaka Gandhi, Feroze Gujral and the rest remained in the stands In the VVIP special enclosure,

Bruce Springsteen and (inset) the Human Rights Now Concert poster. a roaring success



the world how much he enjoyed the show by taking off his shirt and signing autographs for a bevy of giggling female fans. He was followed by such other *Bombaywallahs* as Anil Ambani, Kumar Gaurav, Mahesh Jethmalani* and Amrita Singh.

The *Delhuwallahs*, though, stuck to their expensive plastic bucket seats. Thus Akbar

sat even more sedate types: Lok Sabha speaker Balram Jakhar, Anand Sharma, MP, culture persons Romi Chopra and Rajeev Sethi, supercrony Lalit Suri and Mrs Mani Shankar Aiyar, her *kurta*-clad husband having abandoned her and run off to the pit with his fair daughters

Also in the crowd were Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi who attracted relatively little attention and Maureen and Nusli Wadia (with CBS head R.V. Pandit) who proved that they were made of sterner stuff than the bopping Anil Ambani, by perching delicately on their chairs and taking hefty swigs of a (no doubt, non-alcoholic) drink

◆

SO, DEVI Lal finally has a rival when it comes to Hindi chauvinism. And he's none other than the good old Dravida leader of the Congress(I) **P.V. Narasimha Rao.** For what did our latest external affairs minister do but address the plenary session of the United Nations' General Assembly in our *rashtrabhasha*, Hindi. Since the talents of UN interpreters do not extend to understanding the language, Indian officials provided them an official English version of the speech, to work from.

This places Rao in the company of Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Janata foreign minister who was a pioneer in this regard. Though Rao, no doubt, will consider this a very dubious honour.

SO HE'S back at the helm. **Dilip Vengsarkar** served a longish stint in the wilderness, being injured during the West Indian tour last season and then banned from cricketing fields for writing bylined articles in contravention of his contract with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). But the ban expired in August, this year, and the captaincy was awarded to Vengsarker once again He will lead the Indian team in the forthcoming Sharjah Cup and Asia Cup tournaments

The Indian middle-order, should be strengthened by his comeback. But one can't say the same about Dev Features' contributors list.

◆

HE IS remembered more for the jokes that revolve around him than for his running. Example: Are you relaxing? No, I am **Milkha Singh.**

Now the 'Flying Sikh' is making news by levelling accusations (laced with gratuitous abuse) at India's golden girl, (so what if she finished last in the Seoul Olympic heats?), **P.T. Usha** and her latter-day Dronacharya, O.M. Nambiar. The duo had, according to Singh, "deceived the nation", by making false claims about Usha's fitness The government too came in for a fair share of the blame for clearing her candidature in good faith, even though she did not meet the basic qualifying standards.

Railed Singh: "This was not only cheating, but grave injustice to those who worked hard to attain the qualifying marks and also against those who missed the mark by a whisker." He had been sure, he said, that Usha could never repeat her Los Angeles performance. And what made him think so? Usha, he says, deliberately avoided running in international meets and, "I gave up every hope when she refused to run in the Open Athletic Meet and the Permit Meet at New Delhi, prior to

Nikhil Bhattacharya



P.T. Usha: brickbats

the Seoul Olympics."

Milkha's apprehensions have been proved right and this venerable elder of the sports circuit is graceless enough to treat us to "I told you so", in this, our hour of national anguish.

◆

THE PROGRAMME was called "Lifting up the World." And among those lifted by **Sri Chinmoy,** Indian spiritualist and leader of peace meditations at the United Nations was Indian tennis ace **Ramesh Krishnan.** In New York to play the US Open, Krishnan crashed out in the early rounds with boring predictability. Undeterred, however, Sri Chinmoy went through with his plan to do him honour. Using a specially-constructed apparatus he lifted Krishnan overhead using only one arm. (The total weight lifted amounted to 158 pounds—more than Chinmoy's own bodyweight.)

Said Chinmoy later: "I always feel that the audience takes a very special gift, a very special spiritual wealth from Ramesh's tennis playing."

To round up the programme was sung (by the International Sri Chinmoy choir) a song composed by the champion weightlifter himself. To quote:

"Krishnan, India's fondness-heart-choice.
Krishnan, India's fulness-soul-voice.
None can equal his style's



Ramesh being lifted by Sri Chinmoy: incredible feat

fragrance and charm.
Indian firmament beats his supremacy-drum."

◆

IT SEEMED like a fairy-tale ending when the glamorous leading lady of Indian cinema **Mumtaz** chucked up a successful career in Bombay to wed her very own Prince Charming, **Mayur Madhvani,** of the Kenyan fortune fame. One had assumed then that the golden couple would live secure in their millions ever after.

But rumour tells a different story. Evidently, these are proving to be hard times

Pradeep Chandra



Mumtaz: troubled times?

for the Madhvanis with their sugar factory in Ramisi, Mombasa going bust. As the story goes (according to some Kenyan newspapers) the Bank of India's Mombasa branch had loaned the Madhvanis Rs 8 crores for resuscitating their sugar factory, languishing in ill-health for some time now. But the rot had set in too deep and in April, this year, the concern ground to a halt.

The Madhvanis are, therefore, tightening the purse strings. So, frequent visits to Bombay are out. Mumu will be missed.

Compiled by Seema Goswami

SAY CHEERS TO A NEW ARRIVAL.



CRUICKSHANK

You'll raise a lot of toasts to this new arrival. Because you'll know that this one's got a great future ahead. At Parties. Among Peers. Among Friends. Everywhere. In fact, you'll find that its smooth, mature and distinctly elegant personality is going to be the toast of every party soon.

And reason enough to keep celebrating forever!

C&C.
CRUICKSHANK & COMPANY LTD.
A NEW SPIRIT IS BORN

Bhangra goes west

Finally, Indians and Pakistanis in the UK evolve their own pop music. And guess what? It's Bhangra

Ten men in silver and tinsel gyrate furiously onstage to the tune of *Holle Holle*. The audience goes wild - people throw up their arms, scream to the crazy, throbbing sounds and dance with abandon. The stage is bathed in blue and red light, the hall streaked with blinding strobelight beams. "Bhangra fever," yells someone. And the sequinned singers reach out to touch their adoring fans.

The venue is the Empire Ballroom in downtown London's Leicester Square. Oblivious to the lunchtime crowd of staid office-goers, 3,000 teeny-boppers are pulsating to a new-found rhythm in a daytime disco—the Bhangra disco, which has become a unique feature of the cultural life of Asians in London.

Salwaar-kameez clad teenage girls, boys in glittering jackets, all swing to the new sound that is helping them identify themselves in an alien society. Skipping school and college, the youngsters have come, with or without their parents' knowledge. Many left their homes in the morning with their party clothes discreetly wrapped in their school satchels only to change into them in the cloakrooms of the Empire Ballroom.

All is fevered here—the rhythm and the romance—as the Southall kids delight in their answer to Western pop music. Gone are the days of Beatle mania. Today's Bhangra mania has every kind of beat—*dholaks*, synthesizers, violins and saxophones—as its creators strive for an alternate rhythm. *"Bhabhiye Ni Bhabhiye, Sun Bhabhiye,"* croons one of the silver men. And the shingled teenagers jig wildly. Pop goes Punjabi, and there's no dearth of takers. "You won't believe it, but some of the first fan letters we had were from elderly people, who were really



The rock group Heera. music with a difference

glad that we were bringing the second-generation Asians closer to their roots," said Channi, lead singer of Alaap, the oldest and most popular of the Bhangra rock groups

Plump, good-natured and sporting a diamond stud in one ear, Channi isn't quite Michael Jackson material, but he's got what it takes. His catchy *Nach Mundeya* could easily say "beat it" to its Western counterpart. Channi, more formally Harcharanjeet Singh, comes from Malerkotla in Punjab and says he's a reject from Jullunder Radio. The man who's made the music that Asian communities in the US, Canada, the Middle East and Singapore are swinging to, had failed the radio audition in Jullunder twice. He doesn't, of course, need to feel sorry about it.

With wife Dhanno, who helps with the band, he now has three gold discs for the group. And with the seventh album due to be released later this month, Channi and his Alaap seem to have struck the right chord. It is expected that 40,000 copies of *Pataka*, the latest Bhangra album from the pioneers, will sell on the first day of its release.

"We put everything into our music," said Channi, "but we always see to it that the essential Bhangra rhythm remains. That's what has made us the longest-lasting band. Today other bands are bringing in more Western sounds and losing the original flavour. Long after all these groups die out, Alaap will remain." Spoken with confidence—but then Channi has everything to be confident about. Twelve years back, he had teamed up with two others—Harjeet and Randhir (now the keyboard and guitar players respectively, in Alaap)—and started singing in *gurdwaras* and small functions.

Popularity came swiftly and in 1978



Alaap, the oldest Bhangra rock group: ushering in the new age

they cut their first album, *Tera Chum De Sitare*. Initially no one would touch the record, mistaking it for traditional Punjabi music. But with promotion on a local radio program for Asians, the album caught on. "It was an instant hit," said Channi, "because it was so different from anything that had appeared before."

After that it was a string of hit albums. *Bhabhiye Ni Bhabhiye* followed with sales of close to 80,000. The next disc, *Nach Kudiye* was a runaway success, selling nearly three-quarter of a million albums, and Alaap had captured the imagination of a new generation. Not only were the Punjabi listeners hooked, but the large Gujarati populace was also soon jiving to tunes like *Tu Gujarat Ki Chori, Main Punjab Ka Jatt*, composed by Alaap.

With lyrics about love and dancing, Alaap's music appeals instantly to all those youngsters caught up in a Western culture that they don't quite identify with even while their ethnic links remain shaky. Asian parents who wouldn't allow their children to go to a disco or a nightclub, found no harm in daytime dancing to Punjabi lyrics. So the eager crowds flowed in to the sophisticated Empire Ballroom to hear Alaap, Holle Holle, Heera and the other Bhangra bands.

"Our studios are busy everyday," said Hasmukh Gohil, director of Savera/Multitone, the company that records music by at least six top disco Bhangra bands. Soft-spoken Gohil is dedicated to what he calls the cause of bringing Bhangra "to the level of an international sound. We have been giving these young bands the support they need for the last ten years," he said.

With major names like Alaap, Chirag Pehchaan, Iremi, DCS, Bali, and Shava Shava contracted to Savera, Gohil spends a busy day. He says his biggest problem is piracy, from which he loses millions of revenue in India, the Middle East and Singapore. The concern is echoed by Channi, who says, "Our cassettes are pirated, our music is lifted by Punjabi and Hindi films, we face quite a bit of loss." The culprits in India are of course the infamous T Series, and the record companies are fighting a running battle against them.

But with all the rhythm and popularity and sales of over 80,000 to

Khazanchi's latest discoveries are two sisters from Swindon—Romi and Jazz who have just cut an album of English lyrics called *Reach Out*. Romi and Jazz came up to 121 in the charts, which wasn't bad going for the two pretty Sikh girls





Channi (right), the lead singer of Alaap and Randhir, the group's guitarist: instant hits

100,000, the Bhangra bands haven't yet made it to the famed Top-of-the-Pops. Except for a stray inclusion in BBC's Radio One—the biggest pop station in Britain—and Capital Radio, they go uncharted and unincluded in mainstream pop music. Reason: charts are prepared by the main retail music shops like HMV, Virgin, Tower Records, and Our Price. And most of the Bhangra music sells in Asian shops which don't prepare them.

Though disco Bhangra is available in HMV and Tower Records, people prefer to buy it from Asian shops where it is sold cheaper. While a standard Western pop music album costs anything from £5 to £7, Bhangra records and cassettes are priced at about £3 each.

The man who has the most professional perspective on the entry of Bhangra into mainstream music functions from a small studio in a basement in the East End of London. Deepak Khazanchi—music composer and director of the record company Arishma—sits at his table crowded by fan mail, orders and popularity charts.

A Kashmiri from East Africa, Khazanchi is one of the original scorers of the Bhangra beat. His record company now sponsors three groups—Holle Holle, Heera and Kalapreet—and he's determined to see Heera's next release, *Balle Balle*, enter the charts.

Music director for Alaap till he started his own studio, the 37-year-old guitar and keyboard player used to play Country and Western music in Irish pubs. Later, he mixed the farmer's music from Punjab with electronic sound and Eighties' rhythms, and began a revolution in Asian rock.

Khazanchi's compilation record, *Bhangra Fever*, sold over 80,000 copies. The album *Diamonds from Heera*—with music scored by Khazanchi—sold 60,000 copies and for the release of Heera's *Balle Balle* in October, Khazanchi expects a sale of 30,000 on the first day.

Khazanchi is enthusiastic about the new sound. He takes pains to show how popular it's becoming in the US, Canada and Europe. He even has letters from Swedish Radio and Radio Norway to praise his music. "Our music is popular in clubs in Scotland and Ireland apart from London," said Khazanchi. "Radio stations in Germany and France have been playing us regularly. People enjoy the beat and rhythm of Bhangra."

The man who has the most professional perspective on the entry of Bhangra into mainstream music, Deepak Khazanchi, has his table crowded by fan mail, orders and popularity charts



Khazanchi's latest discoveries are two sisters from Swindon—Romi and Jazz (short for Raminder and Jaswinder) who have just cut an album of English lyrics called *Reach Out*. Romi and Jazz came up to 121 in the charts, which wasn't bad going for the two pretty Sikh girls.

Khazanchi explained the complications of getting on the charts and the race for the Top-of-the-Pops position. The first stage is getting a team of dedicated people called "The Strike Force" who see that all the record shops have copies of the new album. They usually give about three albums free and book orders for at least 10 or 20 more. Their job is to see that the shops never run out of stock as this could affect the ratings. The next stage is paying big money to a "plugger" who has the job of getting the disc jockeys to listen to the album and convincing them that it is going to be a seller.

The "plugger" plays a key role in promoting the music. For once the album enters the studio and goes on the air, its future is almost made. The "plugger" has to make sure that the disc jockey not only plays the album once, but also repeats it on several programmes. Once a record gets "listed" by a disc jockey and is played a number of times on the air, it's sure to be a winner.

With about 150 albums being released every week in the UK, promotion is the key to success. All the money can go down the drain if the album flops. "It's tense, because you're talking about a lot of money," said Khazanchi. "You may have to pay as much as £15,000 to a plugger. The whole system is computerised and once you get to the top 75 positions, you're closely watched. You have to climb up in the charts or you're doomed. If you make it to the top 40, you're a sure success and above that it's Top-of-the-Pops with assured sales of thousands."

With *Balle Balle* which has English and Punjabi lyrics, Khazanchi is aiming for a chart position. But the legwork needed to make that happen, is tremendous. As the middle-aged rockers go for the charts, it looks definitely like disco Bhangra has come of age. As Alaap sings *Aa Kuriye Ni Tenu Nachna Sikha*, the jazzed-up Indian rock culture looks poised to make its biggest break in Britain. The synthesized *dhol* is sounding the beat for a new pop music revolution.

Shrabani Basu/London

The birth of a communalist

Bipan Chandra describes how Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the nationalist, turned communal



Communalism remained at the liberal stage till 1937 when it increasingly started assuming a virulent, extremist or fascist form. The liberal communalist argued that India consisted of distinct religion-based communities which had their own separate and special interests which often came into mutual conflict. But he also accepted that the ultimate destiny of Indian politics was the merger of the different communities into a single nation. Thus, the liberal communalist demanded separate communal rights, safeguards, reservations, etc., within the broad concept of one Indian nation-in-the-making. He accepted national unity as the ultimate goal as also the concept of the ultimate common interests of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. Liberal communalism had also a rather narrow social base. Politically, it was based mainly on the upper and middle classes.

Extreme communalism was based on the politics of hatred, fear psychosis and irrationality. The motifs of domination and suppression, always present in communal propaganda, increasingly became the dominant theme of communal propaganda. A campaign of hatred against the followers of other religions was unleashed. The interests of Hindus and Muslims were now declared to be permanently in conflict. The communalists attacked the other 'communities' with, in W.C. Smith's words, 'fervour, fear, contempt and bitter hatred,' in the extremist or fascist phase of communalism after 1937. Phrases like oppression, suppression, domination, being crushed, even physical extermination and extinction were used. The communalists increasingly operated on the principle: the bigger the lie the better. They poured venom on the National Congress and Gandhiji, and, in particular, they viciously attacked their co religionists among the nationalists.

Communalism also now, after 1937, increasingly acquired a popular base, and began to mobilise popular mass opinion. It was now sought to be organised as a mass movement around aggressive, extremist communal politics among the urban lower middle classes. This also required an issue or a slogan which could arouse mass emotion. Because of the reactionary, upper class base of communalism, an appeal to radical social issues could not be made. In other words, communalism could not base itself on a radical socio-economic, or political or ideological programme. Hence, inevitably, an appeal was made to religion and to irrational sentiments of fear and hatred.

Liberal communalism was transformed into extremist communalism for several reasons. As a consequence of the growth of nationalism and, in particular, of the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-34, the Congress emerged as the dominant political force in the elections of 1937. Various political parties of landlords and other vested interests suffered a drastic decline. Moreover, as we have seen, the youth as also the

Jinnah: relied on the communal card



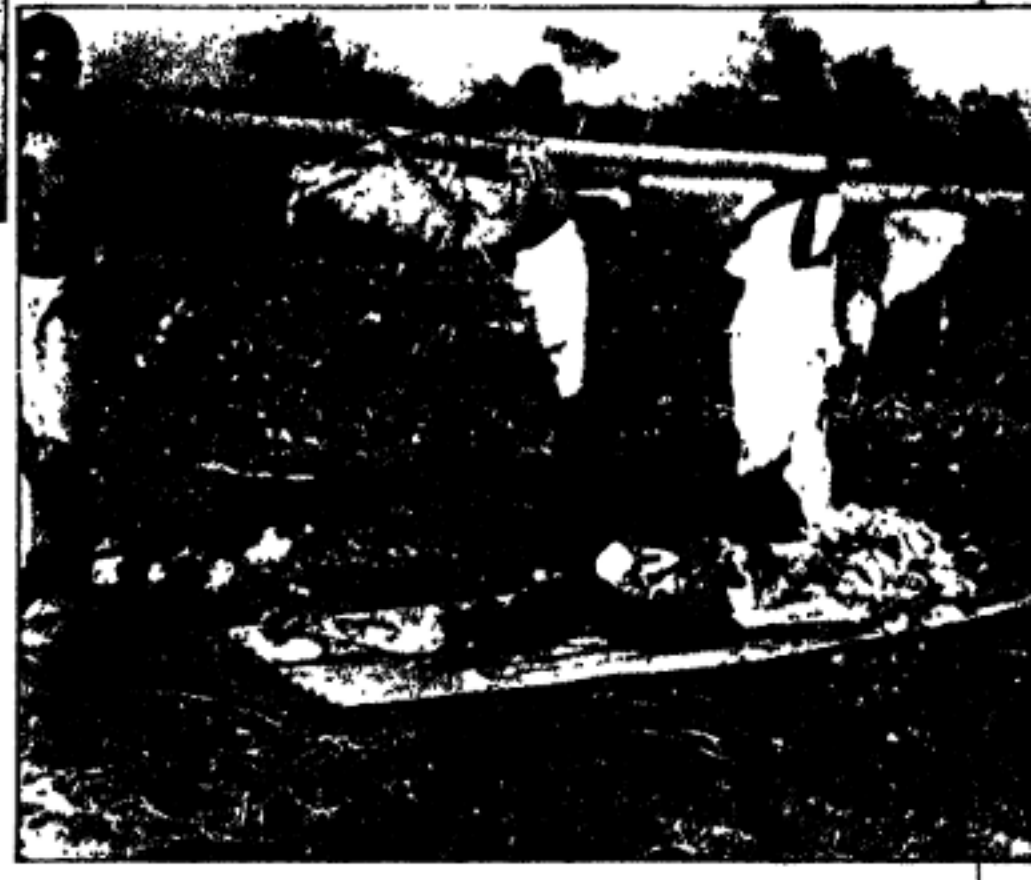


The great Calcutta killings; (inset) victims of the 1946 riots being carried for cremation: the fallout of communal politics

workers and peasants were increasingly turning to the Left, and the national movement as a whole was getting increasingly radicalised in its economic and political programme and policies. The *zamindars* and landlords—the *jagirdari* elements, finding that open defence of landlords' interests was no longer feasible, now, by and large, switched over to communalism for their class defence. This was not only true in UP and Bihar but also in Punjab and Bengal. In Punjab, for example, the big landlords of West Punjab and the Muslim bureaucratic elite had supported the semi-communal, semi-casteist and loyalist Unionist Party. But they increasingly felt that the Unionist Party, being a provincial party, could no longer protect them from Congress radicalism, and so, during the years 1937-45, they gradually shifted their support to the Muslim League which eagerly promised to protect their interests. Very similar was the case of Muslim *zamindars* and *jotedars* in Bengal. Hindu *zamindars* and landlords and merchants and moneylenders in northern and western India too began to shift towards Hindu communal parties and groups. To attract them, V.D. Savarkar, the Hindu Mahasabha president, began to condemn the 'selfish' class tussle between landlords and tenants. Similarly, in Punjab, the Hindu communalists became even more active than before in defending moneylending and trading in-



demands. The League was recognised as the sole spokesperson for Muslims and given the power to veto any political settlement. India could not be given freedom, it was said, so long as Hindus and Muslims did not unite. But such unity was made impossible by the wholesale official backing of Muslim communalism. The Muslim League, in turn, agreed to collaborate with the colonial authorities and serve as their political instrument for its own reasons. The Hindu Mahasabha and other Hindu and Sikh communal organisations also offered to support the colonial government during the war. But the colonial authorities, while accepting their support, could no longer divide their loyalties; their commitment to Muslim communalism was to remain total during the course of the war, and even after.



terests.

Communalism also became, after 1937, the only political recourse of colonial authorities and their policy of divide and rule This was because, by this time, nearly all the other divisions, antagonisms and divisive devices promoted and fostered earlier by the colonial authorities had been overcome by the national movement, and had become politically non-viable from the colonial point of view. The non-brahmin challenge in Maharashtra and South India had fizzled out. The scheduled castes and other backward castes could no longer be mobilised against the Congress except in stray pockets. The Right and Left wings of the Congress also refused to split. Inter-provincial and inter-lingual rivalries had exhausted themselves much earlier, after the Congress accepted the validity of linguistic states and the cultural diversity of the Indian people. The effort to pit the *zamindars* and landlords against the national movement had also completely failed. The elections of 1937 showed that nearly all the major social and political props of colonialism lay shattered. The communal card alone was available for playing against the national movement and the rulers decided to use it to the limit, to stake all on it. They threw all the weight of the colonial state behind Muslim communalism, even though it was headed by a man—M.A. Jinnah—whom they disliked and feared for his sturdy independence and outspoken anti-colonialism.

The outbreak of World War II on 1 September, 1939, further strengthened the reliance on the communal card. The Congress withdrew its ministries and demanded that the British make a declaration that India would get complete freedom after the war and transfer of effective government power.

For countering the nationalist demand and dividing Indian opinion, reliance was placed on the Muslim League whose politics and demands were counterposed to the nationalist politics and

Once the basic digits of communal ideology are accepted, the ideology takes over a person independent of his subjective desires. This is how Jinnah, who started as the 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity' ended up by demanding Pakistan

Both the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha had run the election campaign of 1937 on liberal communal lines—they had incorporated much of the nationalist programme and many of the Congress policies, except those relating to agrarian issues, in their election manifestoes. But they had fared poorly in the elections. The Muslim League, for example, won only 109 out of the 482 seats allotted to Muslims under separate electorates, securing only 4.8 per cent of the total Muslim votes. The Hindu Mahasabha fared even worse.

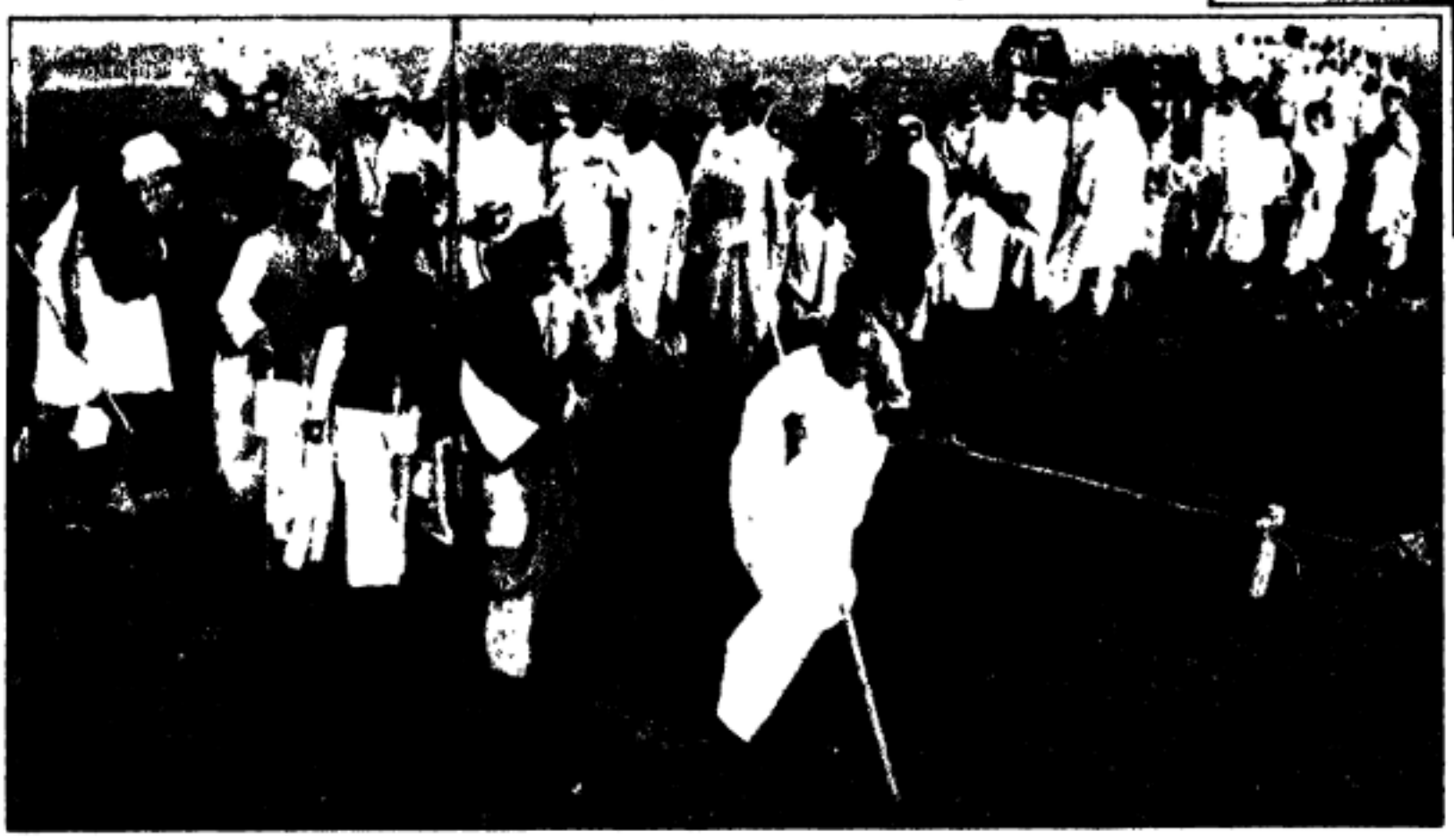
The communalists now realised that they would gradually wither away if they did not take to militant, mass-based politics. Hitherto, organised mass movements and cadre-based politics had been built by radical, anti-*status quo* nationalists. The conservatives had shied away from mass movements. In the 1930s, a

successful right-wing model of mass politics, which would not frighten away the vested interests, became available in the form of the fascist movement. Both Hindu and Muslim communalists decided to follow this model. Moreover, the Congress had not yet acquired firm roots among all the masses, especially among the Muslim masses; now was the time to take advantage of their political immaturity, before it was too late. Urgency was added to the need to shift to extreme Muslim communalism because the Congress decided to initiate, under Jawaharlal Nehru's guidance, a massive campaign to work among the Muslim masses, known as the Muslim Mass Contact Programme.

The logic of communalism also inexorably led to extreme communalism. The Congress had gone quite far in the late 1920s in accepting Muslim communal demands. In 1932, the Communal Award and then the Government of India Act of 1935 accepted nearly all the liberal communal demands. Nor did the National Congress oppose these concessions to the communalists. But such concessions would have no cast-iron guarantee behind them once the foreign rulers disappeared from the scene and the country came to be ruled democratically. Moreover, what would the communalists do next? Since their demands had been accepted, they had either to dissolve their political organisations, give up communalism and commit political *harakiri* or discover new demands, new threats to their communities, and inexorably and without necessarily, a conscious design turn towards extreme communalism. Similarly, the Hindu communalists had failed to grow. Further, till 1937, the Congress had permitted both Hindu and Muslim liberal communalists to work within the Congress organisation. Under Jawaharlal Nehru's and the Left's pressure the Congress was frontally attacking the communalists. Not only did it not accommodate them in the elections of 1934 and 1937, it moved towards expelling them from the Congress, and finally did so in 1938. The Hindu communalists were facing political extinction. They also had to find a new basis and a new programme for their survival and growth.

The propositions that communalism has a logic of its own and, if not checked in its early stages, inevitably develops into its 'higher' stages is illustrated by the life history of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. His case shows how communalism is an inclined plane on which a constant slide down becomes inevitable unless counter steps are taken. Once the basic digits of communal ideology are accepted, the ideology takes over a person bit by bit, independent of the subjective desires of the person. This is how a person who started as the 'Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity' ended up by demanding Pakistan.





Mahatma Gandhi in Noakhali: symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity

M.A. Jinnah came back to India after becoming a barrister in 1906 as a secular, liberal nationalist, a follower of Dadabhai Naoroji. On his return, he immediately joined the Congress and acted as Dadabhai's secretary at the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906. He was an opponent of the Muslim League then being founded. The Aga Khan, the first president of the League, was to write later that Jinnah was 'our toughest opponent in 1906' and that he 'came out in bitter hostility towards all that I and my friends had done and were trying to do...He said that our principle of separate electorates was dividing the nation against itself'. From 1906 onwards, Jinnah propagated the theme of national unity, earning from Sarojini Naidu the title, 'Ambassador of Hindu Muslim Unity'.

The first step towards communalism was taken without any desire of his own and perhaps against his own wishes when he entered the Central Legislative Council from Bombay as a Muslim member under the system of separate electorates. The real slide down began when from a nationalist pure and simple he became a communal nationalist in 1913 when he joined the Muslim League. This, of course, meant that he was still basically a nationalist. He re-



Jawaharlal Nehru arrives for a Congress session, attacking the communalists

mained in the Congress and still opposed separate electorates arguing that it would divide India into 'two watertight compartments'. But he also started assuming the role of a spokesperson of Muslim 'community' as a whole. These dual roles reached the height of their effectiveness in the Lucknow Congress-League Pact of which he and Tilak were the joint authors. Acting as the spokesperson of Muslim communalism, he got the Congress to accept separate electorates and the system of communal reservations. But he still remained fully committed to nationalism and secular politics. He resigned from the Legislative Council as a protest against the passing of the Rowlatt Bill. He refuted the communal assumption that self-government in India would lead to Hindu rule; and argued that the real political issue in India was Home Rule or 'transfer of power from bureaucracy to democracy'.

In 1919-20, the Congress took a turn towards mass politics based on the peaceful breaking of existing laws. Jinnah disagreed and did not find it possible to go along with Gandhi. Along with many other liberals who thought like him—persons such as Surendranath Banerjea, Bipin Chandra Pal, Tej Bahadur Sapru, C. Sankaran Nair, and many more—Jinnah left the Congress. But he could also see that mere liberal politics had no future. And he was not willing to go into political oblivion. Unlike most of the other liberals, he turned to communal politics. He became a liberal communalist. The logic of communalism had asserted itself and transformed him first from a nationalist into a communal nationalist and then into a liberal communalist. During the 1920s, Jinnah's nationalism was not fully swallowed by communalism. He revived the down-and-out Muslim League in 1924 and started building it upon and around the demand for safeguarding 'the interests and rights of the Muslims'. His politics was now based on the basic communal idea that 'Muslims should organise themselves, stand united and should press every reasonable point for the protection of their community'. At the same time, he still pleaded for Hindu-Muslim unity on the basis of a fresh Lucknow Pact so as to fight the British together, and he cooperated with the *Swarajists* in opposing government policies and measures in the Central Legislative Assembly. As late as 1925, he told a young Muslim, who said that he was a Muslim first: 'My boy, no, you are an Indian first and then a Muslim'. In 1927-28, he supported the boycott of the Simon Commission, though he would not join in the mass demonstrations against it.

In 1946 Muslims were asked to vote for the League because 'a vote for the League and Pakistan was a vote for Islam'. League meetings were often held in the mosques after Friday prayers

But by now his entire social base comprised communal-minded persons. He could not give up communalism without losing all political influence. This became apparent in 1928-29 during the discussions on the Nehru Report. Step by step he surrendered to the more reactionary communalists, led by the Aga Khan and M. Shafi, and in the end became the leader of Muslim communalism as a whole, losing in the bargain the support of nationalist leaders like M.A. Ansari, T.A.K. Sherwani, Syed Mahmud and his own erstwhile lieutenants like M.C. Chagla. His slide down was symbolised by his becoming the author of the famous 14 demands incorporating the demands of the most reactionary and virulent sections of Muslim communalism.

Jinnah was further alienated from the main currents of nationalism as the Congress organised the massive mass movement of 1930 and started moving towards a more radical socio-economic programme. Moreover, the Muslim masses, especially the younger generation, were increasingly shifting to nationalist and left-wing politics and ideologies. Jinnah was faced with a dilemma. He saw little light; and decided to stay mostly in Britain.

But Jinnah was too much of a man of action and of politics to stay there. He returned to India in 1936 to once again revive the Muslim League. He initially wanted to do so on the basis of liberal communalism. Throughout 1936, he stressed his nationalism and desire for freedom and spoke for Hindu-Muslim cooperation. For example, he said at Lahore in March 1936, 'Whatever I have

done, let me assure you there has been no change in me, not the slightest, since the day when I joined the Indian National Congress. It may be I have been wrong on some occasions But it has never been done in a partisan spirit. My sole and only object has been the welfare of my country. I assure you that India's interest is and will be sacred to me and nothing will make me budge an inch from that position.' On the one hand, he asked Muslims to organise separately, on the other hand, he asked them to 'prove that their patriotism is unsullied and that their love of India and her progress is no less than that of any other community in the country'.





Victims of communal riots that broke out following partition: the debris of hate

Jinnah's plan perhaps was to use the Muslim League to win enough seats to force another Lucknow Pact on the Congress. He also assumed that by participating in the 1937 elections the Congress was reverting to pre-Gandhian constitutional politics. Partially because of these assumptions and partially because the bag of communal demands was empty—nearly all the communal demands having been accepted by the Communal Award—Jinnah and the League fought elections on a semi-nationalist Congress-type of programme, the only 'Muslim' demands being protection and promotion of the Urdu language and script, and adoption of measures for the amelioration of the general conditions of Muslims.

But the poor election results showed that none of Jinnah's assumptions were correct. Jinnah had now to decide what to do: to stick to his semi-nationalist, liberal communal politics which seemed to have exhausted its potentialities or to abandon communal politics. Both would mean going into political wilderness. The third alternative was to take to mass politics which, in view of the semi-feudal and semi-loyalist social base of the League and his own socially, economically, and politically conservative views, could only be based on the cries of Islam in danger and the danger of a Hindu *raj*. Jinnah decided in 1937-38 to opt for this last option. And once he took this decision he went all the way towards extreme communalism putting all the force and brilliance of his personality behind the new politics based on themes of hate and fear. From now on, the entire political campaign among Muslims of this tallest of communal leaders would be geared to appeal to his coreligionists' fear and insecurity and to drive home the theme that the Congress wanted not independence from British imperialism but a Hindu *raj* in cooperation with the British and domination over Muslims and even their extermination as also the destruction of Islam in India.

Let us take a few examples. In his presidential address to the League in 1938, Jinnah said: 'The high command of the Congress is determined, absolutely determined, to crush all other communities and cultures in this country and establish Hindu *raj* in this country.' In March 1940, he told the students at Aligarh: 'Mr Gandhi's hope is to subjugate and vassalise the Muslims under a Hindu *raj*'. Again at Aligarh in March 1941: 'Pakistan is not only a practicable goal but the only goal if you want to save Islam from complete annihilation in this country'.

V.D. Savarkar: believed in a Hindu state



If a leader of the stature of Jinnah could take up politics and agitation at this low level, it was inevitable that the average communal propagandist would be often even worse. Men like Z.A. Suleri and F.M. Durrani surpassed themselves in Goebbelsian demagogy. Even Fazl-ul-Huq, holding a responsible position as the Premier of Bengal, told the 1938 session of the League: 'In Congress provinces, riots had laid the countryside waste. Muslim life, limb and property have been lost and blood has freely flowed...There the Muslims are leading their lives in constant terror, overawed and oppressed by Hindus ...Their mosques are being defiled and the culprit never found nor is the Muslim worshipper unmolested'. M.H. Gazdar, a prominent League leader of Sind, told a League meeting in Karachi in March 1941: 'The Hindus will have to be eradicated like the Jews in Germany if they did not behave properly.' Jinnah was however in no position to pull up such people, for his own speeches often skirted the same territory.

The Muslim communalists now launched a vicious campaign against nationalist Muslims. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and other nationalist Muslims were branded as 'show boys' of the Congress, traitors to Islam and mercenary agents of the Hindus. They were submitted, during 1945-47, to social terror through appeals to religious fanaticsm and even to physical attacks. Jinnah himself in his presidential address to the League in April 1943 described Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan as being 'in charge of the Hinduising influences and emasculation of the martial Pathans'.

Religion was also now brought into the forefront of propaganda. In 1946, Muslims were asked to vote for the League because 'a vote for the League' and Pakistan was a vote for Islam'. League meetings were often held in the mosques after Friday prayers. Pakistan, it was promised, would be ruled under the *Sharia*. Muslims were asked to choose between a mosque and a temple. The Quran was widely used as the League's symbol; and the League's fight with the Congress was portrayed as a fight between Islam and *Kufr* (infidelity).

India's Struggle for Independence (1857–1947) by Bipan Chandra. Published by Penguin Books (India) Ltd, New Delhi (a Viking book). Price: Rs 250

SUNDAY WEEK

BEGINNING 16 OCTOBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) If you work hard your efforts are sure to be fruitful Businessmen should not hesitate to take risks Professionals will be praised by their seniors Promotions are likely Be wary of frauds and sycophants It would be better to avoid controversies A pleasant week for lovers
Good dates: 16, 17, 19
Lucky numbers: 4, 5, 6
Favourable direction: North



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) Financial gains are likely You might inherit some property Servicemen will be in the good books of their employers Do not be rash or impulsive in your dealings The time is appropriate for matrimonial alliances Do not get worked up about minor problems You will have a busy time socialising Be careful about your health
Good dates: 17, 18, 20
Lucky numbers: 2, 3,4
Favourable direction: South-east



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) This will be an excellent week You will succeed in everything you do Unemployeds may get jobs Businessmen will get new expansion opportunities Private sector employees will make good progress The time is also good for lovers Some of you will inherit properties Avoid legal wrangles Be careful of enemies who might do you harm out of jealousy
Good dates: 18, 19, 21
Lucky numbers: 1, 8, 9
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (21 June—20 July) Artists, litterateurs and musicians will find their talents recognised For the rest, however, there will be few opportunities Businessmen are advised not to take unnecessary risks. A new friend of the opposite sex will bring you happiness Social engagements will keep you busy throughout the week A journey is likely. If you have children they will keep you happy Watch your health
Good dates: 19, 20, 22
Lucky numbers: 4, 6, 8
Favourable direction: North-east



LEO (21 July—20 August) If you intend to get married, the time is just right Financial prospects are bright. Professionals and businessmen will progress steadily A period of success for sportsmen. There is a possibility of a reunion with a long lost friend A letter might bring a pleasant surprise at the end of the week
Good dates: 18, 20, 22
Lucky numbers: 3, 5, 7
Favourable direction: North-east



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) Your love-life may not be very happy Poets, novelists and all those who are engaged in fine arts will do well Businessmen should avoid speculative ventures. Executives may be criticised by their superiors Avoid arguments and do not be hasty in taking important decisions The home front will be peaceful
Good dates. 16, 18, 19
Lucky numbers: 2, 8, 9
Favourable direction: South



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) A good week for lovers If you wish to get married, this is the time to proceed Friends and relatives will be very helpful For those of you who are employed, a promotion is likely. Businessmen should not take any hasty decisions. A lucky time for sportsmen The domestic front will remain peaceful and help you to face professional challenges Be careful about your health
Good dates: 17, 19, 20
Lucky numbers: 4, 7, 8
Favourable direction: South west



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) The stars are not favourable this week You should be satisfied with your lot and not be impatient or rash. Do not trust everybody. You must choose your words carefully while interacting with people However, do not be depressed for better times are not far off Rely on your instincts especially in your dealings with the opposite sex You might inherit property.
Good dates: 16, 18, 21
Lucky numbers: 6, 7, 8
Favourable direction: West



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) Financial problems will be favourably resolved Businessmen will find themselves endowed with the Midas touch. You must bank on your own intuitions If you are employed, you must control your emotions at your place of work. A friendship with someone of the opposite sex is likely.
Good dates: 18, 19, 22
Lucky numbers: 1, 2, 6
Favourable direction: East



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) An excellent week for love and matrimonial alliances Young ladies should look forward to proposals from men Think carefully and consult your elders before taking important decisions The stars are favourable for those cultivating the fine arts However, there is a possibility of financial problems You might have to change your residence.
Good dates: 16, 17, 18
Lucky numbers: 3, 7, 9
Favourable direction: North-west



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) In spite of a few disappointments, this is going to be a lucky period for you Businessmen may attempt new ventures Be careful not to hurt the sentiments of the opposite sex If you put in a lot of hard work you will very soon be rewarded Avoid quarrels and never lose your temper. Something you have been longing for will materialise towards the end of the week
Good dates: 20, 21, 22
Lucky numbers: 5, 6, 8
Favourable direction: South

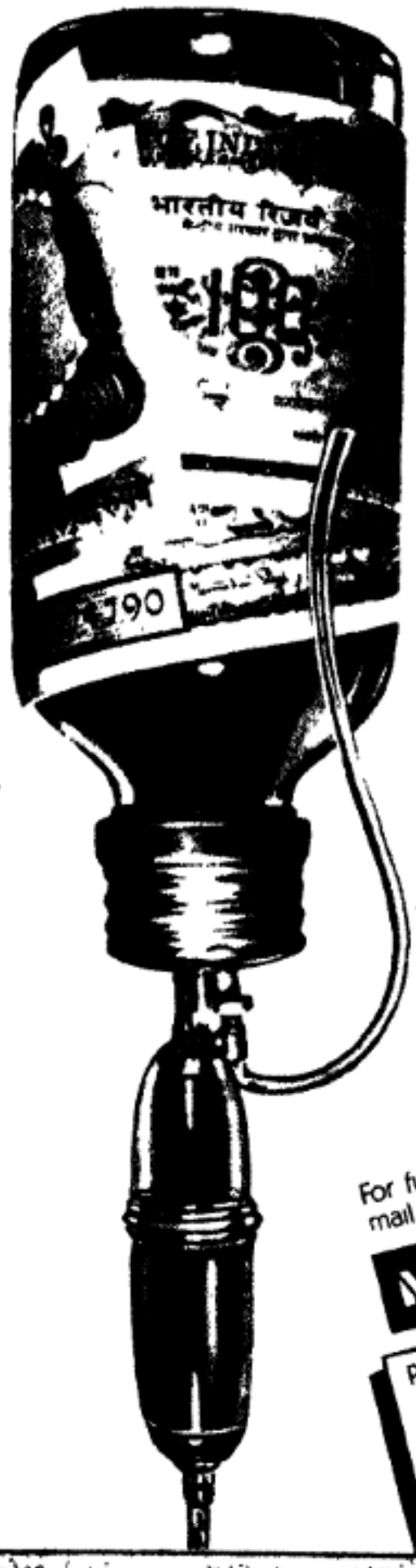


PISCES (21 February—20 March) A lucky week for you Your friends will go out of the way to help you Those who are looking for jobs, may find one Businessmen will clinch lucrative deals. The time is favourable for launching new ventures Politicians will find this a time of success Do not procrastinate important work The time is not right for matrimonial alliances Clear all backlog of correspondence
Good dates: 18, 19, 20
Lucky numbers: 3, 6, 7
Favourable direction: East

Star Partners: Aries—Leo

Their relationship could be ruined due to a constant clash of wills. The Leo woman should not let her pride hold her back from expressing her true feelings The Aries man must be warm and loving but he should not get stiflingly possessive.

TO SAVE YOUR LIFE, YOU MIGHT NEED YOUR LIFE'S SAVINGS.



Major illnesses can be pretty expensive indeed Reason why, United India has tailor-made Mediclaim slabs to help you when you need help most.

With its total hospitalisation and domiciliary hospitalisation scheme, UI Mediclaim helps you cope with the heavy expenses of major illnesses—a probability in everyone's life

For a premium that amounts to less than 60p a day, Mediclaim reimburses your hospitalisation and domiciliary hospitalisation expenses upto Rs 13,600/-per year (minimum slab) and you can avail of the best in medicare

Inexpensive and tax-deductable

The most attractive feature of UI Mediclaim is that premiums upto Rs. 3000/- enjoy a deduction on your taxable income.

Family Discount

UI Mediclaim also offers a special family discount of 10% if you cover besides yourself, spouse, two children and dependent parents.

Take the UI Mediclaim Cover.

Premium per day	Premium per annum	Hospitalisation	Domiciliary Hospitalisation
Rs 0.54	Rs 200	Rs 10,500	Rs 3,100
Rs.0 68	Rs 250	Rs 17,600	
Rs 0 95	Rs 350	Rs 25,500	
Rs.1 64	Rs 600*	Rs 37,750	Rs 5,250
Rs.2 30	Rs. 840*	Rs 52,750	Rs 7,400
Rs 3 56	Rs 1,300*	Rs 82,500	Rs 11,500

* Personal Accident cover available on payment of additional premium

For further information, fill in the coupon and mail today.

MEDICLAIM

Please send me the Mediclaim folder with information on United India's Mediclaim.

Name _____

Address _____

UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.

(A Subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India)

24, Whites Road, Madras - 600 014.

We cover you all the way through

Interpub/UI/88

Angry Alva

Margaret Alva feels let down once again and not without reason. As minister for youth affairs, sports and child development, she had spared no effort to send what she thought was a winning team to Seoul for the XXIV Olympics. The Olympics came and went with the 'winning' team failing to win a single medal, thus putting paid to Alva's best intentions.

India's dismal performance has prompted the hon'ble minister to take a firm stand



so far as foreign tours by Indian teams in future are concerned. The first to find itself on the chopping block is the women's basketball team which was scheduled to leave for Hong Kong on 8 October to participate in the Asian Basketball Championship.

The team has been refused permission to go for the tournament, in spite of the fact that a regular camp was held for the players for three months. The morale of the team is understandably low because these players had helped India secure the third place in an international tournament earlier this year.

Pot-luck!

Can a pothole bring you luck? In Calcutta, it can. The Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS) has devised a unique competition in which prizes will be awarded to the best photographs of potholes in the city. Black and white prints of the largest and worst potholes will be judged in the "Find potholes and win a prize" contest. CUTS will then hand over the pictures of the potholes to the Calcutta Municipal Corporation in order to help them in their road repair programme.

A new food

Beer guzzlers have something to celebrate. The Government of India does not treat beer as a mere alcoholic beverage any more: officially speaking, beer is now a food item.

P. Murari, secretary of the food processing ministry, recently told newsmen in Mysore that beer along with fruit, vegetables, meat and grains had come under the purview of the new ministry. While the portly Murari took pains to point out the nutritional value of beer, another food scientist present at the same press conference pointed out that excess beer could be harmful. But who cares about these scientists? Three cheers to the new food!

Media spread

Have you ever wondered how large India's radio network is? Perhaps not, what with television demanding so much of leisure time, especially in the urban areas. Well, at present All India Radio's (AIR) coverage is second only to that of the US. AIR's coverage by area is 82.93 per cent and by population 94.52 per cent! And if the Seventh Plan targets are finally achieved, 91 per cent of the geographical area and 97.50 per cent of the world's second most populated country would be covered, which would put India ahead of the US. And efforts are on by the information and broadcasting ministry to have round-the-clock radio broadcast in the near future. So, don't snigger at AIR the next time it may soon find a place in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

Meanwhile, Doordarshan too is making rapid strides – not so much in terms of absolute quality but definitely by way of reach for whatever it is worth. Areawise, TV covers 49 per cent of the country while the population coverage is an impressive 73 per cent. What's more, Mandi House has decided to introduce soon a one-hour afternoon telecast. A second hour of afternoon telecast is in the planning stage to ultimately have a 18-hour telecast day.

Electronic tabla

The technology bug has not spared even the staid, traditional world of Indian classical music. It may sound somewhat incongruous but today you can play music on not only an electronic *tanpura*, but also provide accompaniment on the electronic *tabla*!

Thanks to the efforts of an M. Tech from IIT, Madras, G. Rajnarayan, the world of Carnatic music is now open



to the fast-paced world of electronic instruments—the electronic *tanpura* and the electronic *tabla*. The electronic *tanpura* produces sounds very similar to the *tanpura*, complete with well-timed strokes. Despite some limitations, including the fact that the *tabla* can be used only for practice, the instruments were well-received and have become immensely popular at Carnatic music concerts.

Rajnarayan, who devised the two instruments, is understandably proud. After all, he has achieved something which research units all over the country have not. And his Bangalore-based Radel Systems is manufacturing and marketing these electronic classics.

THIS INDIA

BANGALORE. A Bangalore bank was robbed by three 'mysterious' youths who threatened the staff with a bomb, a knife and a gun. But they left behind a note saying, "It is funny. It's not a bomb, it's an ashtray. It's not a gun, it's a toy gun. It's not a knife, you can get it at any handicraft centre. Thank you. Yours, three jokers." Talk of gumption—*The Indian Post* (D.N. Rajan, Thane)

VIJAYAWADA: At a press conference in Eluru, Bhajan Lal spoke in Hindi and had to be interpreted. Began the Union agriculture minister, "I was delayed because of the *barsaat* (rain)." But the interpreter heard '*prasad*' instead of '*barsaat*'. He said that the minister was delayed because of "heavy lunch (*prasad*) and a good sleep." Mercifully, K.S. Rao, MP, hastened to correct the translation—*The Hindu* (R.K. Saxena, Hyderabad)

NEW DELHI: Everything has a price, including marksheets of the Delhi University—or so the students allege. The price: Rs 500. According to the Delhi University Students Union, blank marksheets can be bought from the examination branch of the university—*The Hindu* (Prem C. Sinha, Patna)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

Illustrations: Debasha Deb

Out of depth at Seoul

In one of its worst Olympic debacles, the Indian contingent returns without a single medal

Contrary to all expectations, an Indian did feature in the final of the XXIV Olympics. But except for the compliments of the organisers for boxing events in Seoul, his efforts went unnoticed. He was, after all, just a referee for the bantamweight finals.

For the rest of the athletes, sportsmen and women and the hordes of officials, it was just another jamboree-where the athletes rested while the cook took part in the inaugural marchpast! As usual, the Indians came back with a load of gifts and purchases in lieu of medals. And memories of a fortnight of fun.

Not that much was expected. India had never won a medal except in hockey. The last of that had come eight years ago, when the West boycotted the Moscow Olympics and India couldn't help but win against a very weak field. In every other discipline, we have always been mere participants. Occasionally, a Shriram Singh would reach the final of an event, or a Milkha Singh would lose a medal by a hair's breadth.

In recent times, all of India has been pinning hopes on P.T. Usha. The girl has been spearheading the Indian assault on medals at the Asian level for many years now. In the Los Angeles Olympiad, she finished fourth in the 400 metres hurdles final, after winning her heats. In the euphoria that followed, one stopped to think that the entire Eastern Bloc had boycotted the L.A. meet, to counter what had happened in Moscow.

In true Hindi film fashion, every success is blown out of all proportions. To most Indians, Usha's feats at the Asian level meant she was ready to take on the world. And, considering her form even a year ago, no one put it beyond her to at least feature in the final of her favourite event,the 400 metres hurdles. But the fact is, over-exposure and competition in too many events, had sapped her energy. More important, she had been nursing a nagging injury for the past nine months. Instead of laying off for a long stretch—even skipping the Olympics, if competent doctors advised it—Usha kept on practising and taking pain-killers.

For the Indian athletes and hordes of officials, it was just another jamboree where the athletes rested while the cook took part in the inaugural marchpast. As usual the Indians came back with a load of gifts and purchases in lieu of medals. And memories of a fortnight of fun

Usha limped to last place in the qualifying round at Seoul. And the only person responsible for this was her coach, Nambiar Pampered beyond all norms, decorated with the 'Dronacharya' award, Nambiar rode the Usha bandwagon as if he was the champion. The truth is, he knew little beyond what the NIS could offer, refused to take anybody's advice—whether Indian or foreign—and was hell-bent on finishing Usha, perhaps for good.

The injury and the drugs told very heavily on the girl who should have been resting at home rather than exhibiting her lack of fitness in Seoul. Usha had obviously been egged on by her coach,


PTI

The India-Pakistan hockey match in progress: subcontinental debacle

who must have known all along that the hurdles specialist couldn't even walk properly when the pain came. And it came quite often, usually in the mornings.

The second hope for India was in hockey. After the 1980 Olympics, India slid to the bottom of the 12-team rankings. The usual dirges were sung, unseen enemies blamed and finally work at reconstruction of a good team was started. But just a few minor successes were enough to send hopes soaring again. Officials and players alike felt they were in with a change of a medal. Considering the depths Indian hockey had sunk to in the recent past, sixth position at the Olympics must be construed as a success of sorts.

But India will never win a hockey medal again unless the basic approach to the game is changed. And, for this, it is imperative that we swallow our gall and start thinking of approaching European coaches for the game. Now we need them as sorely as they needed us between the World Wars and shortly thereafter.



The scandal Olympics

What does one call it—the Drugs Olympics, or the first professional Games? Whatever the label, the XXIV Olympics held in Seoul in the second fortnight of September this year, will go down as the farthest removed from the Olympic ideals ever.



Ben Johnson: sorrow after the triumph

In their urge to win medals, nations and individuals vied with one another to inject banned drugs so that the sportspeople could perform better than their "normal" best. The malaise is much more deep-rooted than the general public suspects. According to Edwin Moses, the legendary hurdler, more than half the leading sportspeople of the world take performance-enhancing drugs on a regular basis. The fact that officialdom is not particularly keen in preventing their use is proved by the fact that "masking" medicine is used freely to try and prevent laboratory tests from showing the use of drugs.

Even as thousands of athletes strove faster, higher and stronger, the Olympics drug-detection centre worked feverishly to try and detect the use of unfair means. And they struck early. Six weightlifters were disqualified and several others also nabbed in routine urine tests.

But the biggest catch of all was Ben Johnson, who had predicted months ago that he would run the 100 metres in 9.79 seconds. He did just that, streaking ahead of his arch rival, Carl Lewis of the USA. But the Jamaican-born Canadian national had imbibed an anabolic steroid which is a muscle-building stimulant. He was stripped of the gold medal, banned for two years from competition and is now facing a probe by the Canadian government.

Johnson was certainly the biggest catch, but doping tests conducted over the last twenty years have proved that drug abuse has been rampant in several countries. Initially restricted to the developed countries, the use of drugs—not only to build up power but also to lose weight, which weightlifters, boxers, wrestlers and the like can use to advantage—spread to more and more sports-conscious nations.

The pressures of Olympic competition started it all. Coupled with it was the entry of big money. The life of a sportsperson is usually limited to a decade, sometimes even less. His main drive today is making enough money within this time to last a lifetime or more.

While sports bodies are trying to fight the evil with sophisticated equipment, unscrupulous sportsmen and their coaches and physicians are already working on a new device to inject raw power into sportsmen. According to one of the world's leading medical journals, *Lancet*, the latest technique being developed is blood doping. This could be done by injecting packed red cells into the blood stream. This, according to the journal, will be almost impossible to detect.

Already, steroids are known to damage the liver and, in some cases, to lead to cancer. Blood doping could bring even more lethal after-effects. But, with the current wave of victory at any cost, there will undoubtedly be scores of sportspeople agreeing to the advice of their coaches and physicians to damage their bodies to earn fame and fortune.

While officialdom will undoubtedly step up its efforts to end this scourge, nothing can be done to ensure fair competition until every nation's sports machinery is used to test athletes for medical stimulants—on a regular basis. Until athletes know they cannot get away with this sort of cheating, they will not stop.

Freestyle wrestling was another sport where India was supposed to do creditably. In the Munich Olympics of 1972, we placed two grapplers in fourth position. In 1980, one took fifth place. Four years later, there were three within the first six in different weight categories. But, despsite the 'import' of a Soviet coach atter the '86 Asiad, none of the Indian grapplers got beyond the fourth round, three short of earlier successes.

In boxing, the third round was the limit— but even this was not reached by any of the other Indians in any discipline. Tennis came back to the Olympic fold after 60 years, but it didn't do India any good. Vijay Amritraj lost in the first round, while Zeeshan Ali reached the second. The Amritraj brothers also made a quick exit from the doubles. The story was the same in table tennis, and in yachting India took 17th position. While all that our young archers did was to gain the experience of a top international meet, Soma Dutta, our young shooting star, emerged 30th and 13th in her two events. And Khazan Singh Tokas went out after the first-round heats for the 200 metres butterfly event in swimming.



[NONI]

P.T. Usha: Ignominy

Both Soma and Khazan had been training for years under top international coaches, one in the USA and the other in Australia. Both coaches waxed eloquent over their wards, but they had nothing to show that they hadn't earlier. They were given preferential treatment not being asked to pass the qualifying marks in India. Obviously, neither was medal-material at Seoul. It will be surprising if such leniency is ever shown to any sportsperson in future.

But the biggest drama once again featured the hapless Usha Namblar, as is his wont, tried to browbeat the official athletics coach into including the obviously unfit Usha in the 4x400 metre relay squad. In an unprecedented show of solidarity, all the other girls threatened to walk out of the team if Usha was included. Finally, a compromise solution was worked out: Usha's time in the 400 metres would be recorded. If she was found to be better than any of the other girls, she would be in the squad. She failed to measure up. The girls didn't qualify for the final, but their timing was much better than they had recorded in the recent past.

But the fact is, the relay time was well above the minimum standard set by the athletics federation to qualify for the Olympics. It was a last-minute ministerial decision that got not only the relay quartet, but a lot of others on the flight to Seoul. This was essentially a gesture of encouragement to the sportsmen and women of the country. But this will obviously be misconstrued now.

It is not enough to say that because we can't win medals, we shouldn't appear at the Olympics. That serves no purpose, because we don't have either the finance or the single-minded dedication of the Chinese who shut themselves in for many years and came back into the international arena only after they had attained world standards. Instead, token representation should continue, but stress should be laid on youngsters with an eye to the future —maybe two Olympics ahead.

Arijit Sen

There is love in her eyes



Nature has gifted you eyes...
Keep them healthy and beautiful
— the natural way

Cineraria Schwabe

PROVEN HOMEOPATHIC FORMULA FOR EYE CARE



Available with all leading Chemists.

IT'S REGULAR USE SOOTHES, CLEANSES AND KEEPS YOUR EYES HEALTHY

Manufactured and packed in West Germany by Dr. Willmar Schwabe

SCHWABE

Schwabe
Trusted eye care

SWAN

Cops and ministers

Is Gujarat chief minister Amarsinh Chaudhary finding the state's director-general of police, Manmohan Singh, too tough to tackle? That the two do not see eye to eye with each other is an open secret. So, when a Baroda-based daily front-paged a story that Singh was likely to be transferred to Punjab, no one was surprised. The state government then promptly came up with a denial, and Singh himself found the matter "too trivial" to take note of.



Chaudhary: unsuccessful ploy

How did the story then find its way to the press? Apparently, the story was planted by Chaudhary himself, when he visited Baroda *en route* to Delhi, through a journalist friend of his. The CM thought that he could move the powers-that-be in Delhi to push the police chief out of the way, but failed in the process.

First blood

Maharashtra's chief minister Sharad Pawar won his first victory over his rivals in his Cabinet before he left for a fourteen-day tour of England and the United States in search of NRI investment. A few days prior to his departure a story was planted in the press saying



Pradeep Bandekar



Dungarpurkar

Pawar (left) and Patil: power games

that minister for industries Ramrao Adik would be acting chief minister while he was away. The report was promptly denied the following day in an item which said that each minister would look after his own department. This obviously annoyed the ambitious Adik. After some parleys, Sharad Pawar relented but played it cleverly by appointing Adik to look after everything but home which was entrusted to Sushil Kumar Shinde. "Did Pawar feel that he could not trust Adik on the home front?" asked a wag.

Staying Pawar

Pawar has been upstaging more than just his rivals in his Cabinet these days. It is well known that former chief minister Vasantdada Patil was colluding with the Shiv Sena and the recently rehabilitated A. R. Antulay to counter the power wielded by the chief minister. Their plans became so apparent to the high command that it recently sent party treasurer Sitaram Kesri to make it clear that Pawar was there to stay. Speaking at a hurriedly called meeting, Kesri left no one in doubt about which side Delhi was on by praising Pawar for his secularism and efficiency. Naturally, the ambitious Vasantdada did not take this too well. Some suggest that Dada's illness—he is now recuperating in Bombay Hospital after an attack of breathlessness and a high diabetic count– was a direct consequence of Kesri's unpalatable message.

Publicity first

The infamous Auto Shankar scandal seems to be getting murkier. Shankar is now in jail under the Goondas Act, which means that he need not be produced before a court up to a period of one year. This led AIADMK leader Jayalalitha to allege that such incarceration only pointed to a conspiracy in high places to let him and his gang free after a year's detention.

Jayalalitha's contention is that under the prevailing Indian laws, the killers would be severely penalised but in order to protect them from facing such a fate, the government has held them under the protective umbrella of the Goondas Act, so that they may be let off the hook after a year's detention.

But Madam Jayalalitha is clearly very weak on Indian law. Auto Shankar and company are now being held under the Goondas Act to prevent them from seeking bail after the 90-day imprisonment period is over.

But who cares for facts when publicity is more important?

Shankar: murky episode



Sipahia, India Photo Service

Building a name for himself

There's no end to his megalomania. Andhra Pradesh's chief minister N.T. Rama Rao recently agreed to inaugurate a housing project—on the condition that it was named after him.

The Bansilal project at Secunderabad in Andhra



NTR: narcissistic stunts

Pradesh has been seeing more foundation stones than houses. First, it was former Congress chief minister Chenna Reddi who launched the housing project during his tenure. The project, named after Gandhiji, was meant to provide 750 houses for the weaker sections. A few units were built during his time and then it was left to the late chief minister T. Anjaiah to restart the scheme by laying a second foundation stone and calling it Chacha Nehru Nagar.

That was all. About 250 houses were left to be built and subsequent Congress governments did little to finish the project. Until NTR's "magnanimity" did the trick.

Thus was born Nandamuri Taraka Rama Nagar. ■

Devi Lal's Humpty Dumpty theory

Ajit Singh's chief lieutenant, Ajay Singh, has been operating as an intermediary between Devi Lal and him. Last month, Ajay Singh took Ajit Singh to Haryana Bhawan in Delhi to meet Lal. The conversation that followed is a pointer to Opposition strategies.

Lal asked Ajit Singh what he would like to eat for breakfast. Singh replied, "Anything goes." When Lal insisted, Singh answered, "Omelette and corn flakes."

"Single omelette or double?" asked Lal.

"Double," said Singh.

Accordingly, Lal placed the order for the food. When it arrived, Lal flew into a rage. "You fool," he rebuked the waiter, "what have you done to the eggs? Why did you break them?"

"Sir," quaked the nonplussed waiter, "how can you make a double omelette without breaking the eggs?"

Suddenly Lal changed expression and smiled. Turning to Ajit Singh, he said, "See, Ajit, learn from this waiter. He is much wiser than you. Unless you break all the parties, how can you form a new one?"

Lal, lessons in Opposition politics

Jagdish Yadav



K.M. Kishen

Jethmalani: conflicting versions

Inspector Clouseau's flying visit

Strange are the ways of Ram Jethmalani, the knicker brigade's Inspector Clouseau. Jethmalani, who is in New York, flew to India for just one day—to secure Sanjay Singh's bail. But it is the manner in which he reached Lucknow that raised eyebrows. Jethmalani's version is that he flew to Delhi, then took a car all the way to Lucknow. The fact is that Haryana CM Devi Lal was in charge of his transport here: he requisitioned a special Haryana government plane to cart him all the way from Delhi to Kanpur, from where a car (organised by Lal) took him to Lucknow. But who paid for his air fare? If the grapevine is to be believed, Arun Nehru.

Azad's new anti-dissident formula

The Bihar chief minister, Bhagwat Jha Azad, has chalked out a new strategy to counter dissident activity in the state. Three editors are believed to be involved in the gameplan. The compromise formula worked out is that the three journalists would not praise Azad in their writeups. Instead, Azad would supply them, from time to time, information against Dr Jagannath Mishra, a former chief minister and a key dissident leader, Tariq Anwar and the perennial sleazeball Sitaram Kesri. One of the editors incidentally runs a features agency.

Will the cousin attend?

Will Rajiv Gandhi attend the wedding of Arun Nehru's daughter on 22 October? This is the question that has been engaging quite a few Congressmen. Should Rajiv not attend the wedding, then it really means that all is over between him and his cousin. But if he does, then it would expose his ambivalent attitude: lambasting his critics in public but accepting them in private. Moreover, should Rajiv attend the function, it will only take the wind out of the Congressmen's sails, who have spared no opportunity to badmouth Arun Nehru.

Why Sheila Dixit refused to work in the PM's House



Dixit: low profile?

What's Sheila Dixit, the minister of state attached to the PM's Office, up to? Dixit was offered a room at 7, Race Course Road—the PM's residence—to operate from; the room was adjacent to Satish Sharma's. She refused. The logic: first, it would expose her to the glare of publicity. Moreover, any visit to Dixit would be construed as a visit to the PM. Should there be any mix-up, the PM would get a bad name. So much for loyalty.

Durability and reliability:

the hallmark of perfection.

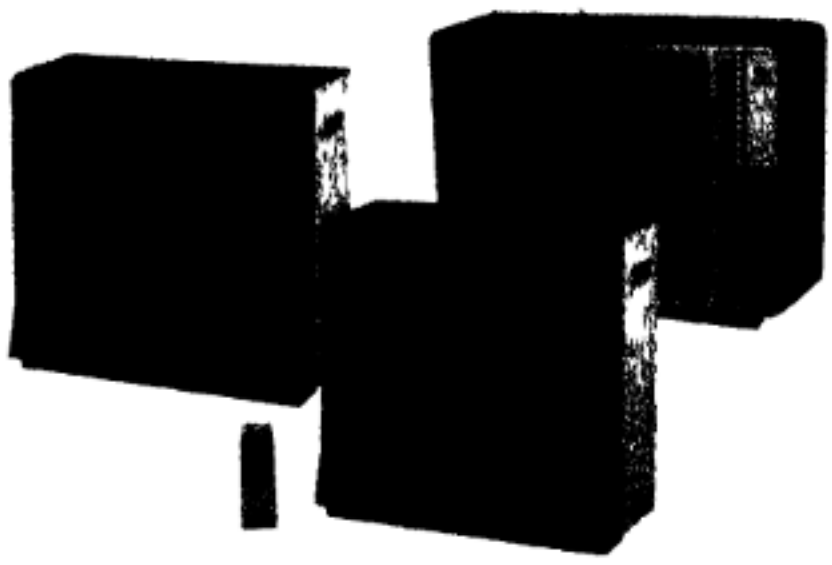
Ask anyone who has owned a BPL colour TV for some years And you'll decide that nothing less will do for you, too

Because BPL colour TVs last longer and perform better Not surprising, since their components are double soldered to the PCB To ensure that they stay in place And to eliminate the risk of corrosion Thus removing the most common cause of failure

Besides, highly critical components like Fly-back Transformers, Deflection Yokes and Tuners are made in collaboration with Sanyo of Japan And the tough, lightweight cabinets are manufactured in-house at a modern injection moulding plant

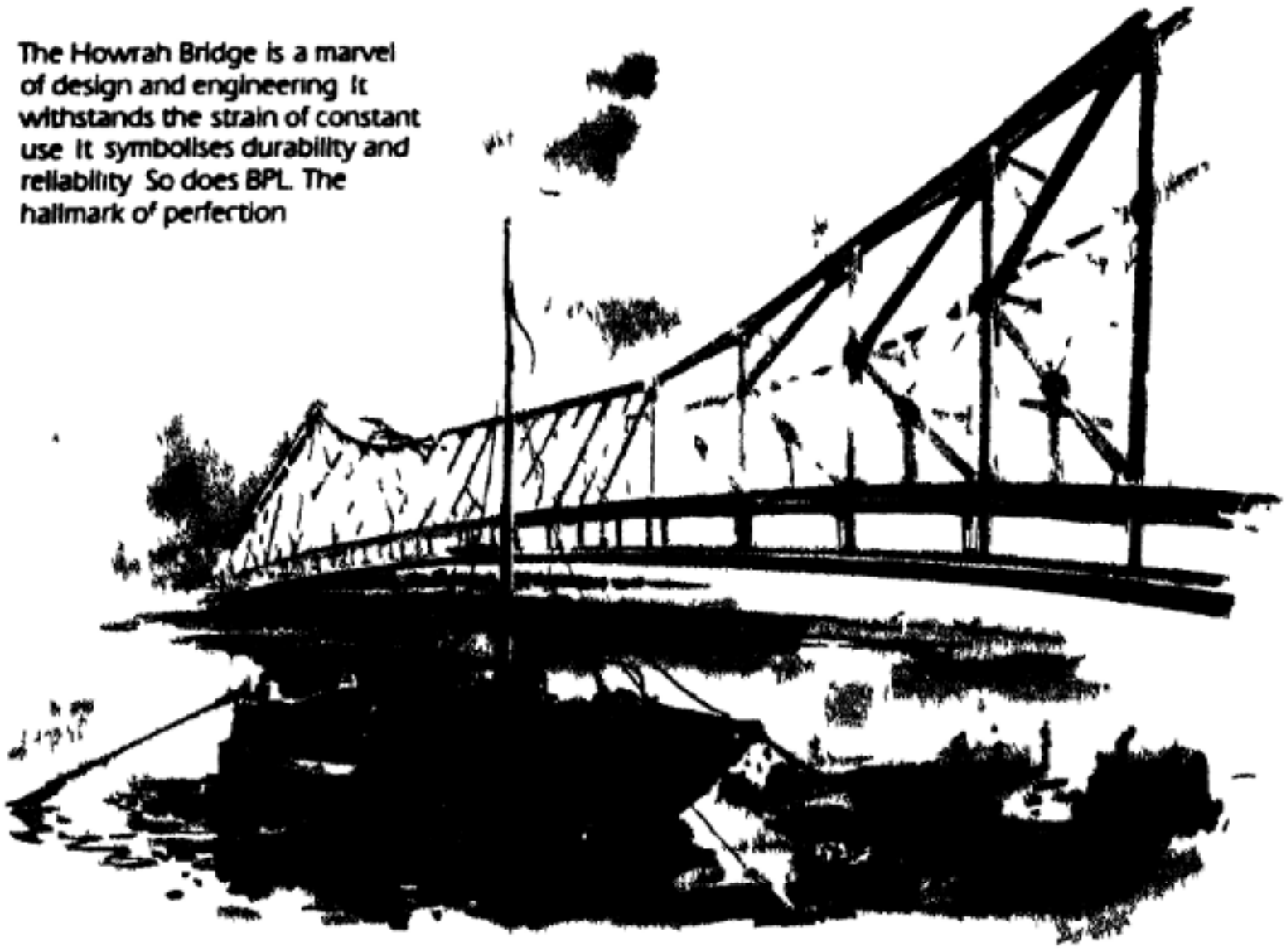
All this means durability and reliability which BPL is renowned for

Visit the nearest BPL dealer today And own the hallmark of perfection Available in a range of trend setting models



YOU'LL FIND IT IN BPL.

The Howrah Bridge is a marvel of design and engineering It withstands the strain of constant use It symbolises durability and reliability So does BPL. The hallmark of perfection



BPL-TV

Always the best!

R K SWAMY/BPL/3585

SUNDAY WEEKLY 16 OCTOBER 1988 REGD NO.
WB/CC 256 TN/MS (G)-676-MH-BY-SOUTH-660



Wills Filter set the filter trend in cigarettes long years ago. Today it's still the finest. In taste, in satisfaction. Hand-picked virginia tobaccos married to an efficient filter make it so. Millions of smokers have discovered it, then stayed with it.

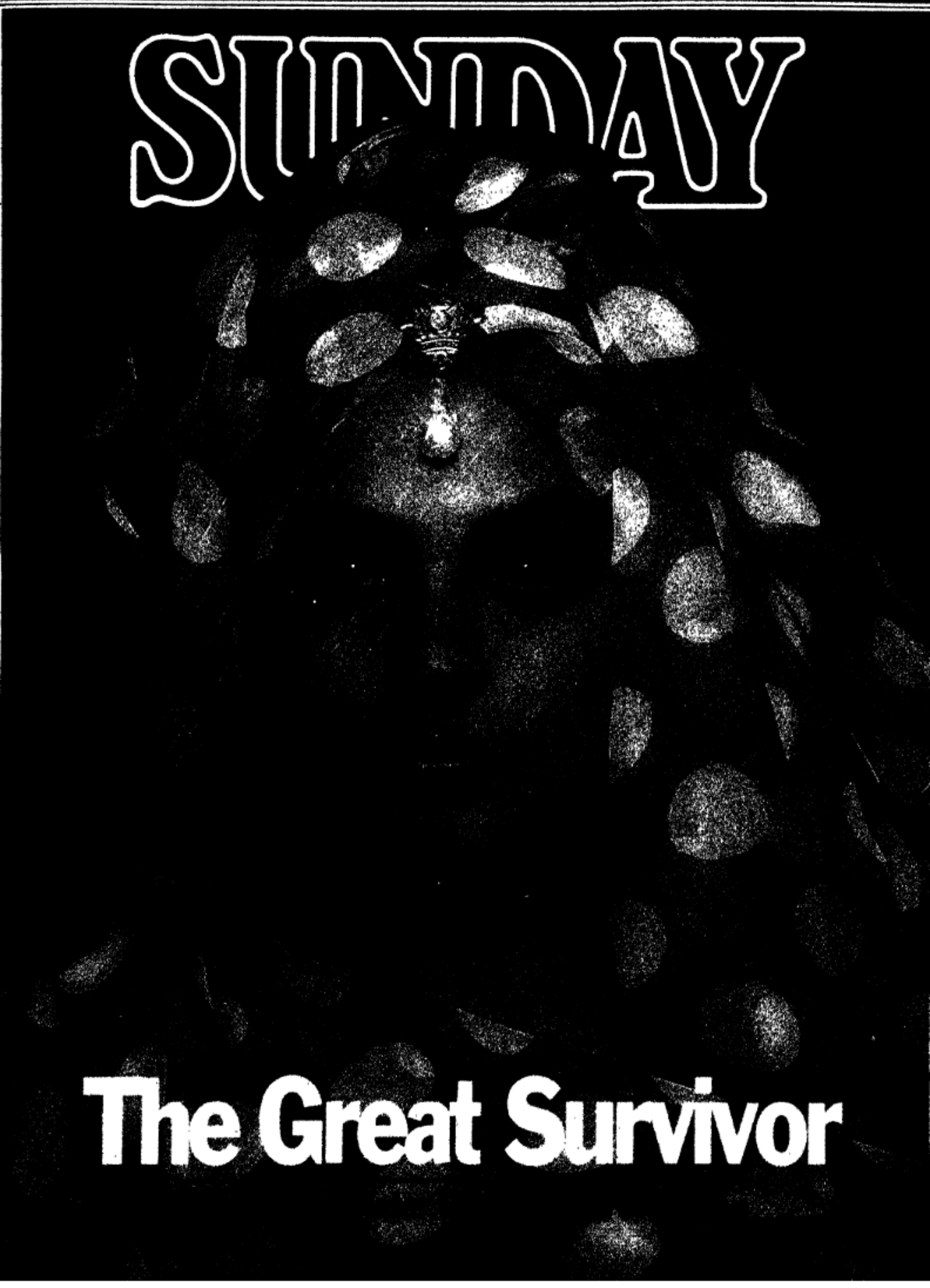


WILLS FILTER
Filter and tobacco perfectly matched

STATUTORY WARNING
CIGARETTE SMOKING IS

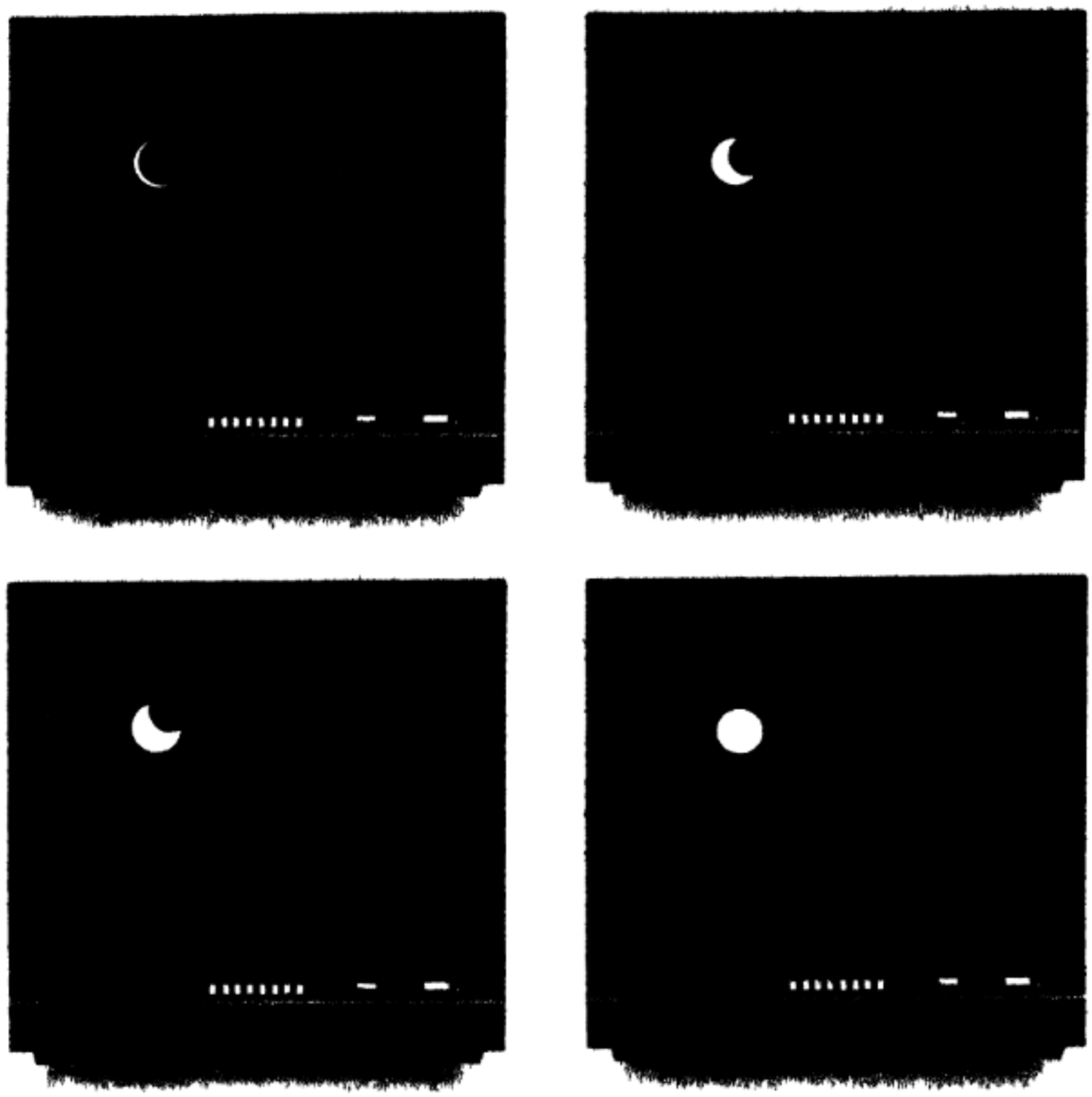
JANATA DAL: WILL THE UNITY LAST?

SUNDAY



The Great Survivor

EC Colour TV



Real value... as time goes by.

ECTV

SAMTEC Electronics Corporation of India Limited (A Government of India Enterprise), Hyderabad 500 762.

CONTENTS

VOLUME 15□ ISSUE 48 □ RS 6.00

SUNDAY

AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

30 OCTOBER—5 NOVEMBER 1988

COVER STORY **21**

THE GREAT SURVIVOR

From the dusky, pouting heroine of *Sawan Bhadon* to the polished, sophisticated and ravishing superstar of *Khoon Bhari Maang*, Rekha has come a long way indeed. Over the years, she has successfully managed to stay at the top, the Sridevis and the Meenakshi Seshadris notwithstanding. What accounts for her superstardom? A close look at the sultry siren.

SPECIAL REPORT **14**

A PARTY IS BORN

The Janata Dal was launched with a lot of fanfare and exuberance in Bangalore recently. But will it be a cohesive party? How long will the unity last?

FOREIGN POLICY **48**

THE KAMPUCHEAN TANGLE

Can India play the peace-maker in South-East Asia?

CULTURE **50**

A RUSSIAN GALA



The Soviet Mela in Delhi has brought enjoyment and excitement to people and bound two nations closer together.

BUSINESS **54**

AMBANIS HIT THE TAKEOVER TRAIL

Reliance Industries has pulled off a major coup by acquiring engineering giant Larsen and Toubro, and there's speculation that the Ambanis are now eyeing Siemens India.



Page 21



Page 14

Letters 4
Sight and Sound 11
Byline M.J. Akbar 6
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 9
Business Diary 62

OTHER DEPARTMENTS
Random Notes 81
Delhi Diary 82

There was no issue of SUNDAY dated 23—29 October 1988

Cover transparency of Rekha by Jagdish Mali

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bijit Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 8 Prafulla Sarkar Street, Calcutta 700 001. Also printed at Siliguri for Bengal and Delhi and Tripura; Bongaon for North-Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup, Gauhati, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Borgolai districts of Assam, Meghalaya.

VIDEO **67**

THE THIRD WORLD ON FOUR



Like its creator Tariq Ali, *Bandung File*, the television programme on the Third World, bears a nonconformist stamp.

NEWSWATCH **70**

AND NOW, A BODOLAND

The agitation for a separate homeland by the Bodo tribals in Assam is gaining momentum. A report.

ESSAY **74**

THE DEVIL'S ALTERNATIVE?

The right to freedom of expression in most free societies is a gray area. The banning of *The Satanic Verses* only worsens this dilemma.

PROFILE **76**

BEYOND SALEEM SINAI

Meet the new Rushdie—same as the old Rushdie.

BOOKS **78**

THE MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN DO THEIR BIT

The controversy surrounding *The Satanic Verses* has spilled over the borders of India and become an international Islamic concern.

NEWS **32**

Khaas Baat 63
Spotlight 64
Sundayweek 79
Odds and Trends 80



A government for the rich

The cover story (*Crony capitalism*, 2—8 October) brings one to the conclusion that the 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' in India has gradually changed to a 'government of the rich, by the rich, for the rich'. The one single factor responsible for this unfortunate change is the expenditure on elections running into crores of rupees. This invariably gives rise to a vicious circle wherein businessmen dole out crores to finance elections, and in turn receive favours which multiply their crores. Is this then a government that is supposed to work for the poor?

Husain E. Beguwala, Bombay (Maharashtra)

■ The alliance between politicians and businessmen is like that between a prostitute and a pimp; both lack sincerity. This is purely a relationship of convenience. Elections are won on the strength of black money supplied by businessmen and industrialists, who then feed on the power wielded by the ruling party. Once you have this backing, you can get away with anything. The curse of Indian democracy has no redemption. Perhaps, only time can help us.

U.S. Iyer, Bangalore (Karnataka)

■ The cover story is interesting, but seems to suffer from a strong bias against people in business and industry, particularly the comment: "True, but the industrialists' support of the freedom movement also stemmed from the recognition that their future was brighter under the nationalists." To say the least, it is unchantable to allege that these industrialists, who were willing to sacrifice everything and go to jail for the nation's cause, did so with an ulterior motive. Is it seriously being suggested that industrialists would be prepared to pay a heavy price in the present for benefits in the unknown future? Please remember that the period under reference was the 1920s and 30s.

Viren J. Shah, Bombay (Maharashtra)

■ The cover story made good reading. Our country is in this sorry state only because of the mutuality of interests of our politicians and businessmen who do not have the good of the country at heart. As a result of this mass exploitation, the common man always gets a raw deal.

D.J. Patro, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

Wise step

Apropos the report, *How the Bill was killed* (2—8 October), the withdrawal of the Defamation Bill by the Prime Minister proves that he was not out to curb the freedom of the press. Rajiv Gandhi has shown considerable wisdom in refraining from making the Bill into a law. No legislative measures in recent times have generated as much heat and passion as the Defamation Bill. Though the Opposition raised its voice against the Bill, it is the concerted action of the press which made the government change its stand.

However, it should not be taken for granted that the press in our country is without its blemishes. In the name of publishing sensational items, the press has, on occasion, exceeded its limits. By withdrawing the Bill, Rajiv Gandhi has only reminded the media that they should perform their tasks with a sense of responsibility.

Mithu Mukherjee, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ The unequivocal and unconditional withdrawal of the Defamation Bill by Rajiv Gandhi proves that he is keen to preserve the democracy of the country. Of course, one cannot deny the necessity of having a strict law on defamation in our country. But existing laws are more than adequate. Had the Bill been made into law, the government itself would have been the most affected. Leaflets and cyclostyled sheets would have emerged as an alternative means of feeding the people with gossip about the government.

The role of the press in standing up against the Bill is indeed commendable. Journalists should now use the power of their pens to unmask the guilty, not put a stain of corruption on the innocent.

Amit Mukherjee, Calcutta (West Bengal)

Rajiv Gandhi: timely retreat


Ashok Vaishnav

Only in size

It was heartening to learn that a number of Indian companies are international leaders (*India's global leaders*, 25 September—1 October). However, do these companies have anything to speak about in terms of their technological strengths? How many new models has Bajaj managed to introduce, apart from variations of existing products? What is the quality of the detergent made by Nirma? Does the State Bank of India offer world class service? To take India into the 21st century, we require technological leaders who are globally competitive and not just global leaders in quantitative terms.

R. Rangamani, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

Was the Sheikh parochial?

Khushwant Singh's article on Sheikh Abdullah (*Gossip sweet and sour*, 2—8 October) appears to have some deliberate distortions. Abdullah was never pro-Pakistan and was arrested for holding secret talks with the then US ambassador, Loy Henderson, on the formation of an independent Kashmir. This is borne out by the declassified US State Department documents (Vol. 5, pp. 1433-1455) which gives a full account of the parleys, sent in a secret despatch, between Henderson and the Sheikh. He con-

ceived of accession to India only as a stepping stone to Kashmir's independence with US backing.

Also, the Maharaja of Kashmir did not flee the state in the wake of the Pakistani invasion. He left Srinagar for Jammu on the advice of the Union home ministry to escape falling into Pakistani hands. This fact is amply documented in official Indian records.

Sheikh Abdullah was not at all a secularist like Gandhi or Nehru. He was a parochial Kashmiri who heaped abuse on Nehru in his 1000-page autobiography.

Brig. (Retd) Jatinder Singh, Jammu Tawi (Jammu & Kashmir)

■ Reading the article, one was left wondering how nationalists turn secession-



Sheikh Abdullah

ists and foreign agents and then return honourably to the nationalist fold. Abdullah was hailed as a nationalist leader before Independence, thrown behind bars six years after freedom, and finally resurrected by Mrs Gandhi. His son, Farooq Abdullah, has also experienced a similar cycle three decades later. Perhaps the Sikhs who were in the vanguard of the fight against Pakistan and are today being branded as Pakistani agents, will some day become nationalists again.

Darshan Singh Chabhal, New Delhi

Letter bomb

The report (*The CM and the leaked letter*, 2—8 October) was analytical. The furore over the leaked letters exchanged between Jyoti Basu and Jatin Chakraborty has put the ruling Left Front in West Bengal in an embarrassing position. Chakraborty's obsession with controversies is well-known. Not long ago, he had launched an unwarranted crusade against the popular singer, Usha Uthup. Quite recently, he made an adverse remark about the West Bengal CM and then tendered an unconditional apology.



Jyoti Basu (left) and Jatin Chakraborty: falling out

Thus, going by the PWD minister's track record, his tirade against the CM and his son need not be taken seriously. The press has needlessly blown the episode out of proportion. We are confident of the fact that the CM will not stoop so low as to promote the business interests of his son.

B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur (Bihar)

■ The exchange of letters between the chief minister and the PWD minister is a glaring example of the Left Front government's so-called clean administration. To cover up the abuse of power, CPI(M) leaders have chosen to tarnish the image of Jatin Chakraborty by calling him an agent of the Congress(I). But the question that still remains is: why was the CM silent on this issue till it came to the notice of the public? To clear all doubts, the CM would do well to order a judicial probe.

Nanda Dulal Roy Chowdhury, Kharagpur (West Bengal)

The many faces of secularism

Which Jawaharlal Nehru did the columnist have in mind in his article (*Byline*, 25 September—1 October)? Was it the pre-Chinese invasion Nehru who held the fanciful and ludicrous view that Hindu communalism was a bigger threat to India than communism, or the post-Chinese invasion Nehru, a completely metamorphosed man who had the candour to admit that he had been living in a world of his own imagination? Thrown on to *terra firma* from his cosmic plane by the great national catastrophe of 1962 and disillusioned by communist treachery, Pandit Nehru invited 5,000 uniformed RSS volunteers to participate in the Republic Day parade. When approached by a flabbergasted Congress leader who told him that the RSS was communal and anti-national, Nehru's laconic reply was, "Not so."

M.J. Akbar would do well to know that a proud and good Hindu is invariably a proud and good Indian.

Ajay K. Mittal, Meerut (Uttar Pradesh)

■ I fully support A.P. Venkateswaran's view that India should be a Hindu nation. If Pakistan is for the Muslims and Israel for the Jews, what is wrong if India is for the Hindus? As it is, every right thinking individual knows that the creation of Pakistan was a farce because there are more Muslims in India than in Pakistan. Nehru, no doubt was a great man, but had he known that all are not idealists, he would have declared India to be a Hindu nation, thus preventing the communal riots that have erupted so frequently.

Rohit Pandit, Shimla (Himachal Pradesh)

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager (U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta-700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of:
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

Hatchet job

I wish your correspondent was fair to me—and also to your readers—by contacting me before writing the profile on me (*Rajiv's legal hatchet man*, 25 September—1 October). That would have enabled her to avoid half-truths, falsehoods as well as twisted comments shorn of objectivity.

P. Shiv Shankar, Union minister of human resource development, New Delhi

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

The de-Yuppiefication of the Congress

It may yet be a trickle, but a trend is certainly now visible. All apostates are welcome. They vary of course: some are victims of the pre-Rajiv Gandhi era of Indian history (remember those days?), from Abdur Rahman Antulay to Shyama Charan Shukla; some were suspected guilty of the most dangerous disease in the Congress—ambitions of prime ministership, like Pranab Mukherjee. And some did not live up to the good-manners-culture of the young inheritors, 1985 vintage, as for instance R. Gundu Rao. It is curious, but the only two dissidents who did face the severe whip of expulsion were the eldest of them all, the venerable Kamalapati Tripathi, and the youngest, the whippersnapper of Bengal, Subrata Mukherjee. Both keep giving enough cause for some action each week, and nothing happens to them each week. But then both have survived the age when Rajiv Gandhi's word spread terror in the ranks. These days, the ranks more often spread terror in Rajiv Gandhi. It is a chastened leadership now; so action if any has to be a sleight-of-hand affair rather than iron fist treatment. But let this much be said about Kamalapati Tripathi: he became a dissident when it was totally unfashionable to be one, and in fact his first major complaint was that Rajiv Gandhi had begun to trust a class which had never been loyal to the Congress. He referred of course to the *zamindar*-raja class, the *taluqdars* created by the British government as the price for support to the British cause in 1857, little rajas who (exceptions like Dinesh Singh's family apart) were bitterly hostile to the freedom movement and to Nehru-promoted concepts like land reform. It did not need much time to prove the shrewd Kamalapati right.



The Prime Minister in Tamil Nadu: very popular

Rajiv Gandhi's four years in power can be classified: 1985 was the year of hope; 1986 was the year in which the seeds of the coming power struggle were sown; 1987 was the year of defeat and disgrace, a year during which power almost slipped out of grasp as the triumvirate (the President of the country, Giani Zail Singh, the strongest pillar of the Cabinet, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, and the strongest figure of the inner circle, Arun Nehru) nearly pulled off their long-planned and extremely well-constructed coup. And 1988 is the year of reformulation of battle plans. The first major battle between Rajiv Gandhi and the Opposition-cum-deserter combine having ended indecisively, with both sides mauled but neither fully defeated, the two foes are gearing up their strategies and battle positions for the next confrontation. And this, of course, will be decisive because the battlefield is no longer the corridors of power, but the open plains of a general election. Whoever wins the next round gets a chance to rule India with some confidence.

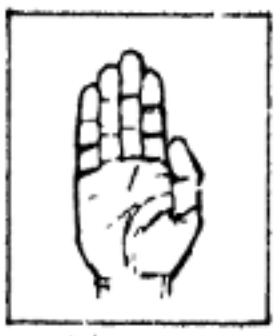
If Rajiv Gandhi does not watch out, the Yuppies will soon advise him into another electoral disaster in Tamil Nadu

If you see Indian politics in the images of a grand war, it becomes a shade clearer: Gandhi was so right when he said that we are constantly refighting the *Mahabharat* (except that the heroes have gone, and this is a *Mahabharat* of lesser men). There is the Congress on one side, and the allies on the other. But while the Congress is defined by just one name, it is hardly as if it is united. There are power struggles at

many levels in the phalanx, and anyone hoping to lead this party has to have the nerves of a fairly ruthless juggler—indeed it must be a ruthlessness which can never allow much peace. But the most important sign that the party has changed from its 1985 phase lies in the fact that one of the power struggles going on inside the Congress is between the Yuppies and the Regulars from previous campaigns. In 1985, the Yuppies brooked no challenge to their unbridled authority over the party. Indeed, it is a tribute to their strength that they still can put up a struggle even after having taken the party into debacle after debacle.



And if Rajiv Gandhi does not watch out, they will soon advise him into another electoral disaster. In Tamil Nadu. First, the good news for the Congress: Rajiv Gandhi is extremely popular in the state, no matter what the press might have written about him in the last two years. His personal relationship with the people was once again evident during the intense touring of the state, a style which is becoming a hallmark of his politics. Now for the bad news: that personal popularity is not sufficient to give the Congress victory in Tamil Nadu. After all, in a state election the people vote for a chief minister, not a Prime Minister, and there can be no doubt that the only credible candidate for the job is K. Karunanidhi at the moment The Congress leaders, whether G.K. Moopanar or P. Chidambaram, would not get the time of the day from the electorate. All the opinion polls that have been done privately by political parties confirm that the local leadership is a drag on the Congress rather than an asset: the party has about 20 per cent support in an Assembly poll, but this figure goes up by a remarkable eight to ten per cent in a Parliamentary election. This could be called the Rajiv Gandhi difference. But if Rajiv Gandhi thinks he can transfer his vote to a surrogate, he is very mistaken. However, the advice he is getting from the Chidambaram lobby is to go it alone. If he listens he will have to pay a much heavier price than after Bengal or Haryana: because next year is election year, and all the dissidents (or, more simply, those who believe that they will not get a ticket) will suddenly begin to discover morality in order to find an excuse for defection. And they will go away in dribbles, keeping the story of despair simmering all the time.



The most important sign that the party has changed from its 1985 phase lies in the fact that one of the power struggles going on inside the Congress is between the Yuppies and the Regulars from previous campaigns. In '85, the Yuppies brooked no challenge to their unbridled authority over the party



Jayalalitha could have been a vital asset to the Congress, but in the past few months the Yuppies have done what they could to alienate her

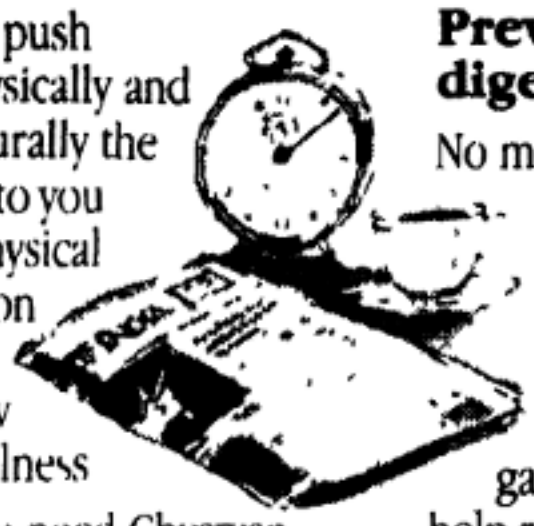


It is true that the heirs of MGR, the two ladies, have done nothing to show that they deserve the honour, but they still have a strong base. Jayalalitha, in particular, could have been a vital asset to the Congress, but in the past few months the Yuppies have done what they could to alienate her. She herself is hardly of saintly temperament, true; but it is a question of alternatives, not of ideal situations. If the Congress wants to avoid another Haryana, it must enter into an alliance with one of the Anna DMKs on offer. The only other alternative is to merge the Tamil Nadu elections with the general elections so that the Rajiv Gandhi factor can find play in the voting, but that is too great a risk.

The elders are coming back; which of course is good; but it is the next phase which is more important. Rajiv Gandhi should now begin involving them in decision-making. It is perfectly reasonable that they cannot be converted into the stars of the party overnight; there is no reason why the loyalists who stuck with the party all along should accept that. But the point of bringing them back surely is to exploit their vast experience in the complex business of setting up a credible strategy and army in time for the most important confrontation with the Opposition: the general elections.

In the current elections in the United States, the race would have been over by now, bar the actual voting, with George Bush too far ahead for Michael Dukakis to even dream of catching up—but for one thing: doubts about the man chosen by Bush as his vice-presidential candidate, Dan Quayle. Quayle is the Yuppie of the Republicans who has managed to destroy the confidence even of the other Yuppies in the land; he is a drag which Bush must now be regretting very seriously indeed. However, Bush can do nothing except grin and bear it, and pray that the damage can be contained. Rajiv Gandhi, on the other hand, can do something about the couple of Dan Quayles who keep hanging around him. He can drop them before they turn into the millstones that could sink him.■

Everyday you push yourself – physically and mentally. Naturally the pressure gets to you Mental and physical fatigue. Tension Digestion problems Low resistance to illness



That's why you need Chyawan Shakti –nature's own formula to fight symptoms of stress–created with over 46 precious herbs Brought to you by Dabur

Chyawan Shakti–combats stress, revitalises mind and body

The effects of stress on your nerves can be disastrous. Chyawan Shakti has ingredients like Draksha, Ashwagandha, Akarkara and Gokshur These act as demulcents and tonics, while Kesar and other herbs build up physical vigour and invigorate the mind.

Prevents acidity and digestion problems

No more antacids and anti-flatulence pills. Herbs like Akarkara, Lavanga, Madhu and Mukta Shukti Pishti prevent acidity, help digestion, stimulate appetite, relieve gastric and intestinal pains and help regular bowel movement.

Rich in Vitamin C to fight illness

Who needs orange juice!

Chyawan Shakti has an abundance of Amla, the richest source of Vitamin C

This, along with other herbs in Chyawan Shakti, acts as a powerful immuno-stimulant to build up resistance to common ailments.

Fountain of youth

Chyawan Shakti supplies you with Iron, Calcium, Minerals, Magnesium, Phosphorous and acts as an all-round health tonic.



Keeping you feeling young and raring to go. And since it is wholly natural, there are no harmful side effects. So go ahead and give it a try.

You have nothing to lose except the adverse effects of stress and strain!

SPECIALLY CREATED FOR PEOPLE WHO WORK HARDER

NEW Dabur CHYAWAN SHAKTI



AYURVEDIC TONIC
TO KEEP YOU GOING STRONG



everest/d88/OIL/261

Dabur INDIA LTD.
Harsha Bhawan, Block E,
Connaught Place,
New Delhi-110 001.



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

For a free Press Council

The Press Council of India has gone through many vicissitudes. The first chairman, J.R. Madhulkar, trod a cautious path, tending to favour the government, but also taking care not to annoy the press. Most cases presented to the council at that time were against pressures exerted by the central and state governments, often regarding the placement of their advertisements.

The term of chairman N.R. Iyengar was the darkest because he openly sided with the government, although in private he bemoaned Mrs Gandhi's policies. His role during the Emergency was most reprehensible. I was a member of the council then, and sponsored a resolution in the council—the highest body for the protection of press freedom -condemning the censorship.

Iyengar had the resolution killed at the Delhi-based members' meeting on the plea that no newspaper would be allowed to publish it and that the council, which was doing useful work by discussing the case between K.K. Birla and George Verghese regarding the latter's dismissal from the *Hindustan Times*, would be dissolved if the resolution was passed.

I never knew at that time that Iyengar was in constant touch with V.C. Shukla, the press czar during the Emergency. Subsequently, the government's white paper on "misuse of mass media during the Emergency" confirmed his links.

His letter to Shukla dated 13 August, 1975, which came to light during the Janata regime, said: "You remember I spoke to you about the desire of some members to have a meeting convened for the purpose of discussing the Emergency and the censorship. I had an informal meeting of the Delhi-based members and I was able to convince them that this is not necessary or desirable. So this will not figure in the agenda of any meeting that is being called."

However, under Justice A.N. Sen, the council again came to assert itself. During his three-year term, which ended on 9 October this year, there were more complaints against the press than against the government. His impartiality won him the esteem of journalists. Although he often censured them for crossing the limits of free reporting or free comment, he did not spare the government either.

For example, Sen openly criticised the Defamation Bill and said repeatedly that he was never consulted about it at any stage, although Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi insisted that he had consulted the Press Council. Sen's courage in contradicting the Prime Minister, to quote a top official, was "the last straw on the camel's back". The government understandably had no intention of extending his term, although, in the past, the practice has been to give two terms to a chairman. The laconic observation from a top I and B ministry source is: "So far the decision is not to appoint A.N. Sen."

At one stage M.P. Thakkar was considered as a successor. He has the distinction of having submitted a report on Mrs Gandhi's assassination which he himself requested be kept secret for having reportedly made some remarks against certain living personalities. This should make clear what his views are on the demand for the right to know. He, along with S. Natarajan, another Supreme Court judge, also interpreted the Fairfax scandal as part of a conspiracy to destabilise India.

Apparently, the government is pleased with him because he, a sitting judge of the Supreme Court, was offered the chairmanship of the Law Commission, and even the Chief Justice of India had no objection to his combining the two positions. Hopefully he is out of the way because he has been appointed the Law Commission's chairman. The only hope is that the panel which selects the chairman of the Press Council, comprising the Lok Sabha Speaker, the Rajya Sabha chairman and a person nominated by the Press Council, will withstand the government pressure and give Sen another term or select someone other than a judge and who has shown himself to be not so blatantly partisan.



Justice A.N. Sen; impartial'

Since the sanction of a Press Council is moral, it cannot be allowed to become an instrument in the hands of such people who might use it to besmear the reputation of those who are opposed to the government.

The British Press Council, on the lines of which the Indian Press was set up, has been able to avoid such situations because the newspaper industry in the UK foots the entire bill of the council. The Pakistani press has decided to follow the British example. Released from the 25-year-old rigours of restrictions, it wants to have a council of its own. The Council of Pakistan Newspapers Editors Conference (CPNEC) has decided that the Press Council should be a voluntary body, headed by a person qualified to be a High Court judge, to consider complaints about the conduct of the press or the conduct of persons or organisations towards the press. Unlike India, where the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha nominate MPs to the council, Pakistan will have as council members only representatives from the press and the public.

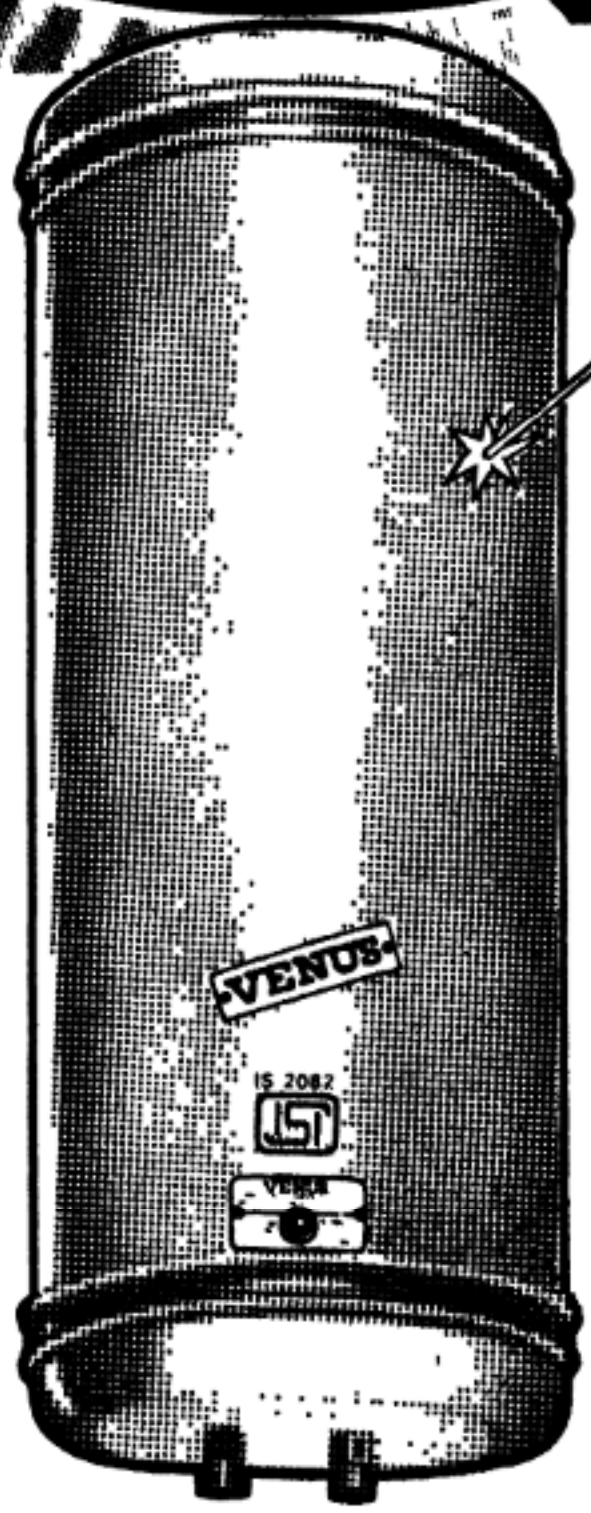
Perhaps the way out for the Indian press to prevent the government from dictating to it through the Press Council headed by a pliable judge is to dissociate itself from the present statutory council and constitute a council of its own. Since the sanction of a Press Council is moral, it cannot be allowed to become an instrument in the hands of such people who might use it to besmear the reputation of those who are opposed to the government.

The appointment of a chairman chosen by the press can prevent government interference. And the chairman need not be a judge, who often tends to tie himself up in legal knots. When I was a member of the council, I sometimes felt that the procedure was too legalistic and wasted time unnecessarily. In fact, the amendment made to the Press Council's constitution does say that a person other than a judge can be appointed chairman.

A few years ago, the government—as also some chairmen—felt that the council should have powers to punish. I believe the subject was pursued with Justice Sen as well but he put his foot down. He rightly said that the sanction of the Press Council was moral. ■

Quality.
The built-in magic that has made VENUS a best-seller...

For 27 years!





Venus has the distinction of staying on top for over 27 years.

Built-in quality

Unlike several cheap water heaters where only buying and assembling of parts are done Venus is manufactured to strict quality control standards all through the production process That's why all the models of Venus water heater from 10 to 50 litres carry the ISI mark

Making Venus in the long run maintenance free and ensuring a trouble-free service

Built-in safety

Venus comes to you with built-in safety features like Fusible Plug Pressure Release-cum-Vacuum Release Valve Unlike other water heaters where safety features are optional accessories

Making Venus totally safe

Built on expertise

Venus water heaters are built on innovative technology that comes with the expertise of 27 years

Quality in service

A nation-wide distribution network makes Venus available every where and assures prompt after-sales- service

Built to your choice

Venus water heaters are available in a range of 10, 25, 35, 50, 70 & 100 litres capacity in Vertical, Horizontal and Dwarf models

Venus, always the leader.

IS 2082 ISI

VENUS®
WATER HEATERS

Manufactured and marketed by

STANDARD ELECTRIC APPLIANCES

Central Marketing Office.
S-2, Green Park Extension, New Delhi 110 016

H O. & Factory. Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu.
Branches at: Madras • Bangalore • Calcutta • Bombay.



"

Back home in Haryana people call me *dau* (father), I am not a *dada* (grandfather)

DEVI LAL, *Haryana chief minister, responding to K.P Unnikrishnan's statement accusing him of indulging in* "dadagiri"

Krishna has been born, Kamsa has to be careful now

S.R. BOMMAI, *Karnataka chief minister, on the newly formed Janata Dal*

A rapist is a man worse than an animal. He should be slaughtered, for he is not fit to live in civilised society

RAJ BABBAR, *filmstar*

It is nothing but an opportunistic attempt to create a disturbance. In India it has become a political football and here (Britain) Muslim groups are trying to do something similar.

SALMAN RUSHDIE, *on the burning of his book, The Satanic Verses*

We are being wrongly accused of buying time on the issue. It is the RSP that is doing that We have made our reaction amply clear.

BIMAN BOSE, *CPM central committee member*

We will not repeat the 1977 debacle.

RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE, *newly formed Janata Dal leader*

Most of our films have an accent on gratuitous violence and bloodshed—in this respect I found *Nayakan* to be an honest effort towards a more realistic cinema.

FEROZE KHAN, *film-maker, on his recent film,* Dayavan, *a Hindi remake of* Nayakan

Hemaji is a director's actress. The director can get what he wants from her. What I like about her is her honesty.

JEETENDRA, *filmstar*

Businessmen and filmstars are the worst income-tax defaulters.

AJIT PANJA, *Union revenue minister, during a recent visit to Calcutta*

There is a fixation with death everywhere. What the media—be it newspapers, the ad world, or even cinema—is selling is death and violence. It is a terrible trend

KETAN MEHTA, *film director, talking about his recent film,*Hero Hiralal

I never watch television.

JYOTI BASU, *West Bengal chief minister, when asked to comment on the extensive television coverage given to him and to Kerala chief minister, E.K Nayanar*

This (Shiv Sena) is a party interested in the mother tongue, not the motherland.. they thrive on conflict, not on the courage of their convictions.

RUSTOM TIRANDAZ, *corporator, Bombay Municipal Corporation*

"Sometimes friends ask, 'How do you feel at 86?' I can truthfully answer, I feel fine. The old machine is still running faithfully : after all, it's a Kirloskar product."

— S.L. KIRLOSKAR

Kirloskar



The Kirloskars have never believed in isolating the concept of quality from the manufacturing process. We have struggled hard to ensure that it runs through our enterprise, in every work done there, and in every person who does it.

"**Quality**", as my brother Ravi always said, "**must go beyond standard tests and procedures. It must be equated with self-respect and personal pride**".

Our engines, motors, compressors, machine tools, pumps and valves and a host of other products serving every Indian industry and recognised in many parts of the world, provide ample proof of a century-long history of quality. That this history will be carried forward by the future generations is beyond doubt.

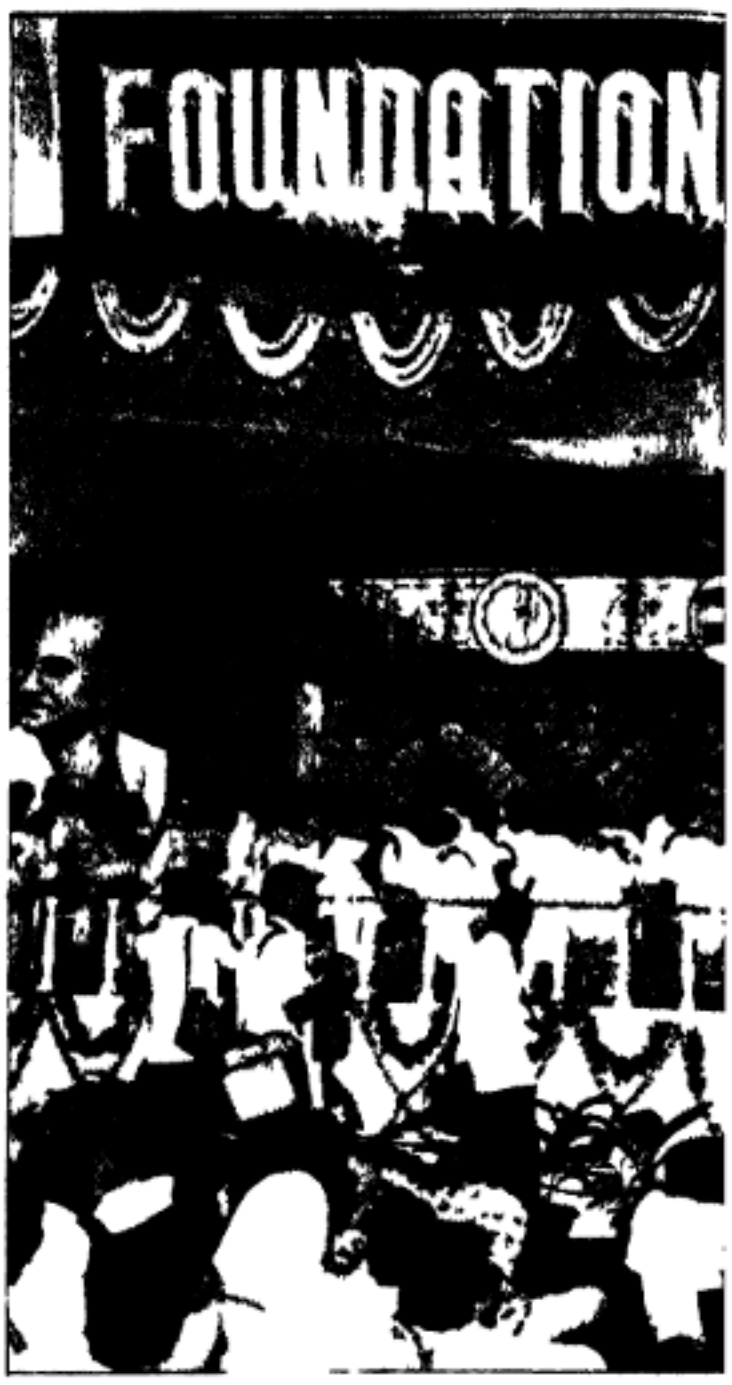
We shall continue to contribute to India's social and economic betterment through engineering excellence
— our chosen method.

100

KIRLOSKAR CENTENARY
1888-1988

A party is born

The Janata Dal is launched by the Opposition amidst a lot of fanfare—and a little foreboding



Even its architects were amazed When the brand new, unified Opposition party was formally unveiled on a crisp Bangalore afternoon on 11 October, the most surprised were the motley Opposition leaders, who had sweated, quarrelled, harangued and laboured to merge their differences and produce a united front to challenge the ruling Congress(I) At the moment of conception, Janata leader Ramakrishna Hegde beamed "I know it seems incredible, but it has become a reality."

Hegde's rapturous confession said it all For one, why should the birth of the new Opposition party, the Janata Dal (JD), be incredible? To the millions of Indians disenchanted with Congress(I) rule, a united Opposition is only logical. But the Opposition has, so far, been ruled not so much by logic as by the demands of power and personalities Even on the day of the great birth, exuberance was mingled with foreboding

The ominous note was struck by one of the four parties that had earlier decided to merge The Congress(S) and its articulate leader, K P Unnikrishnan, had been working for the past year to bring together disparate Opposition politicians, but on the day of the merger, the Congress(S) declared it would have nothing to do with this "opportunistic alliance". However, it is to the credit of the Janata Dal leaders that they allowed nothing, not even the Congress(S)'s *volte-face*, to mar their enthusiasm, at least on that afternoon in Bangalore.

"History is being made," happily announced Vishwanath Pratap Singh, the man who is viewed as the most credible challenge to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. And Singh had reason to feel overjoyed. At the convention, he was unanimously elected president of the new organisation with the power to constitute its national committee and appoint office-bearers. The move

"My voice cannot be silenced"

But Chandra Shekhar is not sure whether his opinion will carry weight



Chandra Shekhar with Hegde: coming together

SUNDAY: You had stressed on policies and programmes all along. Do you now feel that this need has been met with the 11 October resolutions?

Chandra Shekhar, Yes. With the resolutions that requirement has been met. The steering committee had appointed the sub-committee on deciding policies and programmes for the new party and the outlines have been approved. So that requirement has, more or less, been met.

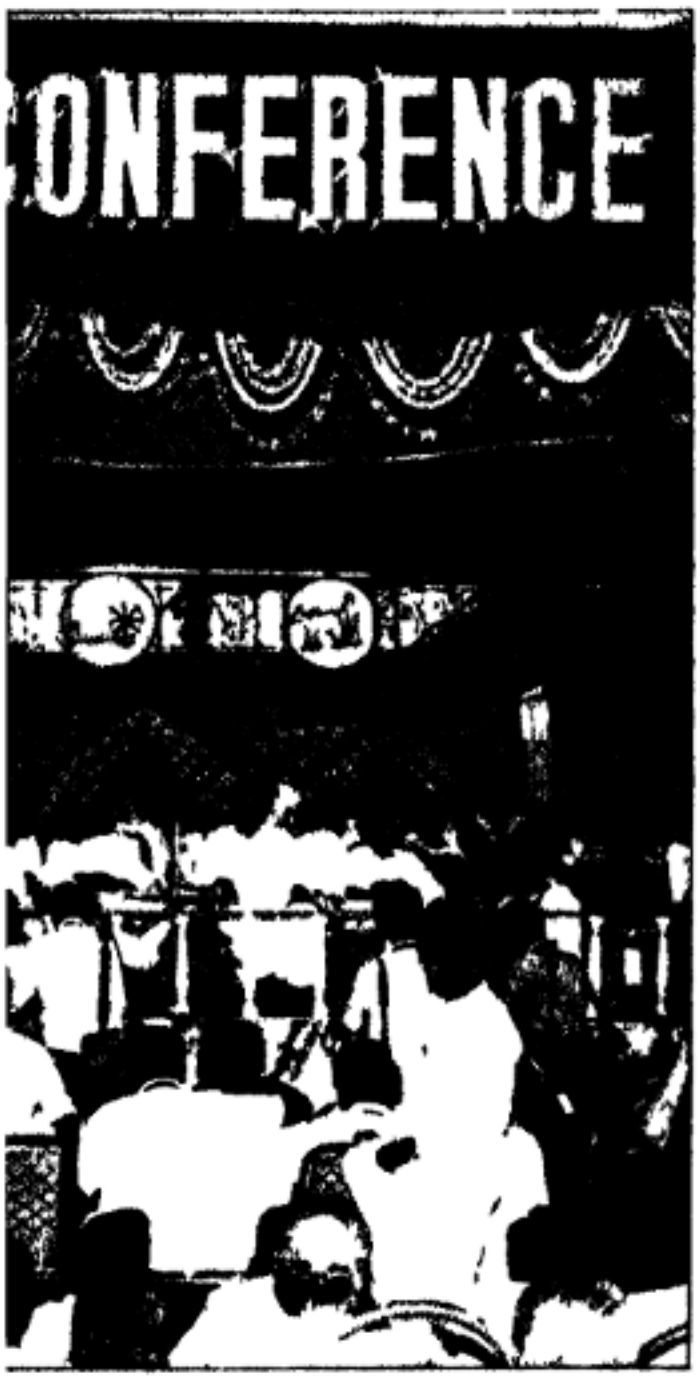
The other point you have been stressing upon—that the Opposition must not look for a substitute for Rajiv Gandhi but it needs an alternative with alternative politics. What difference has there been in this regard in the last one month?

It is not a question of the last one month. It was connected with policy and programme. Our policy and programme indicate a total departure from the methods of Rajiv Gandhi in the task of development. We have said planning should be based on the needs of the people.

Do you think that kind of alternative politics has come about with the present set-up?

No This (policy and programme) is only an indication. How the policy will actually function will depend upon the attitude of the leadership of the party, the sincerity and dedication of its workers By just forming a new party you cannot claim that it has started in that direction. Because it requires tremendous work to







(Left) Opposition leaders at the launching of the Janata Dal, V P Singh with Ajit Singh providing an alternative

mobilise the workers and it is not just by constituting a party or coming together of some leaders.

But now you are at the head of the committee to decide upon policy and programme?

Yes, that is true. In words we have charted a new path, the desired path. But mere passing of a resolution or acceptance of the policy does not necessarily mean that it will be implemented. I cannot be hypocritical and say that because we have expressed pious hopes, those hopes will become a reality.

Now that V.P. Singh has been given powers to appoint the national executive and the office-bearers, what guarantee is there that all sections will be equally represented?

The only thing is that you must have some confidence in people and hope that they will behave in a reasonable and rational manner. If V.P. Singh is to be head of the new party, he has to be rational for his own survival.

Rajiv Gandhi has accused the Opposition of not having a policy to tackle serious problems facing the nation, like Punjab, Sri Lanka, etc. What specific policy does the new party have for the Punjab problem, for instance?

These have been spelt out in the policy paper. See, a new party does not mean a new Punjab policy. I have my own. I cannot speak for the party. Let it function for some time and then we will see.

But since you have been talking about policy and programme, your opinion must carry some weight?

I don't know, that is my misfortune also. In this country it is easier to ignore all the problems of the nation and try to become a leader. Populist slogans are the surest way to get the support of people who claim themselves to be arbiters of the nation's history. Elitist sections go by media projections. Media projections are not the reality. I don't know whether my voice will carry weight, but I can tell you my voice cannot be silenced.

pushed Singh closer to his goal of prime ministership, in spite of veiled warnings by Madhu Dandavate, who made it a point to mention "Nobody needs to be a replica of Mahatma Gandhi or Jayaprakash Narayan It is enough if he leads us on the path shown by these two leaders At this time, we are not thinking about who will be Prime Minister We are not worried about that "

Indeed, the leaders of the newly-formed Janata Dal did not appear to be worried about anything at all The three prime movers of the new party, Ramakrishna Hegde, Haryana chief minister Devi Lal and V P. Singh, could not stop beaming at the mammoth crowd that had gathered at the Bangalore Palace grounds (renamed Jayaprakashnagar in commemoration of the Loknayak's birth anniversary) to felicitate the new party

It seemed nothing could wipe the smiles from the trio's faces Their euphoria remained even when the crowds, brought to the venue in hundreds of buses, began to fade away just as the speeches began. Not even the absence of Jan Morcha leader Ram Dhan and Lok Dal boss H.N. Bahuguna made any difference Doubts about lasting unity were brushed aside.

"Janata Dal is a political fact"

V.P. Singh challenges Rajiv Gandhi

SUNDAY: How will you get the constituents of the new party to agree to the merger?

V.P Singh: What constituents are there? There are no constituents. Only one single party: the Janata Dal.

But the merger needs to be ratified by the constituent parties...

That is a legality. In politics, legalities always follow politics and not the other way round. The Janata Dal is a political fact.

With the personality clashes among leaders...

That has been resolved. We (the new party) will test him (Rajiv Gandhi) out in the by-elections. We will defeat all of them (Congress-I candidates).

In what way is your party different from the Congress(I)?

The Congress(I) is already rotten. Only a tug of the rope is needed to bring it down. The trunk has dried up and termites have eaten away the roots. Rajiv (Gandhi) is enough to defeat the Congress. There is no need for an Opposition. But when the Congress building collapses, we need something to restruct it. We have a programme.

There are differences still. For instance, Ram Dhan did not attend the meet. Does it mean he wants to stay with the Jan Morcha?

The point is that we have joined the Janata Dal. I am no longer in the Jan Morcha. I cannot speak on behalf of the Jan Morcha.



"Bahuguna is a Natwarlal"

Devi Lal feels that H.N. Bahuguna is a non-entity

SUNDAY: How is this merger different from the one you announced as Samajwadi Janata Dal in July—except for Chandra Shekhar's presence?

Devi Lal: Then we had a committee to decide on policy and programmes framed under Bahuguna. With some amendments we have accepted them now.

There is bound to be some disappointment over appointments to the national executive by V.P. Singh? How does the party propose to carry along the disappointed members?

There will be dissatisfaction, naturally. Every party has to face such problems. In the previous general elections, in Haryana, Ajit Singh joined hands with the Janata Party and contested against us. He later merged with the Janata Party. Chandra Shekhar himself had stayed out of the unity talks earlier. But see, we are all together in the same party now. It is a mass party.

What about the differences among leaders? For instance, Bahuguna, Ram Dhan and the Congress (S) have stayed out?

As I have said before, Bahuguna is a 'Natwarlal'. He became the party president by means of intrigues. When I was ill and in a semi-conscious state, I resigned and made way for him in the Lok Dal for the vice-president's post. Yes, it was a mistake.

"I am an optimist because I believe that human beings learn from past mistakes," confessed Hegde. And as the delegates cheered lustily, Hegde went on: "In 1977 there was unity, but only on paper. There was no integration of hearts." He finally urged the gathering: "Let us take an oath in our hearts. Under no circumstances shall we allow any power to break this party. Let us pull the curtain over our past hatred, prejudice and bitterness."

Devi Lal and V.P. Singh at the foundation conference: the Jat-Thakur combine

While the leaders were addressing the crowds, Congress(S) general secretary K.P. Unnikrishnan and party president Sarat Chandra Sinha were holding a press conference to complain about the merger-makers Unnikrishnan said he did not voice his party's disenchantment with the unity process earlier because he did not want to upset the ceremonial mood.He later argued: "Why should they adopt the Janata constitution as the basis? If the Janata Party is sentimental about name, flag and symbol, so are thousands of workers in the Congress(S)..."

The Congress(S) was especially piqued at the fact that the steering committee of the party had held two unoffi-

cial meetings in Bangalore, but had not invited Sarat Chandra Sinha on either occasion though he had been in town. "The reception committee met him, so obviously they could not help knowing he was here," said Unnikrishnan. And that was the end of the Congress(S)'s participation in the merger.

The Janata Dal leaders, at the same time, quietly washed their hands of reluctant partners like Bahuguna and Ram Dhan. Devi Lal commented on Bahuguna's untrustworthy nature and declared that those who had stayed out of the new party would fall by the political wayside. Devi Lal tacitly assumed the role of navigator and charioteer, while V.P. Singh was made out to be the warrior destined to bring down Rajiv Gandhi. At the public rally held immediately after the convention, Pramula Dandavate echoed the new mood of overweening confidence: "If Rajiv Gandhi had seen this sight (of the huge crowd) today, he would not be able to sleep again."



Delegates at the Bangalore convention: all for a united Opposition

The architects of the new party matched their bravado with a new sense of purpose and took several steps to ensure the fledgling organisation's long-term survival. The most important were the resolutions passed by the new party. One of the most significant resolutions concerned the formalities of merger. All the unifying parties have been asked to complete the formalities within a month. Devi Lal said. "We are mass leaders. Legalities will be looked after by Ashoke Sen and J.P. Goyal."

Most leaders did not, however, deny that a number of potential pitfalls remain. Ajit Singh, for instance, attributed the Janata's downfall to its inability to enforce the party's constitutional obligations. Hegde also reiterated that a difficult task lay ahead of the new party. However, he said, if the resolutions adopted by the convention were implemented, the face of the Indian Opposition would change.

The first resolution endorses the statement of policy and programme of the new party, promising an Utopian India with a fundamental right to work and a rural bias in planning and development. The second resolution makes

"My dream has been fulfilled"

A national alternative has been found, says Ramakrishna Hegde

SUNDAY: Are you finally out of Karnataka politics?

R.K. Hegde: I am out of it, but still, in politics there are various associations and interactions. Anyway, Karnataka is my base.

Do you feel relieved?

I am greatly, greatly relieved. But I would have liked this to have happened in altogether different circumstances.

Like?

For instance, I expressed a desire to resign my post on 10 January this year, on the day of Janotsava. But my colleagues said I should not do so. Had I stuck to the decision that I had personally taken, perhaps I would have been much happier.

What role do you have for yourself in the future?

I do not have any particular role. On 11 October I saw the fulfilment of my desire, which I could describe as my dream. Because, please believe me, my real ambition is not to get power, to become somebody. But it is to see that there is a real alternative to the ruling party at the national level and at the state level. Otherwise, democracy cannot grow, it cannot be healthy. I should say my dream was almost fulfilled. Because I don't say the Janata Dal is already the national alternative. It is a beginning. If on that foundation the edifice is properly built.... see, the idea is not to grab power. It doesn't matter if the party has to wait much longer.

V.P. Singh has also been saying he does not want any position. You say that he has the greatest credibility among all Opposition leaders. Supposing your party wins the elections...

Let us first win the elections. At all times in the past, unity attempts have been frustrated on the question of leadership. Once we win under the leadership of V.P. Singh, perhaps it will be much easier (to decide on positions).

How will you deal with the question of positions now, since the office-bearers have already been appointed?

I have been saying that we must stop thinking in terms of self. We must say, "I do not want anything. Even as an ordinary worker I can contribute." It is not necessary I must be in any particular position. That brings undesirable competition and jockeying for power. It will generate a feeling of disgust among the people. Believe me, I am prepared to take up any work assigned to me. I want everybody to say so.

"It is old wine in a new bottle"

K.P. Unnikrishnan is disillusioned with the new party

SUNDAY: What is your view of the 11 October event?

K.P. Unnikrishnan: It is an important event, no doubt about it. But it is not in the way some of us envisaged it.

Why?

In the AICC session in February 1987, I was one of those who specifically said that the Lok Dal (A and B), Janata Party and Congress(S) should get together into a left-of-centre platform which will get acceptance as a national alternative to the Congress(I). There was a void and it was important to fill this void. Democratic principles would permeate the functioning of the new party and these were the credentials with which the party would go to the people. But when the credentials themselves are dubious and insufficient, then it cannot gain acceptance. To my mind, what was born on 11 October is essentially old wine in a new bottle, with a new president. That is going to be its trademark.

But you said it was an important event...

Yes, as an event it is important. As a process, it is important, very important.

It comes as a surprise when you say you were not taken into confidence for the 11 October event.

Let me clarify. We knew about the event, of course, although we had reservations about the date. The time was too short to organise a meet of that kind. But the way the decisions were taken, the name was supposed to be 'socialist people's party'. Now, why within 48 hours of their landing in Bangalore was 'socialist' dropped? Who took that decision? You cannot take such a decision without consulting us, although we are a small party. Some of these leaders cannot assume the role of *dadas* and bulldoze us.

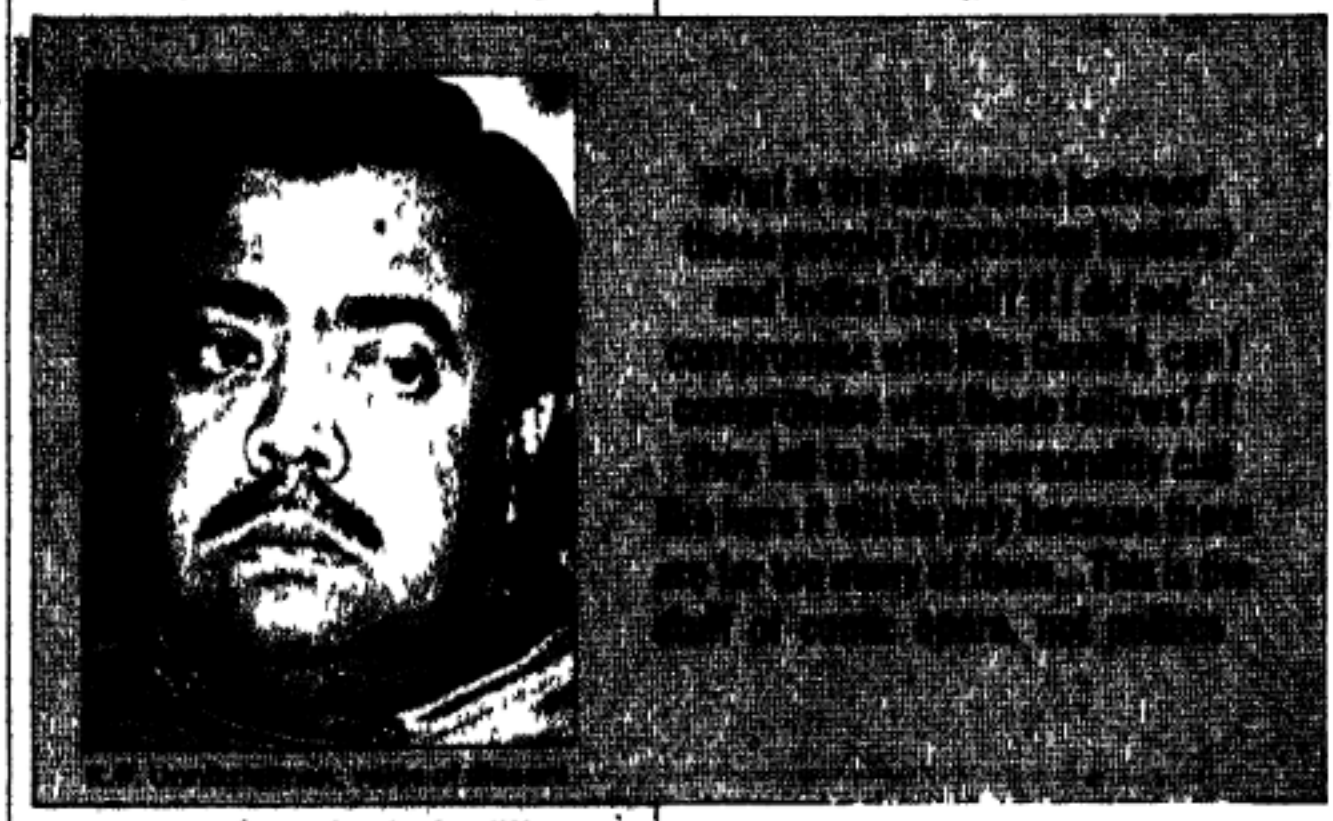
Now take the constitution, and this is important. In concept it was accepted this was to be a new party. Therefore, we leave our baggage behind—keep it tucked away in some cloakroom. Let's have a new constitution,a programme and then come to the people—personnel. But what was alarming was the way they conducted themselves. Therefore, with deep regret, we concluded that association with such a party would be difficult under one organisational umbrella.

You mean, because of fait accompli politics?

You see, it all started when Chaudhari Devi Lal went about like a bull in a China shop. He announced recently that the Samajwadi Janata Dal had been formed with approval from all sides, which was far from the truth. Confabulations went on and on...If expediency is the most important aspect, then what is the difference between these people and Indira Gandhi? If I did not compromise with Mrs Gandhi, one of the tallest leaders of this country this century, can I compromise with these fellows?...If they fail to build a personality cult like hers it will be only because there are far too many of them. You must have seen some of them wearing turbans and shouting slogans. These are the stuff of comic opera, not politics.

But V.P. Singh concludes that you, the Congress(S), is still an ally?

Yes. He is right in the sense that there are allies and allies. We are after all co-architects (of this merger). If we were not serious initially we would not have joined. Probably, we are too serious.



Hegde, Devi Lal and V.P. Singh responsible for the restructuring of the old Janata Party constitution to suit the new party.

The resolutions, passed "unanimously", when the 3,000-odd delegates raised their hands, did not succeed in entirely covering up the brittle nature of the new unity. Not everybody, for instance, is too thrilled with the idea of V.P. Singh, till recently a champion of the Congress(I), being promoted as the Opposition Prime Minister. And Hegde had to explain: "There is nobody with that kind of credibility and popularity as him to head the party. In the eyes of the public, Rajiv Gandhi is like a thief and V.P. Singh is like one who catches the thief."

The hardened veterans of the Opposition, who formed the new Janata Dal, know that nothing succeeds like the aura of success. And the key to the Opposition's success is credibility. If this unity move fails, the merger-makers might not get another chance to bid for power in the near future.

The Karnataka unit of the Janata Party worked overtime to make the merger and the public rally following it, a grand success. This was also Hegde's big chance to refurbish his image. Karnataka chief minister S.R. Bommai and other Hegde loyalists ensured that their leader got the maximum publicity. At the rally ground, Hegde's cutout loomed over the gathering and his voice boomed: "The belief in this country is that beginnings made on this day, the first of Dussera, will be successful." Hegde's call was both an invocation to the fractious followers of the new party and to the gods. The Janata Dal evidently needs both to see it through its infancy.

Prakash Belawadi/Bangalore

Photographs. H K Rajashekhar



Cotswol and you
Colourful and stylish

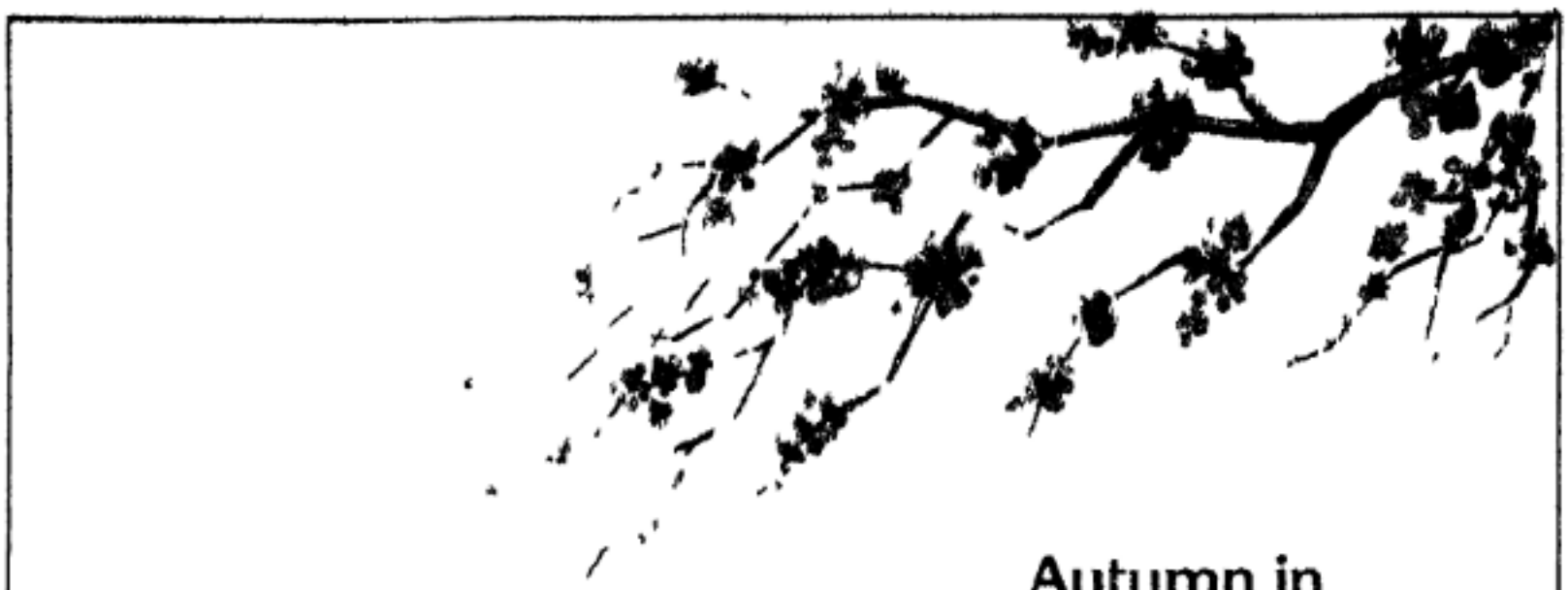
Warm. Comfortable. And classy. Cotswol colours are perfect for all styles. All generations. Check out Cotswol today.

BINNY

Cotswol

Checks • Plains • Tartans • Prints.

A classic is forever.



Autumn in

HIMACHAL





Autumn
is the best time
to be anywhere
in Himachal
Nature's bounty
is in full bloom.
With autumn, clear blue skies return
and fields and forests alike display
wonderful tints of crimson and ochre
While Himachal is charming
in summer it is more fascinating in
autumn
The sight of fruit trees bending with
luscious apples, pears, appricot, plum is
simply breathtaking
With awe inspiring glens and mossy
meadows
entwined by gushing streams or
meandering brooks,
flung east and west, the entire area
is open to any one who wishes to
escape the heat and dust of
the plains to breathe
the exhilrating air of the Himalayas.
Let the Whistling pines sing
a lullaby to you
and agreeable nature do the rest

LET IT BE HIMACHAL THIS AUTUMN

EXPLORE HIMACHAL.
THE HIMALAYAN DREAMLAND

For further information contact our following tourist offices **New Delhi** Chandralok Building 36 Janpath Tele 3325320 3329764 Tourist Information Office, Himachal Bhawan 27 Sikandra Road Tel 387473 **Bombay** 36 World Trade Centre Cuffe Parade Tel 211123/284 **Calcutta** 25 Camac Street Tel 446867 **Madras** 28 Commander in Chief Road Tel 472966 **Chandigarh** S C O 1048-49 Sector 22-B Tel 26494 **Bangalore** Manager Himachal Emproium Ganesh Complex 13 Subedar Chatram Road Tel 76591 **Shimla** The Mall tel 3311 Panchayat Cart Road Tel 4589

If you have any suggestion write to or contact
Commissioner Tourism Himachal Pradesh
Daizy Bank Estate Shimla 171 001 Tel 2028 3136

HIMACHAL TOURISM

Ayar

THE GREAT SURVIVOR

It's been nearly 20 years, but Rekha still reigns serenely at the top

And here is the movie trivia quiz for today. First question: which Hindi film star has acted in over 200 films and is still among the industry's top heroines? Second question: which actress has seemed equally at ease being directed by Manmohan Desai, Prakash Mehra and Manoj Kumar on the one hand and Shyam Benegal, Govind Nihalani and Girish Karnad on the other? Third question: name the only heroine to have lasted nearly 20 years in the business and still seem both desirable and—more important—bankable at the box-office. And a final, slightly more personal question: which movie star has kept turning up on the cover of SUNDAY every second year since the magazine's inception?

Yes, all right, we know you knew the answer all along. But, let's be honest, which of us has ever realised quite how incredible Rekha's success is? For most of us she's become the film industry's lasting icon—a pouting, dusky temptress whose sex appeal we seem to have grown up with and who we reckon will always be around



Rekha has never looked as good, as healthy and as naturally elegant as she does today. Gone is the podgy, little nitwit of the *Sawan Bhadon* days; the wild, unkempt spitfire who ate rat poison when her marriage to Vinod Mehra was dissolved; the overmade-up, bulging bimbo of the early Seventies

Girish Shukla

But stop a while. Look at her career in perspective.

In 1969 when she started shooting for *Sawan Bhadon*, the film industry was a very different place. Amitabh Bachchan did not have a single release to his credit and Rajesh Khanna was not yet the *filmi* phenomenon he later became. The business was still dominated by the Big Three. Of them, Raj Kapoor was

AHEAD OF THE 100's

ESCORTS



busy shooting *Mera Naam Joker*, Dev Anand had yet to enjoy the success of *Johny Mera Naam* and Dilip Kumar was still running around trees pretending to be a young lover. The heroines, too, were very different. Sharmila Tagore, Mumtaz, Asha Parekh, Waheeda Rehman and Saira Banu were the top leading ladies. Zeenat Aman was still at college in America, Shabana Azmi was still at the Film Institute, nobody had signed Jaya Bhaduri for anything, and as for Smita Patil, Parveen Babi and Reena Roy, they hadn't considered joining films. And if you go by the ages offered by today's stars, then Sonam, Farha and the rest hadn't even been born!

Nineteen years later, in an industry over-run by Govindas, Kimi Katkars and Chunky Pandeys, Rekha still survives serenely at the top. Last year, she had a major hit, *Sansar*, and a more moderate success with *Pyar Ki Jeet*. This year, she's had another super hit, *Khoon Bhari Maang*, and *Biwi Ho To Aisi* has been raking it in at the box-office.

The producers queue obediently outside her dressing-room, carrying attaché cases full of crisp banknotes so that they can hand over the signing amount at once in case she accepts their offers. As she acknowledges: "After *Khoon Bhari Maang*, producers are willing to pay me an exorbitant amount." At the moment, she has a staggering 12 films on hand and there are scores of others that she is considering.

But best of all, just *look* at her. Remember the podgy, little nitwit of the *Sawan Bhadon* days? The wild, unkempt spitfire who ate rat poison when her marriage to Vinod Mehra was dissolved? The overmade-up, bulging bimbo of the early Seventies? Well, look again. Rekha has never looked as good, as healthy and as naturally elegant as she does today. Last year, even *Harpers and Queen*, the prestigious British glossy, acknowledged her importance by calling her "India's Elizabeth Taylor".

Who would have thought it would turn out this way? In 1969, Rekha's mother Pushpavalli brought her to Bombay from Madras. Pushpavalli was a former actress. Her husband was an actor and so were many other members of her family. It seemed logical to her, therefore, to launch her pudgy, little 14-year-old daughter in the profession. In retrospect, it is amazing that any producer signed Rekha in the first place—she was not just plump and unkempt; she also spoke no Hindi, had no sense of discipline and made it clear that she hated every moment that she spent in front of the cameras.

Nevertheless, a man called Kuljit Pal signed her to an exclusive contract and put her up at the seamy Hotel Oriental Palace in a shady by-lane in the Bombay suburb of Khar. Her first film was to be *Sawan Bhadon*, directed by Mohan Segal



Mohan Segal is brutally honest about why he gave Rekha her first break. "I signed her out of desperation," he admits. "I was looking for a pulsating young heroine and there just wasn't anybody else"

and also starring another newcomer, a Film Institute product called Navin Nischol.

Nearly everybody who worked on that film has horror stories to relate. Rajan, the production controller, recalls: "Nobody thought she would make it. I was feeling sorry for Mohanji that he was stuck with her. I was sure that she would pack her bags after her first film and go home to Madras."

Even Mohan Segal, who could, with the advantage of hindsight claim that he spotted her star quality then, is brutally honest. "I signed her out of sheer desperation," he says. "I was looking for a pulsating young heroine to fit into a *masala* slot and there just wasn't anybody else. Rekha had a certain naive



With Navin Nischol: he was appalled to be cast against her

charm which, given time, I thought, could flower But I knew it would take at least two years for that to happen"

Much to everyone's surprise, *Sawan Bhadon* was a huge hit and Rekha was perceived as a southern sex bomb, a description that seems slightly questionable when one sees pictures of her in those days For her part, she had no interest in sex or in bombs, continually tried to run away from the sets and—she has sometimes claimed– had to be thrashed by her family before she would return to the soundstage In those relatively unprofessional days, none of this worried the producers unduly and she signed film after film (and got out of an exclusive contract with Kuljit Pal).

Through it all, she understood no Hindi. At first, directors wrote the dialogues out in Roman script and gave them to her to read This caused problems with pronunciation. Then, one day, an assistant director noticed that Rekha was an excellent mimic. (She still is. Her Zeenat Aman and Shabana Azmi impersonations are devastating.) From then on, the director would demonstrate to her how he wanted the lines read and Rekha would simply parrot them without understanding a word.



She was better known for her love-life than her career. A brief marriage to Vinod Mehra led to a suicide attempt. A fling with Kiran Kumar kept the glossies going. And a crush on Jeetendra became a standing joke in the industry

How she survived that period seems mystifying today. Pushpavalli was not a star-mother in the sense that Sridevi's mother is, and having brought her daughter to Bombay, was content to let her be Rekha now says that it was unrealistic of her mother to have pushed her into the business without any grooming "I feel great admiration," she

"I am ready to play Amitabh Bachchan's mother"

Rekha on her past, her glamorous present and her perfect future

Sunday: Next year, you will be completing two decades in films. How does it feel?

Rekha: Whatever has happened since *Sawan Bhadon* is history. Everybody knows it by heart. However, what I have gone through personally, only I know. Probably, sparks of it show in my performance. Considering that I was far from perfect when I started, I must say I have been exceptionally lucky. Anyway, I had much rather not remember the old phase.

Why? Are you ashamed of the old Rekha?

Not ashamed, but I cannot identify with the old Rekha anymore. Today, when I see my old films, like *Kashmakash* and others, I want to cringe. I was so raw and unpolished. The face was fine, but then you can't call a round ball of flesh a face, can you? Not to mention the double-chin, the tyres and all that fat.

Do you find time to watch your old films?

Chhee. When I have time, I would much rather see Meryl Streep films. It's so boring to watch my own films. But there is this particular cassette called *Rekha O Rekha*—a collection of my songs over the years. It is a horrible cassette. It has my worst songs. The other day, when I got home, my sister was watching the tape and I said, 'God, how can you possibly watch this?'

Do you remember the first film you ever saw?

No, I have no such vivid memories. I wasn't inspired by films. I was just thrust into them. There are no idols, no dreams, nothing.

After 19 years before the camera, aren't you bored?

I don't know the meaning of that word. There is so much I want to do and there is so little time. How can I get bored so easily? And why should I be bored of the camera—it is my best friend. I feel I have just started. I feel like a newcomer. There are many more interesting roles I want to do.

How long do you think you will continue to get heroine's roles?

If by 1990 I can do five good performances: by which I mean I look perfect according to the character; my voice and my performances are to the best of my ability; and of which it can be said, 'Only Rekha could have done this', I will be happy. I am easily satisfied. I have one more wish. I hope that before I die I can direct my own film, but for that, there is plenty of time. I can direct, even when I am grey-haired.

Does the thought of getting old frighten you?

Not at all. Because I know that even when I am old I will still be beautiful—in a different way probably, but still attractive.

Everyone calls you the great survivor. Are you one?

Aren't we all? We all have different ways of surviving. My ways have been straight, healthy, hygienic. And that is important because when one is in a crisis, one can get desperate. Even when I felt I was losing my balance, I did not play dirty.

To what do you attribute your success?

Initially, it was luck. After that, it is really difficult to pinpoint. I guess it was different things at different stages. Today, it is my professionalism, punctuality and persistence. Also, I am wise enough not to over-sell myself. My price is not very high.

What is your price?

I will not say anything. But producers, after *Khoon Bhari Maang*, are willing to give me an exorbitant amount. But I am not hiking my price, despite *Khoon Bhari Maang* and *Biwi Ho To Aisi*.

Did you expect these two films to be such big hits?

No way. I had, of course, worked very hard over my role in *Khoon Bhari Maang* and am quite happy with my performance. But the industry's overwhelming feedback came as a big surprise The unexpected success, of course, is *Biwi Ho To Aisi*. I was totally unprepared for the kind of hit the film has been declared.

You cannot run around trees anymore and you are not ready to do mama roles. How many Khoon Bhari Maangs and Biwi

says, "for girls like Sonam, Madhuri and Neelam, whose make-up, clothes-sense and knowledge of language, dancing, driving and riding are all perfect. In my days," she adds, "I only hoped that by getting into films, I could get away from school. But once I started working, I realised that school was probably better."

From 1970, when *Sawan Bhadon* was released, till 1975, Rekha made lots of films (*Namak Haram, Rampur Ka Lakshman, Dharmatma, Mehman, Anokhi Ada, Akraman*, etc.), many of which were hits. Her sex-kitten image persisted and she soon became better known for the complications in her love-life than for her acting skills. A brief marriage to Vinod Mehra led to a botched suicide attempt; a liaison with Kiran Kumar kept the film magazines in business; a crush on Jeetendra became the subject of much gossip and so on.

Her behaviour on the sets, too, did not suggest a consummate professional who was going to be around for two decades. Impulsive, impetuous and flighty, she would fail to turn up for shooting if her mood wasn't right. Expensive on-location schedules would have to be scrapped when the unit would discover that she had taken a flight back to Bombay because of some imagined slight. And frequently, her insecurity would lead her to make excessive demands on her producers, in an effort to be reassured. One director, stubbly writer and lyricist Gulzar, threw her out of his film (*Namkeen*) when she objected to the presence of a journalist on the sets.

Now, Rekha says that her behaviour during that period was misinterpreted: "It was all very harmless. But the film magazines blew everything out of proportion. Unfortunately, people never forget bad memories. And even though I have changed tremendously, they still remember the mad hatter I once was."

Looking back, it is easy to see how a mixed-up teenager could go berserk when confronted with the hectic pace of the film industry and the adulation of a dedicated fan following. It is less easy to explain how her career survived this phase. Her answer is simple: "Destiny. I was just lucky. To be successful, one has to be lucky. Otherwise, in spite of all the talent and opportunity, you cannot reach where you ought to."

Those who know Rekha well, say that she only matured in 1975. That was when two things happened. One was the film *Ghar*. The other was, of course, Amitabh Bachchan. Till *Ghar*, she had been known for her wigs, her expensive make-up, her buxom figure and her madcap personality. But here, she had the role of a lifetime. Stripped of her Estee Lauder make-up, she went ethnic and played a deglamorised middle-class housewife gang-raped by four men. Initially, everyone was leery of Rekha's ability to handle the emotional complexity of the role. Recalls Raakesh Roshan, an early co-star: "In those days, we



With Naseer in *Musafir*: straddling both cinemas

NOW

Horlicks WITH EXTRA CALCIUM



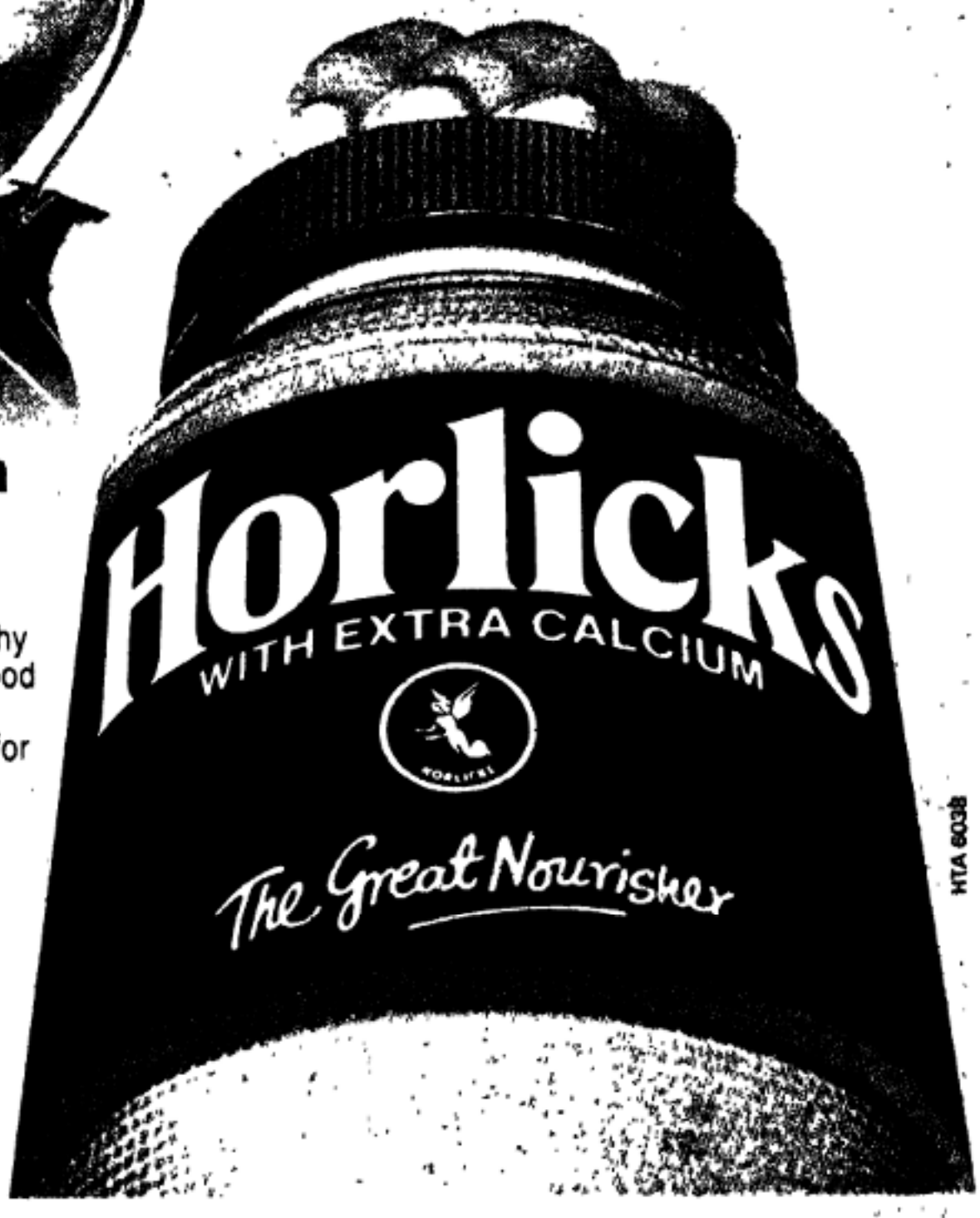


"That means extra health for everyone."

Horlicks is now enriched with extra Calcium — vital for strong teeth and healthy bones in growing children, and for the good health of the entire family. It also helps provide the additional Calcium essential for expectant and breast-feeding mothers.

Horlicks is full of natural nutrients — protein, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates — that provide energy and vitality. And now, extra Calcium means extra health.

The Great Nourisher



HTA 6038

thought of Rekha as somebody who was always distracted. She wanted to eat *samosas*, play with pebbles, do anything, except shoot. But *Ghar* was different."

Rekha took the film seriously, even if she lacked the maturity to get under the character's skin. Says Gulzar: "The enormity of a subject as grave as rape had not really dawned on her. That is why her concept of the role was that of a young girl. She did a very good job but her character came across with innocence, not maturity."

Innocence was enough. The sex-kitten had shown vulnerability and sensitivity. Suddenly, directors began regarding Rekha as somebody who could act if only she was given the opportunity. And another film completed the transition.

Do Anjaane did not offer her as much scope as *Ghar*, but on the sets she met and became fascinated by Amitabh Bachchan. He taught her an important lesson: never to get distracted and to give her role everything she had. "Once you hear the sound of the clap," he said, "nothing matters except your performance." It was good advice but hardly unusual. The difference this time was that it came from a man she respected. And so, she acted on it.

In those days, as Rekha came out of the glamour-puss chrysalis that the industry had trapped her in, she seemed contradictory and a little uncertain. Bachchan had banned the press, so she followed suit. But what she was going through was so intense and so rewarding that she couldn't keep quiet. When she did meet journalists, she would attempt to ape his haughty demeanour till suddenly, her enthusiasm would break through and she would go on for hours about her obsession with Bachchan.

Says Dulal Guha, the director of *Do Anjaane* about the experience: "I had been prepared for a very troublesome star, but instead I found an actress who was eager to learn." Other films with Bachchan, then—as now—the industry's box-office god, followed and Rekha became his perfect on-screen foil. Remembers Prakash Mehra, one of Bachchan's favourite directors: "What I offered her in *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar* was not all that fantastic. She played the other woman in the hero's life and that too, it was more of a guest appearance. But Rekha uplifted that small role to a very significant memory in the minds of the audience."



Jayanta Banerjee

Bachchan: he will not comment on their relationship



Gautam Patole

The glamour queen: an obsession with photography

With success and love came a new poise. She shed the pounds of excess fat that had always plagued her and seemed more certain of what she wanted to be. But the new-found depth did not detract from her essential glamour. She became obsessed with photography and would sit for hours with copies of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* trying to work out why Western models looked so good in their pictures. Her early experimentation with make-up was transformed into a skilful, professional interest. On a visit to Los Angeles, she impressed Estee Lauder's sales girls so much with her knowledge of their product range that finally, Mrs Lauder herself invited her for lunch in New York and gave her a tour of the factory.



"I was impressed when my doctor said Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer really stops hair loss.

But I was convinced when I used it."

"My doctor told me Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer* is a unique scientific formula based on extensive research. He also told me it provides all the essential proteins, co-enzymes and vitamins for strengthening hair roots.

All I know is that it has certainly stopped my hair from falling and checked dandruff."

Here's an excerpt from the research report:

"66.66% gave excellent and 33.33% gave good results with complete disappearance of dandruff in all cases and nearly cent per cent stoppage of fall of hair...So, success rate with Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer may be stated to be cent per cent."

Indian Medical Gazette 118, 223 (1984)



The proven scientific way to prevent hair loss.

Dey's® Dey's Medical. Care you can trust.

*It is not a toilet preparation.

It was a happy phase. "I looked beautiful," she explains, "because I felt beautiful. The glow was from within. It was an inner glow."

She reacted to this new-found happiness by cutting herself off from many of her old friends and retreating to the marble bungalow she had bought with her payment for *Ghar*. "It was a phase when I discovered myself for the first time," she says now.

When *Silsila*, the Yash Chopra film in which she co-starred with Amitabh Bachchan and his wife Jaya, flopped ("I knew it would fail," she maintains) and the lanky superstar stopped signing films with her (either because he wanted younger heroines or because of domestic compulsions), conventional wisdom had it that the Eighties would be a period of decline for Rekha. There were parallels. Of her contemporaries, Hema Malini had settled down to bearing children for Dharmendra, Zeenat Aman had slid into puffy middle-age and Parveen Babi, having already had one nervous breakdown, was on the verge of a second collapse.

And certainly, Rekha helped the speculation by more or less disappearing for all of 1984 and refusing to sign new films. All she would do were art films such as Girish Karnad's *Utsav*. Now she explains: "I had reached a stagnation point." She was fed up of getting up early each morning to have her make-up applied, irritated by the streams of supplicating producers and tired of the poor quality of Hindi films. "I was watching Meryl Streep films on the video day after day," she says, "and asking myself whether my acting had any significance at all. I was totally demoralised and couldn't face the thought of making another Hindi movie."

She considered changing professions, designed jewellery, even toyed with the idea of becoming a full-time fashion designer and went off to America for three months. When she came back, some of the old fire had returned.

To Rekha, losing weight has always been a symbol of regeneration and so, she walked into the health club at Bombay's Sea Rock Hotel one morning and set out an exercise regimen with Rama Bans, the hotel's fitness expert. Relaunching herself as a Jane Fonda-clone, she brought out her own exercise record (Rekha's *Mind and Body Temple*) and won success in a new field.

By then, the industry had changed. Rekha had already outlasted three generations of contemporaries. But would she survive the onslaught of the new southern sirens: Sridevi, Jayaprada and Meenakshi? Would heroes be willing to act opposite a star of her vintage?



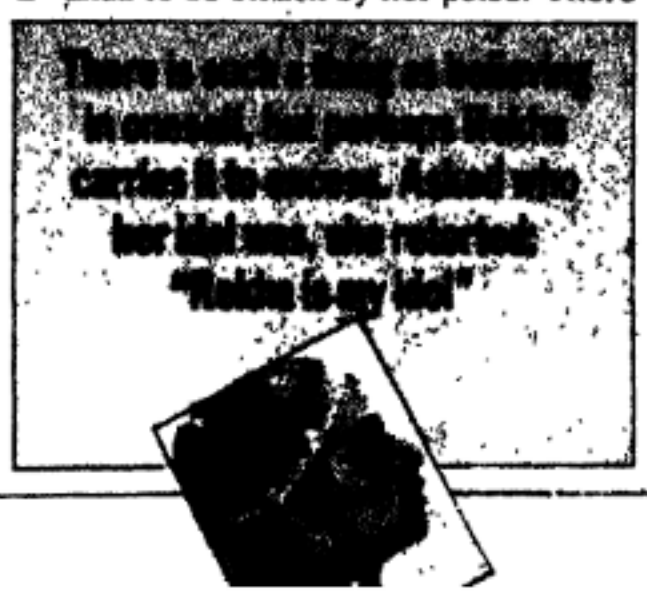
The new and old Rekhas: less weight and many thanks to Estee Lauder

The star at ease: a new poise and an embarrassing confidence

To Rekha's credit, all her doubts have always come from within. Competition has never worried her. "Nobody can eclipse me," she declared with her usual confidence, dismissing the younger breed, and went about restarting her career.

She proved as good as her word. In 1986, she had two hits, *Sada Suhagan* and *Jaal* and was back in business.

Anybody meeting Rekha now cannot fail to be struck by her poise. There is such a thing as believing in oneself, but Rekha carries it to excess. Asked by *The Washington Post* two years ago who her idols were, the actress looked surprised. "Nobody," she said with finality. "Rekha is my idol. I know I am beautiful. I know I am talented. I am Rekha."



Well, quite. But this confidence has nevertheless overcome crises and obstacles that would have felled a lesser woman. Since her relationship with Bachchan cooled (she will not comment on the break and the superstar himself has answered questions about her by simply cocking an eyebrow and asking 'Who?'), her personal life has been rocky. A largely physical relationship with Sunjay Dutt gave way to a host of minor flings and in recent months, she has been in the news because of Raj Babbar who, it is alleged, rushed in to romance her only weeks after Smita Patil died. (For the record, Babbar admits to a close friendship but denies any affair.)

Heads or tails you always win...



Unique package from LIC

BIMA SANDESH + JEEVAN DHARA

Do you know that by just putting aside Rs. 181 per month from age 30 you can get a life insurance cover for Rs. 1 lakh and a life-long monthly pension of Rs. 1,000 after age 55?

This is LIC's novel package—simple and inexpensive. Ideal for young and middle aged persons.

BIMA SANDESH—low-premium, high-cover plan

You can have a large life insurance cover by paying a small premium. On survival till the end of the term, all premiums are returned. On death during the term of the policy, the total sum assured is paid to the nominee. Premiums for this plan are payable yearly or half yearly.

JEEVAN DHARA—voluntary pension plan

You save regularly over a selected period to provide for a monthly post-retirement income. This pension is life-long. On death of the pensioner, after commencement of the pension, GIVE (Gross Insurance Value Element) is paid to the nominee. Jeevan Dhara bonus is added twice—once when the pension starts, and again when the pensioner dies and the GIVE is to be paid to the nominee

Rates for selected terms & ages are given below:

BIMA SANDESH (Sum assured Rs 1 lakh)

Age	Term	Annual Premium Rs.	Premiums returned on Survival till the end of the term Rs.
25	25	871.70	21,793
30	25	1,078.60	26,965
35	25	1,408.60	35,215
40	25	1,906.00	47,650

JEEVAN DHARA

Deferment Term	Age when pension starts	Annual Premium Rs.	Monthly Pension Rs.	GIVE Rs.
25	50	1,090.60	1,000	1,19,701
25	55	1,090.10	1,000	1,19,641
25	60	1,089.50	1,000	1,19,581
25	65	1,087.40	1,000	1,19,344

Rates for other ages and deferment periods can be worked out to suit your needs

TAX BENEFITS

Besides normal 80C benefits for Bima Sandesh, 100% income tax relief under 80CCA for 'JEEVAN DHARA' premiums upto Rs. 30,000/- for the year 1988-89.

Contact your life insurance agent or the nearest LIC Branch today.

Life Insurance Corporation of India

RADR/LIC/2.88

There have been income-tax problems, too. In 1985, she staged live shows abroad apparently because she needed to pay off the taxman. Three years before that, she had been raided and the tax authorities accused her of suppressing the purchase of jewellery (including a diamond worth Rs 5 lakhs) and claimed that she had failed to declare lakhs in cash earnings. Finally, her liabilities (including penalties and the like) totalled an astonishing Rs 75 lakhs (A cynical view is that she returned to films after her 1984 lay-off because she needed the money to pay the authorities.)

Two months ago, after repeated trips by Rekha to Ayakar Bhavan, the Bombay headquarters of the income-tax department, the cases were finally settled to her satisfaction Resentful taxmen told the press (off the record, of course) that their bosses had mysteriously decided to waive her entire liability And there were the inevitable rumours that Bachchan had intervened to have her debts written off, though the gossips did not explain why, if he had such clout, the mega-star allowed the taxmen to make him pay up Rs 30 lakhs in back taxes earlier this year

With the tax problems out of the way, Rekha can look forward to a string of prestigious releases. She is doing two films with Ramesh Sippy (with whom, oddly enough, she has never worked before) Raves Sippy of the heroine of his *Madame X*, "The role suits her to a tee I signed her up because of the aerobics, the fitness cult and the entire persona. She's going to be terrific in the film." Her other assignments include, Sawan Kumar Tak's *Souten Ki Beti, Dushera, Dushman, Azad Desh Ke Ghulam, Ladai* and *Shesh Naag.*



Fooling around: a sexuality the camera loves



Raj Babbar In the news because of an alleged affair



And the offers keep coming. Says Dulal Guha of his *Do Anjaane* star: "Today roles are written specially for her. Fourteen years after *Do Anjaane*, she actually looks better today. She is the only actress who can carry an entire film on her shoulders. Not even Sridevi can do this."

Agrees Jeetendra, the subject of one of her earliest crushes: "I say about Amitabh that he has no competitors. He is all positions from number one to number ten. Exactly the same is true of Rekha. She is in a class by herself." Even Manmohan Desai, respected in the industry for his ability to shoot from the hip, says about the heroine of his *Suhaag*, "She blossomed with that film but she hasn't stopped growing since then." Concludes Rishi Kapoor "Not only is she fantastic but the last two films prove that she is a long distance race horse."

But what of the woman behind the icon? The podgy caterpillar who was dragged kicking and screaming to Bombay 19 years ago has avoided turning into the dour moth that she seemed set to become, but is the butterfly any happier than the moth would have been?

With Rekha one is never sure The fat little sex-bomb of the early Seventies may have been a figure of fun but she was upfront Every emotion showed on her face. The post-Bachchan Rekha, on the other hand, demonstrates an almost unreal serenity that discourages any probing. All personal questions are answered with embarrassing self-praise and no real insights into her personality are ever offered.

It is clear that she has never, in her personal life at least, found the fulfilment she desired. While the relationship with Bachchan obsessed her completely and transformed her personality totally, it never gave her security that she always craved When the relationship cooled (insiders say that the drift began with Bachchan's first great illness in 1982; others say, less plausibly, that it is all a bluff: the two still meet clandestinely), she retreated within herself, finding temporary solace in such teenyboppers as Sunjay Dutt and attempting to abandon the industry.

The new Rekha is obsessed with her career. (Says Dulal Guha: "When she was shooting *Khoon Bhari Maang*, all she would talk about was the role.") Success has become a measure of her self-worth.

But there is another side to her Nobody is still allowed into her marble villa by Bombay's Arabian Sea. Her telephone number at the bungalow is as closely guarded as a state secret. (She tells nosy outsiders that she has no phone at home.) Her love-life is no longer the staple of the gossip glossies. And her closest friend appears to be her secretary Farzana

The obsession with privacy suggests another Rekha; a totally different persona that she keeps from the world. It is a Rekha that only she understands. That way nobody else knows where she goes to when she is alone in her bed.

Henry Jacob with Bhawna Somaya/Bombay

Tiger on the prowl

The government returns LTTE leader Kittu to the battle-ground in Jaffna

SRI LANKA

The Indian government seems increasingly unable to ride the Tamil Tigers, let alone tame them On 12 October, the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) had to swallow its pride and release nine members of the LTTE, a militant group that has been battling Indian troops for over a year in Sri Lanka The nine LTTE members, including the famous Sadasivam Krishnakumar (popularly known as Kittu) who had been operating as the LTTE's unofficial envoy at Madras, were released at Jaffna at a time when the Indian government's plan to ensure peaceful elections in Sri Lanka's Eastern and Northern Provinces is being wrecked by the Tamil militants

The LTTE has been forcing all the moves and, each time, the Indian government has had to back off Kittu, his girlfriend Cynthia and about 165 other LTTE members had been arrested at Madras under the National Security Act (NSA) between 8 August and 12 September this year Kittu had retaliated by threatening to fast unto death if he and his comrades were not released In a letter written to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Kittu had argued "If we had committed any criminal offences in India, we should be brought to trial and punished if the charges are proved If not, we should be released immediately and handed over to our comrades in Tamil Eelam."

There were, of course, no criminal charges against LTTE members in India and faced with the threat of a fast by Kittu, the Indian government had no option but to release the LTTE detenus. This was done on 9 October, just a day before the deadline set by Kittu. At about 2 30 am on that day, the Tigers lodged at Madras Central Jail were woken up and told that they were being flown back to Jaffna The Tamil Nadu state police officials handling the LTTF prisoners had been briefed by RAW officials, who had prepared a plan named 'Operation Kingfisher' According to the plan, 85 LTTE detenus were to be whisked away from Madras and 72 others lodged in the Madurai Jail would be flown out at the same time

Even at the moment of departure, the LTTE members extracted further concessions. The detenus at Madras refused to be handcuffed and insisted that they be allowed to communicate with the Dravida Kazhagam general secretary, K Veeramani, and the president of the Tamil Nadu Kamaraj Congress, P Nedumaran Initially, the police refused, but when the LTTE members started shouting "*Kadida, kadida* (Bite, bite)"—referring to their cyanide capsules – the police quickly relented They obviously did not want dead LTTE men on their hands

If the Indian government had been hoping that the release of the LTTE detenus would please LTTE sympathisers in Tamil Nadu, it was sadly mistaken. The general feeling is that the released LTTE members, many of whom are sick and crippled like Kittu,



Amirthalingam: death-threat

will face certain death in Sri Lanka--caught between the crossfire of the IPKF and the militants.

DMK president, M. Karunanidhi, led the outcry against the move, condemning the operation as a gross human rights violation and a breach of international law. DMK Rajya Sabha member, V Gopalaswamy, wanted the govern-

Kittu back where he wanted

Courtesy *Frontline*



ment to explain why the Tiger detenus were not simply returned to their homes in Madras, but instead were flown to Jaffna where they are exposed to greater danger. K. Veeramani of the Dravida Kazhagam added that this operation had put the last nail on the Congress(I) coffin.

The state Congress(I) was the only party to defend the move. In a predictable statement, T.K. Raman, the state Congress(I) general secretary, declared: "Our government did the correct thing in deporting these men. How can they be allowed to carry on anti-India propaganda while staying on Indian soil?" The government tried to extract as much publicity from the event as possible. A Doordarshan crew covered the handing over of Kittu and his associates to the protective care of senior Jaffna citizens.

All the 157 LTTE detenus were, however, not released. The Indian government is, perhaps, waiting to see what fate befalls Kittu and his associates. The situation for Kittu is particularly worrying since the different militant groups in Sri Lanka have different views on the forthcoming elections to the provincial councils. The LTTE has issued a stern warning to all those associating themselves with the polls. But three other pro-accord militant groups, the EPRLF, the ENDLF and the TELO, have ignored the LTTE threat and are going ahead with the fielding of candidates. In seats where single consensus candidates have been put up, they have already been declared elected. In the process, the EPRLF has already emerged as the major power.

EPRLF secretary general, K. Padmanabha, hopes that the elections will bring peace, but knows that his party will run into opposition from the LTTE. Leaders like Padmanabha are counting on the IPKF and the Sri Lanka government to protect them. Others are less optimistic. The general secretary of the moderate TULF group, Appapillai Amirthalingam, feels that the overall situation in the island is "very volatile and getting worse every day".

Amirthalingam, a moderate among the Tamils, found out just how bad things were while flying out of Colombo on 11 October. On his arrival at Madras airport, he was horrified to see his baggage covered with ominous black Sinhalese lettering: "We will take your life and give it in your hands." A similar, albeit unspoken, threat hangs over every group stuck in Sri Lanka. The Indian government has, so far, shown no sign of being able to counter the threat.

Bhagwan Singh / Madras



Arms surrender: the CPI(M) had lots of its own

Tapan Das

The guns of the CPI(M)

The Communists match the GNLF, pistol for pistol

DARJEELING

It was a welcome finale with a curious twist. The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF), an outfit that has sustained a three-year-long violent movement against the West Bengal government, had started surrendering their sizeable hoard of arms and ammunitions in accordance with the tripartite agreement signed between the GNLF, the state government and the Centre. Then came the surprising part: arms surrender by CPI(M) activists. Till then the state's ruling party had not uttered a single word about the vast accretion of weapons by their own cadres.

The fortnight-long arms surrender ceremony in Darjeeling revealed the disturbing fact that the CPI(M) matched the awesome firepower of the GNLF bullet for bullet. Had the guns of both the parties been fully used, the hills of Darjeeling would have witnessed nothing short of full-scale military warfare.

The denouement fortunately was different. The GNLF took the lead, and, between 2 and 14 October, the date set by GNLF supremo Subash Ghisingh for the surrender of arms, thousands of Gorkha activists dressed in their olive-green battle fatigues queued up before the local Gymkhana Club's skating-rink to hand over their weapons to the district authorities. The weapons included self-loading assault rifles, sten-guns, pipeguns and explosives. Darjeeling's special DIG of police, R.K. Handa, declared: "This is clearly the biggest ever arms surrender by any militant organisation in the country. It is a dream come true for me".

The CPI(M) would perhaps have kept quiet about their own weapons. Ghisingh, however, insisted that the CPI(M) cadres too should deposit their arms. The CPI(M) leadership hesitated but by the second day started ordering their men to join the arms surrender ceremony. Over 3,000 CPI(M) activists in three batches laid down their arms. An embarrassed Ananda Pathak, the local CPI(M) MP, admitted: "I am at a loss to understand how my party cadres procured the arms." He added: "The CPI(M) had never instructed its followers to arm themselves. They must have collected the weapons on their own."

Back in Calcutta, CPI(M) leaders were far less contrite. State information minister, Buddhadev Bhattacharya, said: "Our followers have done the right thing by arming themselves. After all, they have a right to defend themselves." In that case, Ghisingh could claim the same thing. All the same, the surrender ceremony proceeded more smoothly than anticipated. Even Chhatre Subba, the militant opposed to Ghisingh and the Darjeeling accord, meekly surrendered his arms. For once an accord seems to be working.

Rajiv Bagchi/*Calcutta*

Big Brother is angry

The RSP fights the CPI(M), its senior Left Front partner

WEST BENGAL

It is clearly a battle between unequals. The Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), a constituent of the ruling Left Front coalition in West Bengal, has always lived in the shadow of the mighty CPI(M) and is no match for the latter's organisational strength or influence. But over the last one month, the RSP has been putting up a spirited fight against a continued assault by Big Brother. And, strangely enough, the issue that sparked off the bitter rivalry between the two Left Front partners has ostensibly been buried; the infighting has taken centre-stage in West Bengal politics. To make things more difficult for the Marxists, the Forward Bloc, another ally of the CPI(M), has openly sided with the RSP in the dispute.





Jatin Chakraborty (left) and Jyoti Basu: unhappy allies

It all started with Jatin Chakraborty, the RSP leader and PWD minister, making a controversial noting in his personal file virtually accusing chief minister Jyoti Basu of promoting the business interests of the Calcutta-based firm, Bengal Lamp. The note said that the government has been placing bulk orders of electric lamps and tubes with Bengal Lamp on specific orders from Jyoti Basu. Worse still, the note alleged that the chief minister's son, Chandan Basu, negotiated the deal on behalf of Bengal Lamp. To top it all, Jatin Chakraborty's letter was leaked to the press.

Piqued, the CPI(M) leadership launched a tirade against the RSP and Jatin Chakraborty in particular. While Saroj Mukherjee, the state secretary of the CPI(M) and chairman of the Left Front, felt that the PWD minister was "lying in an effort to embarrass the chief minister and his party", others demanded the removal of Chakraborty from the Cabinet. On 23 September, the CPI(M) state secretariat held a meeting where it was unanimously resolved that "the PWD minister's attitude, insinuation and falsehood will severely hamper Left unity in the state". But the CPI(M) itself did not want to take any action against the RSP minister; it began to mount pressure on the RSP leadership to punish its errant minister.

But the state RSP leadership stood solidly behind Jatin Chakraborty. It not only refused to pull up its minister, but also threatened to walk out of the ministry if the CPI(M) took any arbitrary decision. Jatin Chakraborty, too, stuck to his ground that the public works department committed no irregularity in placing bulk orders with Bengal Lamp.

When the Forward Bloc, which has 26 MLAs in the Assembly, came to the aid of the RSP and warned that it would quit the Cabinet if it came to the crunch, the CPI(M) received yet another jolt.

The CPI(M), too, hardened its stand on the issue, especially after its party secretary E.M.S. Namboodiripad and the central committee "authorised the West Bengal secretariat to take appropriate steps to undo the damage done by Jatin Chakraborty" on 7 October. It has rejected outright the RSP's overtures for a bilateral discussion to solve the problem. Said Biman Bose, a CPI(M) member of the central committee: "The matter is a grave one and not a bipartite issue. It concerns the entire Left Front. We are going ahead with plans of holding a Left Front meeting to resolve the impasse."

But finding a solution that will make everyone happy will be difficult as the CPI(M) and the RSP, though partners of a ruling front, are old political rivals and both the parties are determined to make the most of the present crisis. Besides, the RSP's warning that it would quit the ministry is no empty threat. In fact, a majority of the RSP's leaders and workers in West Bengal have been in favour of the idea of quitting the government long before the Bengal Lamp crisis surfaced.

Disllusioned with the CPI(M)'s policy of expanding its base at the cost of the Front partners, the RSP is only too willing to leave the ministry. The RSP has taken strong exception to the manner in which the CITU, the trade union wing of the CPI(M), has formed rival unions to oppose the RSP-controlled workers' unions in hospitals and jails. Moreover, the CPI(M), according to the RSP, has been systematically denying the party its rightful place in different government committees and bodies. And, in rural areas, the RSP has been the CPI(M)'s main target. Over the past few months, there have been a number of violent clashes between rival party workers in several districts.

But the dilemma of the CPI(M) is that it cannot afford to do without its allies. For, though the party alone commands an absolute majority in the House, the constituents together control four per cent of the votes. And though the Opposition Congress(I) was virtually wiped out in the last Assembly elections, a four per cent swing could have changed the political climate of the state. Thus, while the CPI(M) rank and file have been egging on their party stalwarts to take stern action against the RSP and Jatin Chakraborty, the state leadership has been dragging its feet and has refrained from taking any hasty decisions that might prove disastrous in the long run.

Rajiv Bagchi/Calcutta

The beleaguered League

The Muslim League breaks off with the DMK

TAMIL NADU

The Tamil Nadu unit of the Muslim League, in a fit of pique, has snapped all ties with M. Karunanidhi's DMK party. This ends a 20-year-old alliance. The Muslim League's decision to disassociate itself from the DMK appears to have been prompted by Karunanidhi's unilateral decision to jump onto the National Front bandwagon. The president of the state executive committee of the Muslim League, A.K.A. Abdus Samad, complains that despite it being a trusted partner, the DMK chief chose to join the National Front "without the basic courtesy of consulting us on the matter" Karunanidhi, furthermore, did not even bother to invite the League to the National Front inaugural convention at Madras.

Karunanidhi reportedly maintains that the DMK's alliance with the National Front is only for the parliamentary elections and that the Muslim League could continue to be in his camp to fight state elections. But this stance, far from proving conciliatory, seems to have added insult to injury.

"What does he (Karunanidhi) mean by that?" fumes Samad. "Do I go in search of new partners for the Lok Sabha polls? We are already a national party, we have got cadres and they will not tolerate such insults," he declares.

The state Muslim League president also claims that Karunanidhi had declared that the doors were open for the League to walk out of the DMK Front. "So it was obvious that he had already made up his mind to jettison the League in preference for the National Front and the Marxists," points out Samad.

Karunanidhi's explanation is somewhat different and has to do with the League's rivalry with the state's Marxist parties. According to the DMK leader, about six months ago, the League's leadership had publicly stated that they would walk out of the Front if ministerial berths were not assured to them in the event of the Front winning the next state Assembly elections. This crisis was only temporarily resolved by Karunanidhi, who called the League leaders for talks and convinced them to remain in the Front. The DMK leader also claims to have met CPI(M) leaders opposed to alliances with the Muslim League and persuaded them to avoid extreme postures.

But the Muslim League is far from convinced that Karunanidhi has prevailed upon the Marxists to quit attacking them. Samad says that the state CPI and CPI(M) leaders openly threatened to work against League candidates in the next Assembly elections. "We took up the matter with Karunanidhi in his capacity as the leader of the Front, but he did nothing," complains Samad.

Samad, perhaps, has reason to be bitter. But his bitterness has only driven him into a tighter corner. Especially after his precipitate action in expelling the state Muslim League's general secretary, M.A. Latheef, who is considered very pro-DMK. Samad, however, claims that the decision to expel Latheef was nearly unanimous – that 62 out of 67 members of the League's state executive committee supported the expulsion.

"But the Muslim League's national leadership is not amused by Samad's precipitate actions. The League's national general secretary, G.M. Banatwala, who had come to Madras as part of a Parliamentary Estimates Committee, was surprised at the developments in the state unit of his party developments he had no inkling of.

On hearing of Latheef's expulsion, Banatwala declared: "I am shocked and pained to hear the news. I am also sad that the state executive, whatever be its rights in the matter, chose to deny me, who is the national general secretary, even the customary courtesy of consultations before taking such a decision. After all, Mr Latheef was also the joint secretary of the League at the national level."

Reacting to Banatwala's outburst, Samad retorts that the state executive had every right to expel an erring member and it could not delay its decision given the "heinous" crime committed by Latheef.

Worse problems are in store for the Tamil Nadu unit. League president Ebrahim Sait's letters to Latheef had hinted at Samad's growing preference for the Congress(I). This, Sait had pointed out, could have an adverse impact on the League in north India. Samad, thus, is at the centre of a controversy that could affect the future of the Muslim League not only in Tamil Nadu but all over the country.

Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*





Banatwala (in cap) with Samad (his left): breaking up over alliance; (inset) A. Latheef: expelled



HERE'S ONE SMALL REASON WHY YOU SHOULD TAKE UI'S PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE POLICY

Your child. Your family.
Their future lies in your hands.
And your happiness lies in theirs.
That's why you try to do everything you possibly can, for their continued well-being
United India's Personal Accident Insurance Policy is one way of making sure that a sudden threat to your life doesn't cripple your whole family's future.
It provides for compensation in the event of permanent or temporary total disablement, permanent partial disablement, or death by bodily injury resulting from accidents. It could be extended to cover limited reimbursement of medical expenses for treatment of bodily injuries resulting from accidents.
A family package and 'on duty'/ 'off duty' covers at discounted premiums are also available.
So whether you are a construction or electrical engineer, veterinary doctor or bank cashier, machine operator or shopkeeper... United India's Personal Accident Insurance Policy is a sensible act of caution that shows your family how much you care.

Act now. Contact any of our 1000 offices.

FORTY YEARS OF FREEDOM

UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.
(A subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India)
24 Whites Road, Madras 600 014

HTA 7016



Indian army: set to be defeated?

Spy story

The army claims a defence expert is a Pakistani agent

DEFENCE

Patriotism might be the last resort of scoundrels, but it is the first to be evoked by an establishment in trouble. Not surprising, therefore, that the Indian military establishment, which has long confused patriotism with jingoism, has come down heavily on defence expert Ravi Rikhye for writing a book predicting the downfall of the Indian armed forces.

Rikhye's latest book, *The 1989 Scenario*, has yet to find a publisher. But the country's intelligence establishment seems to have found out all about it. It has already been dubbed "highly objectionable" and "anti-Indian"; and intelligence officials claim that the book is a Pakistani plant. Rikhye himself is accused of having been turned by two highly-placed Pakistani diplomats—Group Captain Qazi Zaved Ahmad and Brigadier Z.I. Abbasi.

The military and intelligence establishments want the book banned and proceedings initiated against its author. But this cannot happen before it is actually published. Rikhye, according to intelligence sources, has failed to find a publisher in India and is now contemplating publication from London.

Whether the book is ultimately banned or not, it promises to be controversial. Rikhye seems to have sketched out the worst-case scenario for India. The book starts with the Pakistanis occupying Siachen on 31 July, 1989, and India retaliating in anger on 25 August. In the full-fledged war that follows, Rikhye predicts that India will lose most of Kashmir.

Matters will get worse, writes Rikhye, once the Chinese enter the fray and Sikh terrorists join the war against India. If *The 1989 Scenario* is to be believed, the Sikh terrorists will succeed in carving out Khalistan and China will get Arunachal Pradesh. The intervention of the Soviet Union is expected to affect the war but not the fortunes of the ruling party. The next blow will an army coup against the Prime Minister.

Nobody could have painted a more chilling future for India. And Rikhye has not spared any detail. He has apparently even mentioned that 18,000 Indian troops will be killed, another 40,000 injured and 2,00,000 captured.

The most "objectionable" portions of the book are, reportedly, the ones dealing with the internal politics of India. The book tries to establish that Rajiv Gandhi, General K. Sundarji and Indian intelligence agencies have already created conditions for India's military defeat. Having tarred the establishment, Rikhye cannot get away with it. Both the book and its author are in danger of being proscribed.

Rajiv Shukla/*New Delhi*

The sad policeman

IGP Chaman Lal quits over Rode's march to the Temple

PUNJAB

"I feel sad and disgusted at what has happened today. The situation has been handled wrongly...I have no respect for my superiors because they cannot take a decision on their own even when they know that what they are doing is incorrect." The 10 October press conference of Chaman Lal, Punjab's inspector-general of police (border range), at Amritsar, was a searing indictment of the government's manner of tackling the terrorist menace. What particularly angered Lal was the government's decision to allow Jasbir Singh Rode, the sacked Akal Takht chief, to enter the Golden Temple with his men earlier that day, despite his

Jasbir Singh Rode: controversial return



Jagdish Yadav

insistence to the contrary. In protest, Lal announced his decision to go on leave and requested that he be relieved from his post immediately.

The announcement, which sent shock waves through the state's police force and the administration, only served to highlight the schisms in the top echelons of the police. Lal fell out with the state's director-general of police, K.P.S. Gill, over the handling of the march by Rode and his men from Bhatinda to Amritsar. He had insisted that they be arrested on 30 September when they began their march "to liberate the Golden Temple from the police", but his pleas fell on deaf ears. Lal said that in the first place, the march should not have been allowed from the Takht Damdama Sahib. "But we were asked to wait for orders from above. From the day the *jatha* reached Harike, I was of the firm view that it should be arrested and prevented from disturbing peace. However, that was not to be. The marchers were allowed to go on in spite of the fact that they raised highly objectionable slogans."

The march by Rode with about a hundred followers took ten days. Once inside the Golden Temple, the processionists raised provocative slogans and even advanced menacingly towards SGPC *sewadars* and officials.

Senior police officers and bureaucrats support Lal, who is reputed to be honest and straightforward. As one IPS officer remarked: "Honesty and principled stands don't pay these days. I bet action will be taken against him, although he is absolutely right in exposing the so-called heroes."

Lal's startling disclosure led Governor Siddhartha Shankar Ray to concede that the Rode incident was very unfortunate. "It is regrettable that he stayed on in the complex longer than he should have and did things other than only praying or offering obeisance. The government assures the people that there will be no *sarbat khalsa* at the instance of anybody."

But the general secretary of the Punjab Janata Party, Khushpal Singh, had a different story to tell: that the government wanted Rode to hold a *sarbat khalsa* so that decisions taken at the earlier *sarbat khalsas* could be nullified.

Harkishan Singh Surjeet, politburo member of the CPI(M), remarked that the decision to allow Rode into the temple would only bring about a Bhindranwale cult in the state. He said that the Union government was only encouraging one group to fight against the other.

Rita Sharma/*Chandigarh*

Cops and politicians

A New Delhi seminar grapples with police accountability

POLICE

To whom should the police be accountable: community, immediate superiors, political bosses or the law of the land? It seems that policemen themselves are as interested to know the answer as the people at large.

These and many other related questions were the subject of a lively discussion among senior police officers, mediamen and social activists at a recently held workshop-cum-seminar on police-community relations. P. Chidambaram, the minister of state for personnel, inaugurated the session by describing the topic as "vast and thought-provoking".

"Accountability," he felt, "had two aspects—the first meant conforming to certain prescribed rules, procedures, conventions and instructions. The second aspect of accountability gave primacy to result over procedure." The minister added that, in his opinion, the first type of accountability was "negative and may even obstruct the achievement of goals" nevertheless, the police could not stop adhering to the prescribed rules, procedures and norms.

Sheela Barse, the firebrand activist and writer, who was among the speakers, highlighted the role of politicians. She cited the example of the Dholakia brothers—notorious smugglers in Bombay—to point out how politicians interfere with police investigations.

In course of the session, it became clear that many of the police officers present shared Ms Barse's views. Kiran Bedi, the gritty former DCP of the north district in Delhi, who is currently in the Narcotics Control Bureau, echoed the feelings of many officers when she bluntly said that what was required was a majority of "gutsy policemen" instead of a handful. Addressing herself to the distinguished gathering comprising several heads of police organisations—there was Mohan Katre, chief of the CBI, and M.K. Narayanan, head of the Intelligence Bureau—she said that senior police officers must learn to ward off political pressures.



Ashok Vaid

P. Chidambaram: result over procedure

B. Lall, IGP, Shillong, regretted the fact that the police as well as other governmental agencies were being compelled to cater to the needs of the minority who happened to be in power, while the problems of the silent majority remained unattended. The director general of the Bureau of Police Research and Development, which, incidentally, organised the two-day workshop in the capital along with the Delhi police, pointed out that in a crisis like the November '84 riots, the police alone had been made the whipping boy when everyone knew that there were factors which were beyond the control of the cops.

M.K. Narayanan, the Intelligence Bureau chief, agreed that there had to be accountability to the law and the people but the question was how could one achieve this? Ideally, a proper balance should be achieved between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary so that the police do not become a "pawn" in the hands of vested interests.

Patraleikha Chatterjee/*New Delhi*

Kiran Bedi: resisting pressure



Godrej®

THE STERLING INVESTMENT



Better designed storage space

Godrej design makes optimum use of storage space in the new 165 litre Refrigerator. Discover the largest vegetable tray. A better organised door panel with the largest bottle rack. 165 litres has never seemed so spacious.

All-new robust compressor plus polyurethane insulation

Advanced technology has helped develop a new robust compressor. And teamed with superior polyurethane insulation, the new Godrej cools faster. Saves power too!

Largest colour range

Only Godrej gives you a wide choice of colours other than classic white: desert sand, spring green, cool blue, electric red and sunshine yellow. With an exterior design unmatched in elegance and durability.

The new Godrej 165 litre Refrigerator. You couldn't ask for a better deal.

Godrej® 165 LITRE REFRIGERATOR

BEYOND COMPARE

HTA 2364

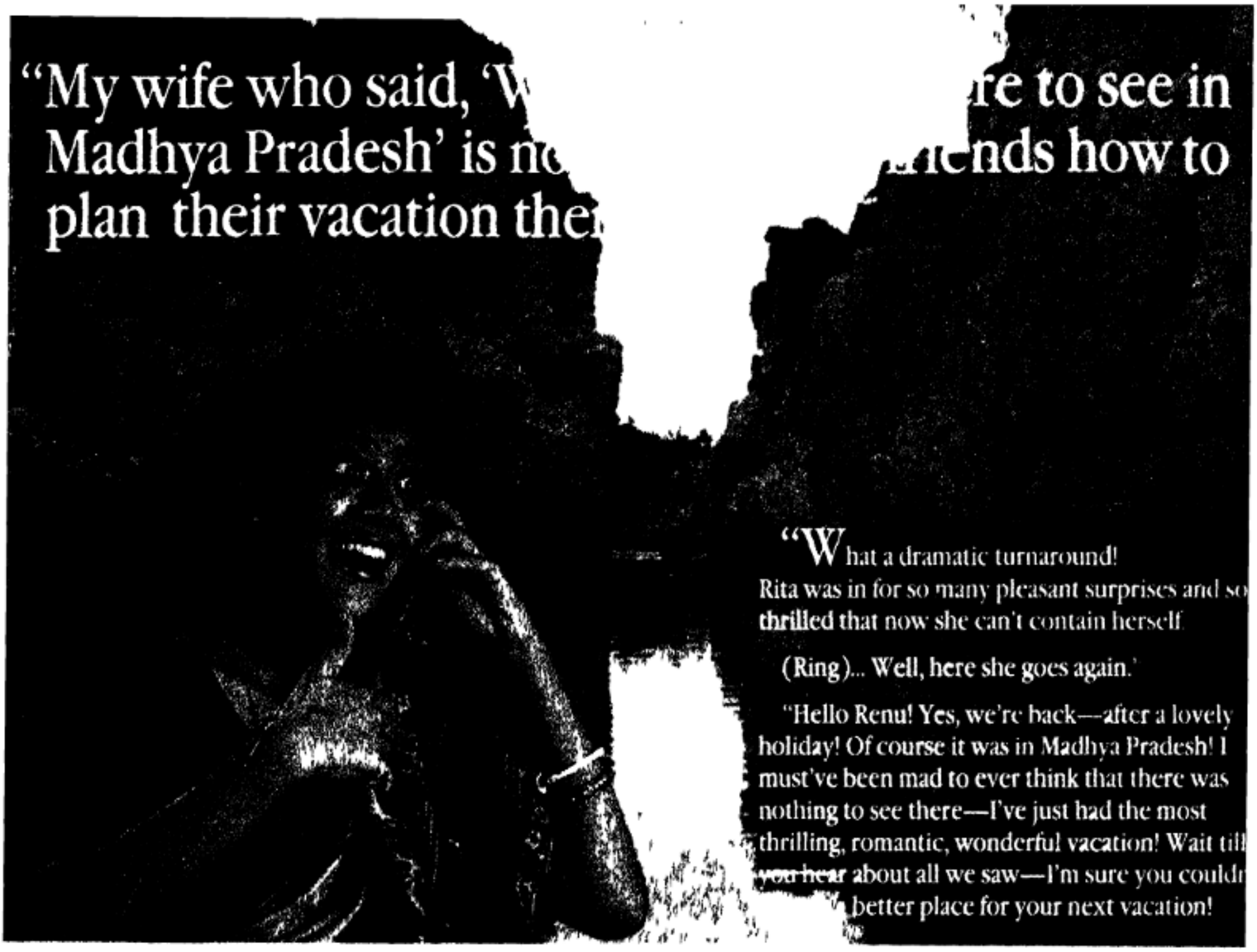


Vibrant variety of fabrics from NTC

NTC with a turnover of Rs. 1000 crores and 125 mills, is one of the largest textile groups in the world. Producing a wide variety of fabrics, both in cottons and blends. Durable and economical. Fabrics which are making out to world markets.

Great Fabrics
Great Prices

NATIONAL TEXTILES



You should begin your trip from **Gwalior**, as we did. The massive fort and battle scarred ramparts brought visions of booming cannons and clashing swords vividly alive

From there we went to **Khajuraho** The temples were exquisite—as if living, breathing beauty had magically been frozen into stone

Our next stop was **Mandu**—the 'City of Joy' The beautiful mahals seem to echo with the love songs of Roopmati and Baz Bahadur We also saw Hoshang Shah's tomb, said to be the inspiration for the Taj

Oh, d'you remember those Jataka Tales we read as kids? Well, they're all depicted on the gates of the Stupa at **Sanchi**, and it is so quiet that you can almost hear the silence

And of course, we went boating by moonlight at the **Marble Rocks** Pearly cliffs and the gentle splash of oars wish we'd gone there for our honeymoon!

The biggest surprise was finding a hill station in Madhya Pradesh. **Pachmarhi** is just the place for picnics and lazing

But Ramesh was itching to go tiger watching, so off we went on a safari—to **Kanha, Bandhavgarh** and **Shivpuri**. Funnily, our excitement hungry hero chickened out when it came to tiger tracking, so we watched chinkara, nilgai and chital instead.



While we were in **Bhopal** to see the Bharat Bhavan, Mum and Dad surprised us with a call—and promptly packed us off on a pilgrimage to **Ujjain, Omkareshwar and Maheshwar.**

What with all that to see and do our vacation just flew past! All too soon it was time to leave and so much we hadn't seen! The medieval city of **Orchha**, and the rock paintings at **Bhimbetka... Amarkantak**, and the legendary **Chitrakoot!**

Getting there? There are many well organised tours Transport? You can choose from coaches, cars or jeeps And there are log huts and tourist villages to stay in You'll go next holidays? Great! Maybe we could all go together "

Come to Madhya Pradesh... It's surprising a lot of people like you.

For more information and bookings, get in touch with Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. **NEW DELHI**: 204-205, IInd Floor, Hotel Kanishka Shoppin Plaza, 19 Ashok Road, New Delhi-110 001 Tel 3321187, 3327264 Telex: 031-63417 MPT-IN **BOMBAY**: 74 World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade, Colaba, Bombay-400 00! Tel · 217603, 214860, 219191 (ext. 299). **CALCUTTA**: Chitrakoot Building, Room No 7, 6th Floor, 230 A, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Road, Calcutta-700 020 Tel. 44854 Telex. 021-4296 AVN-IN. **BHOPAL**: Gangotri, T T Nagar, Bhopal-462 003. Tel. 63552, 65154, 66383, 68563, 64388 66342 Telex. 0705-275 TOUR-IN.

MILESTONES/MPT/152

The highway banks like a roller coaster.
You ease into the curve with grace.

The wider, squat tyres crouch low. Never relenting their claw-like hold on the road.
The rider, on easy.

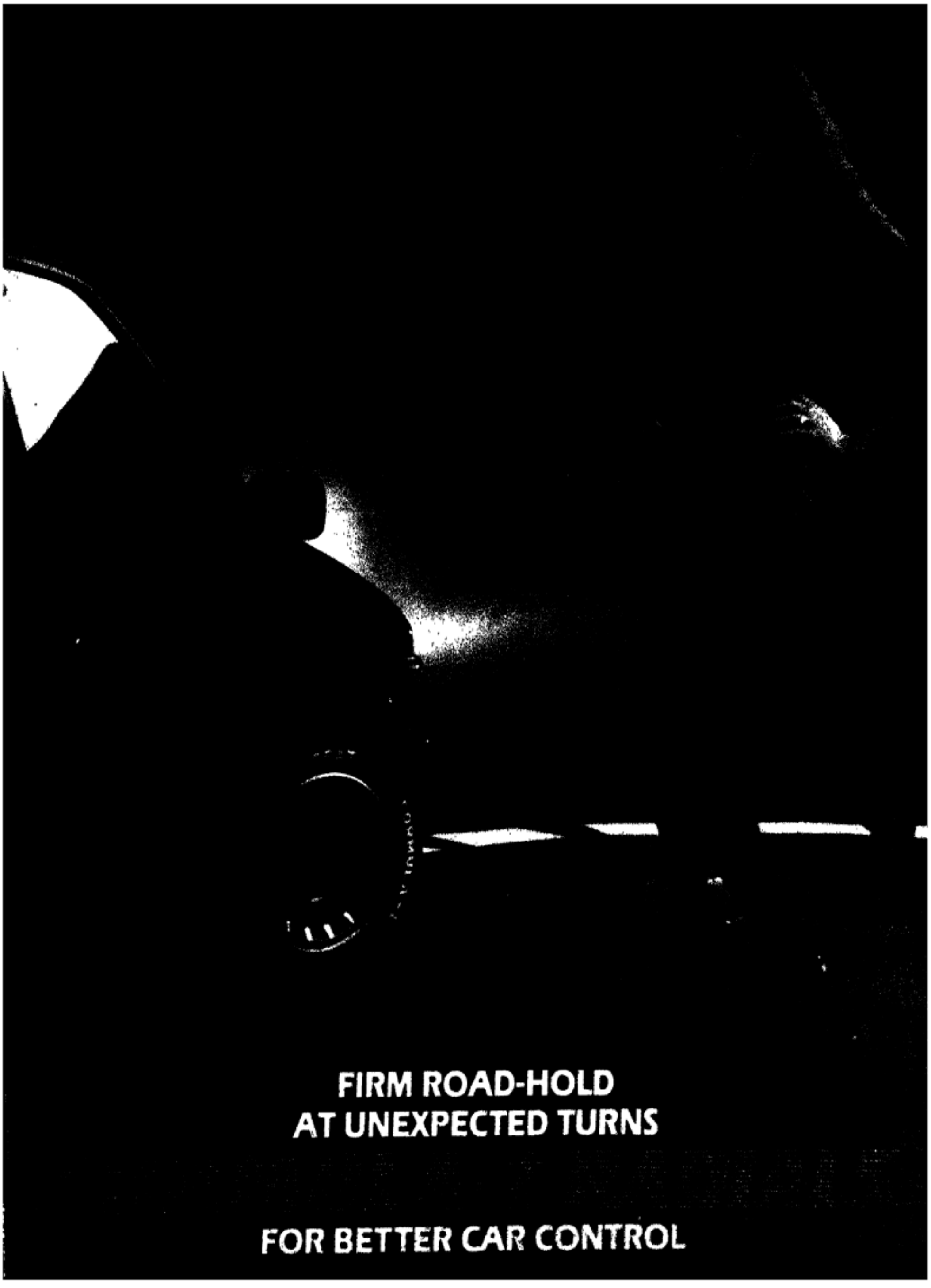
Get the firm road-holding of CEAT FORMULA-I RADIALS.



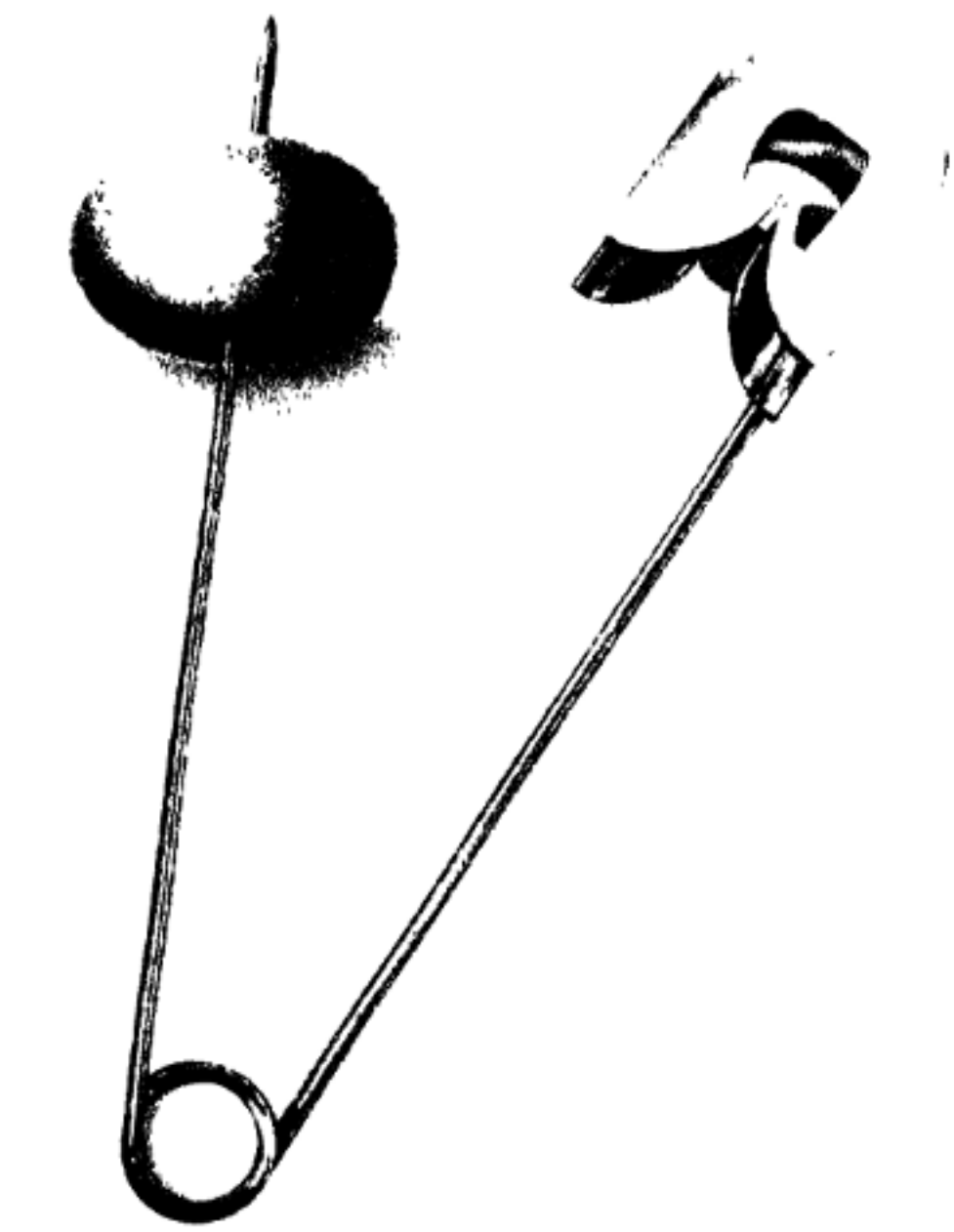
CEAT

born tough




FIRM ROAD-HOLD
AT UNEXPECTED TURNS
FOR BETTER CAR CONTROL

THIS BABY
IS GOING TO REVIVE
A LOT OF
DROOPING SPIRITS.



CRUICKSHANK

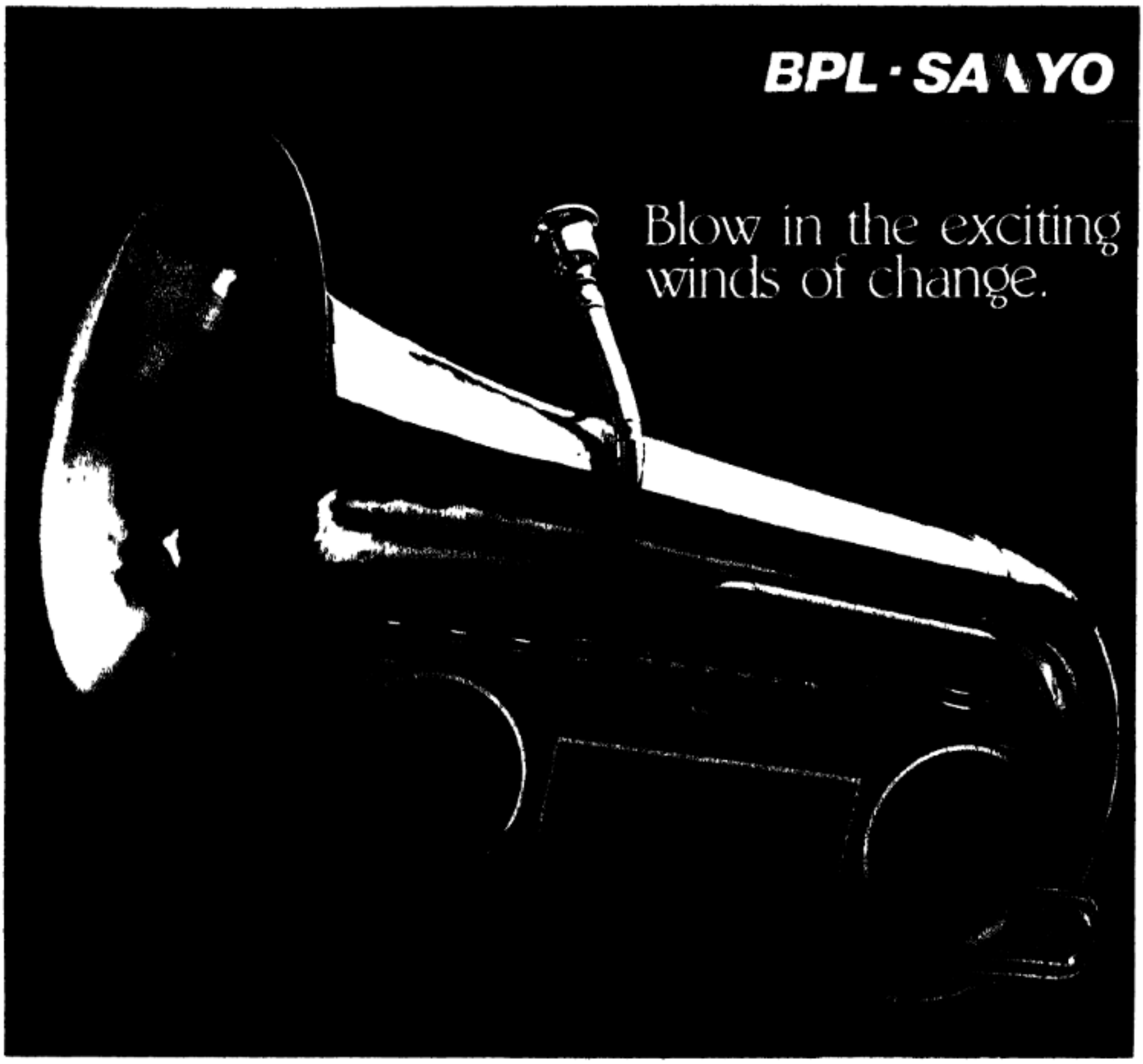
Say 'Cheers' to a new arrival and discover that you'll want to keep cheering. Because you'll know that this one's got a great future ahead. At Parties. Among Peers. Among Friends. Everywhere. In fact, you'll find that its smooth, mature and distinctly elegant personality is going to be the toast of every party soon.

And reason enough to keep celebrating forever!

C&C.
CRUICKSHANK & COMPANY LTD.
A NEW SPIRIT IS BORN



We'll deliver. Wherever on earth. SKYPAK The worldwide couriers.
Skypak House, Off M. Vasanji Road, Marol Naka, Andheri (E), Bombay 400 059.



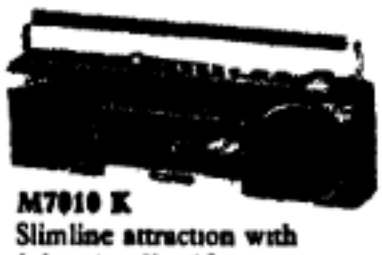
BPL-SANYO music makers.

At last! A world class choice.

Mono or stereo, cassette recorder or 2-in-1, BPL-Sanyo calls the tune. Stylish. Packed with features. And surprisingly affordable. Take your pick.. today!



M7740 K
Ultra-sleek 6-speaker 'Boom Box'. Feature-packed model with big sound that surrounds you The only one of its kind.



M7010 K
Slimline attraction with 4-band radio 10-watt stereo sensation at a sensational price



MW200 K
Double cassette 'Mini Studio' with high-speed dubbing and 4-band radio. Compact model with high-impact sound. Affordably priced



C1 K
Mini compo system with detachable speakers for true stereo effect 4-band radio with FM. Excellent bargain

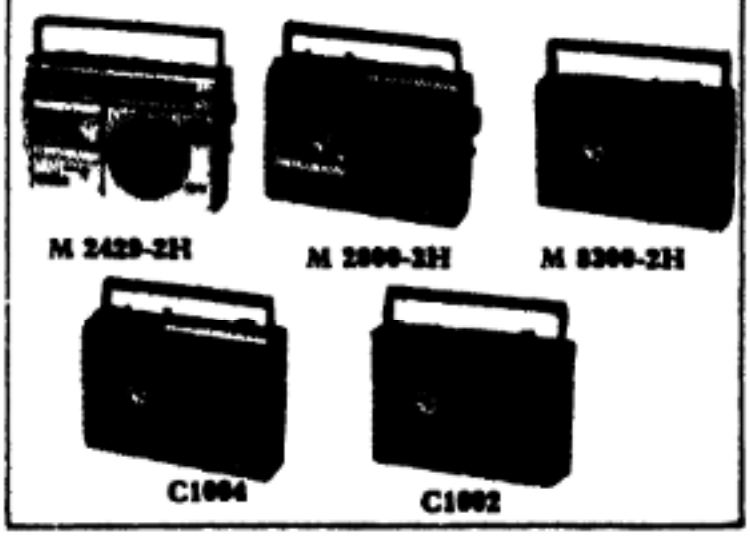


M8003 -2H
2-way, 4-speaker marvel. Surprisingly affordable Makes more sense than a mono in its price range.



M1700 H
Mini and slim international favourite. Small on size, big on sound. Unique styling. Ideal all-time companion.

More to choose from :



BPL-AUDIO

Always the best!

R K SWAMY:BL:3615

The Orient beckons

Bitten by the travel bug, not to mention the low airfares, Calcuttans are making a beeline for the metros of the East

If Calcutta is your starting point, can the Far Eastern cocktail be far out of reach? No longer so, if current travel trends are anything to go by. Holiday-makers have suddenly discovered just how unlimited their horizons can be, if they happen to be in Calcutta. For airfares that almost equal those for inter-metropolis travel within India, today's traveller can taste the shopping and sightseeing pleasures of Hong Kong, Bangkok and Singapore. Not to speak of the glamour of being foreign-returned"!

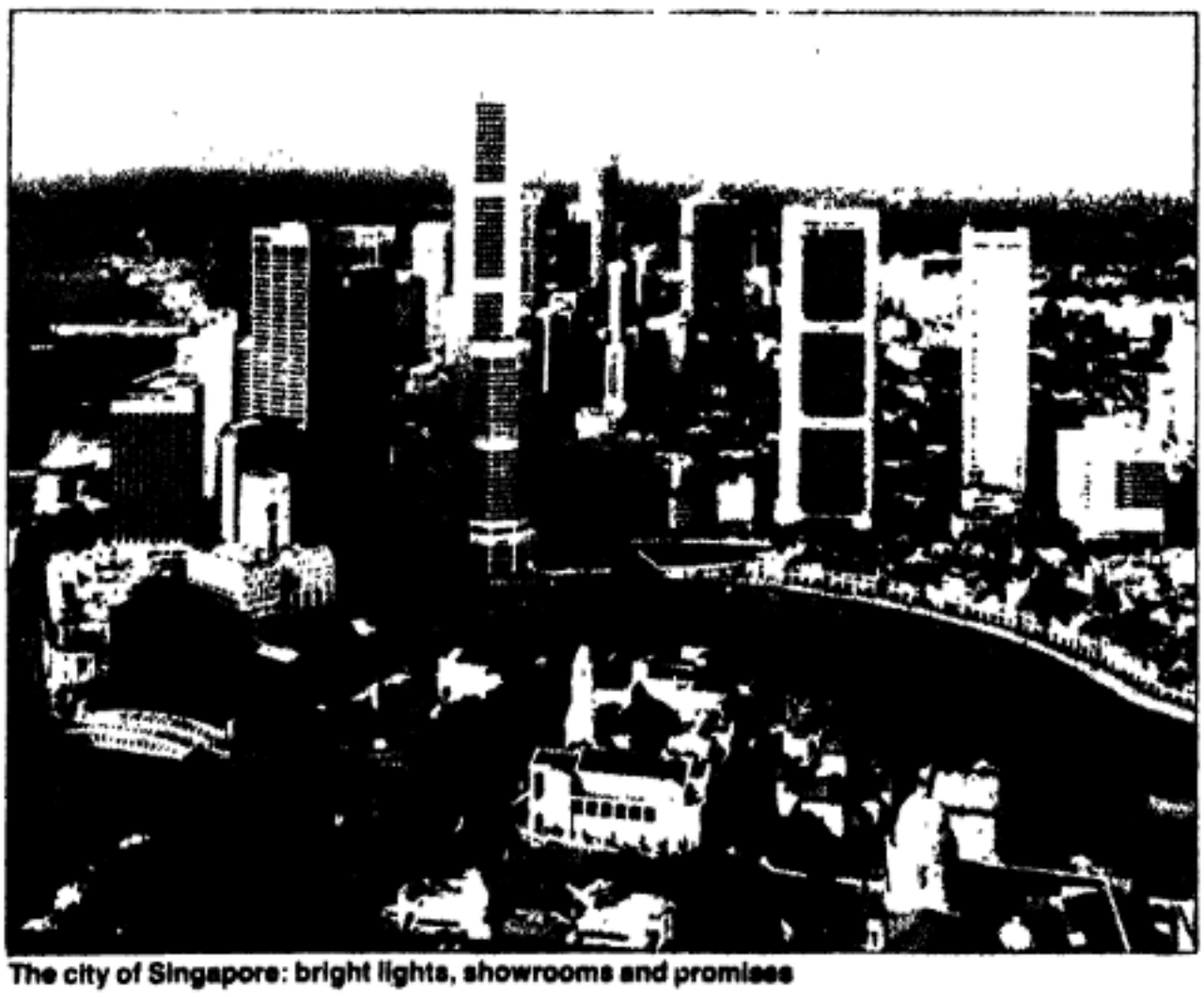
Take Hong Kong. From Madras there is no Air-India (IA) flight. From Bombay, a return ticket costs Rs 6,755, from Delhi Rs 6,355 and ex-Calcutta Rs 5,266. All of them include a stopover at Bangkok, to or from Hong Kong. And all of them are "excursion fares" which are ideal for tourists. However, there are strings attached. If you avail this fare, you have to stay out of India for a minimum of seven days and a maximum of 90 days. For Bangkok, the excursion ticket is valid for 45 days.

But then 45 days must surely be enough, even for the most voracious shopper and the most easy-going holiday-maker. Especially given the difference in excursion and ordinary fares, even from Calcutta. While a return excursion ticket from Calcutta to Bangkok costs just Rs 2,908—which is a little more than a return ticket from Delhi—an ordinary one-way ticket for the same trip is a whopping Rs 3,068! Of course, on an ordinary ticket you can travel for a whole year and, in case of break-journey, on any airline (excursion tickets are valid only on Air-India). But if you are travelling on a one-year ticket, chances are you are on a business trip and not pinching pennies like the ordinary tourist.

Given the rare advantage that Calcutta enjoys, little wonder that travel agencies have sprung up all over the city and are doing business. Going on conducted tours is yet to become passe, and the economies of scale make up for the occasional claustrophobia that a choosy tourist might suffer from. Of course, one does not have to travel through an agent to get group fares or go with a group of one's own choosing. Any group of over 10 persons can avail of group fares provided by Air-India: Calcutta-Bangkok-Calcutta Rs 3,039. Which is a little more than excursion rates but considerably less than ordinary ticket prices. An advantage of the group over excursion fares is that there are no restrictions on the minimum number of days that one must stay out of the country.

Yet, despite the obvious edge the itinerant Calcuttan has over a Bombayite in the way of ticket prices to places in the east, Amal Chakraborty, manager at Calcutta of Travel Corporation (India) Pvt Ltd (TCI), says figures still indicate the contrary. "At least at TCI we have more people going to the Far East from Bombay than Calcutta," he says, "except for times like the Durga Pujas." This, Chakraborty feels, is not really as surprising as it sounds as Bombay continues to have a crucial edge over Calcutta: money.

When Calcutta generates more traffic than Bombay in the off seasons, it is for entirely different reasons, says Chakraborty. "Calcutta has this unfortunate breed of tourists who only go to the Far East to shop. And not just for themselves." Tour operators besides Chakraborty confirm that of the people who travel to say, Hong Kong in one month, a good 40 per cent are allegedly smugglers. "This phenomenon has forced tour operators to be choosy about the kind of people they take on a tour. "We have had complaints of misbehaviour," said a spokesman for another well-known travel agency, "even inebriation on board a flight. With the kind of people we cater to," the spokesman added, "we will lose business if the problem persists."



The city of Singapore: bright lights, showrooms and promises

There are still tourists in India and Calcutta, however, for whom bright spots and showrooms stand for just the opposite of a holiday. And they are making a beeline for exotic Bhutan. By Calcutta standards, a flight to Paro, Bhutan's airport city, is relatively expensive: Rs 1,250 one way by Druk Air. But then today, peace and quiet with a bit of culture thrown in, come at a healthy price. And Calcuttans at least are not complaining. When their slicker cousins from Delhi or Bombay ask where they are heading for their holidays, a good percentage of gloating Calcuttans answer, "Abroad, of course." If the Calcuttans cannot have the best of both worlds, they can at least have of one, the mysterious Far East!

Monideepa Banerjie/Calcutta

Kampuchean tangle

Can India play the peace-maker in South-East Asia?

India is beginning to look beyond its nose. First it was at Afghanistan. Now it is Kampuchea. For the past one year, the Indian government has been getting more deeply involved in the affairs of this distant, strife-torn country. Reason: to build an axis of like-minded nations in Asia and influence the security environment beyond its borders.

For the moment, the Indian external affairs ministry's aims are more immediate and pragmatic. The idea is to help bring peace to this country that has successively suffered a Maoist revolution, internal strife, invasion and guerrilla warfare. One of India's friends, Vietnam, is currently in control of the country, having invaded it a few years ago, and has installed its protégé, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), in the seat of government.

But bringing peace to Kampuchea is a tricky business. For Kampuchea, as one external affairs ministry official puts it, "is one of the most complex international problems today". And the most intractable factor is the Chinese stance on the issue. China is bitterly opposed to Vietnam muscling around in the region and has been aiding the rebel fighters of the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK). China has long refused to recognise the PRK government installed with Vietnamese help, and has been clamouring for the immediate withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, believing that as soon as Vietnam pulled out, Kampuchea would fall to the CGDK fighters.

On another level, Thailand, which shares a long border with Kampuchea, and the United States have so far supported the Chinese stance, if for no other reason than that they both consider Vietnam to be pro-Soviet and a threat to the stability of South-East Asia. Their only problem is the dominance of one group, the Khmer Rouge, in the CGDK. Because of its human rights record, supporting the Khmer Rouge is tantamount to upholding Hitler—a position that few nations can adopt with a straight face.

Bringing peace to Kampuchea, consequently, requires more than just getting rid of the Vietnamese. It requires the setting up of a government that is both acceptable to the world and representative of different Kampuchean power groups. The snag is the bitter antagonism between the ruling PRK and the CGDK—composed of the royalists led by former Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the rightist Kampuchean People's National Liberation Front led by former Prime Minister Son Sann, and the Khmer Rouge led by the maniacal Pol Pot. Each side, till recently, believed that they could resolve the power conflict in the killing fields of Kampuchea, by arms and not negotiations.

At this point Indonesia stepped in. After talking to Vietnam, the Indonesian government hosted a cocktail party at Jakarta on 23 July and invited all four Kampuchean groups and representatives of the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) countries in a bid to sort out the tangle. The meeting was significant to the extent that all the four Kampuchean groups met each other for the first time. But nothing was achieved beyond that. When the then Indonesian foreign minister, Ali Alatas, read out a statement, spelling out the outlines of a tentative political settlement, the representatives of the Khmer Rouge and the Kampuchean National Liberation Front walked out.

But global events and perceptions are beginning to overtake the Kampuchean players. Foremost among the changes is the new note of 'realism' creeping into Chinese foreign policy. Dr S. Velichkin, political analyst at the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi, explains that "after the Afghanistan accord, more and more people, the Chinese included, began to realise that even the most difficult of international problems could be solved through negotiations".

The Chinese once considered the Khmer Rouge, a Maoist group aided and armed mainly by the Chinese, to be their best bargaining chip. But they are beginning to realise that the value of their



bargaining chip is fast diminishing. First, no other nation is prepared to see the Khmer Rouge back in power; and second, the PRK has been steadily gaining in strength and it is becoming apparent that the Khmers will not be able to continue their fight without substantial aid from China and the use of Thai territory.

Of late, the Chinese have been talking about the formation of a quadripartite government in Kampuchea, implying that the PRK, too, has a role to play in the future of the country. When Mikhail Gorbachev visited Beijing in September this year, the Chinese, who have been maintaining that the principal obstacle to the normalisation of Sino-Soviet relations is the presence of Vietnamese troops in Kampuchea, hinted at a new flexibility. Without mentioning any specifics, both countries, for the first time, declared that just as there are differences on Kampuchea, there are also several points of agreement.

The Kampuchean equations changed dramatically with India getting into the act. "Vietnam had indicated that we should take some soundings on their behalf," says the Indian minister of state for external affairs, Natwar Singh. The Vietnamese told the Indian government that they wanted to pull out from



Son Sann (extreme left) and Sihanouk (extreme right): will the Cambodians accept India's mediation?

Kampuchea but wanted PRK to remain as a major power group in the country. This suited India, for a Kampuchea without the PRK would mean a pro-Chinese Kampuchea, especially since all the rebel CGDK groups have been armed, sheltered and encouraged by Beijing.

The leaders of the PRK, President Heng Samrin and Prime Minister Hun Sen, were more specific and wanted India to organise talks between them and the moderate former ruler of the country, Prince Sihanouk, who is Kampuchea's Zahir Shah, a man acceptable both internationally and within the country.

Natwar Singh, accordingly, sent out feelers to Sihanouk and ultimately met hun in New York in October last year. "Sihanouk, in turn, asked us to convey an invitation to Hun Sen for a meeting in Paris," recalls Singh. In December 1987, Hun Sen and Sihanouk met for the first time in Paris. Both agreed to meet again and keep India as an intermediary.

The initial meetings in Paris did not break much ice, with Sihanouk in no mood to play ball with the PRK leadership. At the second meeting with Hun Sen in Paris in January, Sihanouk even insisted on the dismantling of the PRK and the installation of a totally new government headed by himself. The next round of discussions between the two leaders was postponed indefinitely.

Natwar Singh: peace-maker



With the international mood on Kampuchea distinctly upbeat, India is stepping up its efforts to play peace-maker. "We are creating a forum in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) for the resolution of the Kampuchean problem," says Natwar Singh

With the international mood on Kampuchea distinctly upbeat, India is stepping up its efforts to play peace-maker. "To begin with, we have been reinforcing the moves by Indonesia and we are creating a forum in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) for the resolution of the Kampuchean problem," says Natwar Singh. India has been emphasising that it would like to see a sovereign, non-aligned Kampuchea that would not be a threat to other nations in the region. Towards this end, since July 1988, India has started a dialogue on Kampuchea within the NAM set-up.

In the first NAM meeting on Kampuchea held in New Delhi, Natwar Singh asked the Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe to set up a committee on Kampuchea and to explore ways to catalyse a quick political settlement. In Delhi, five countries—India, Indonesia, Cuba, Vietnam and Zimbabwe—decided to form a tentative group to look into the Kampuchean problem. Later, at Nicosia, a formal NAM committee was formed, with the addition of Singapore, Malaysia, Laos, Peru, Algeria, Yugoslavia and the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation). Mugabe, meanwhile, also wrote to all the four Kampuchean groups, inviting them for talks, but only the PRK responded. Subsequently, the permanent secretary of the ministry of foreign affairs of Zimbabwe, Dr Mishing Gaize, was sent as a special envoy to contact the rebel Kampuchean groups. His findings have not been disclosed by the NAM committee.

NAM, however, could be a pivotal forum in the future, since both the PRK and Vietnam have refused to hold negotiations under United Nations' auspices. For, the UN recognises the CGDK, but not the PRK regime. However, in NAM, the Kampuchean seat has been kept vacant. NAM, consequently, is considered more neutral and would be the ideal forum for an international settlement.

Should that happen, India will have pulled off a major international coup. It will also have made influential friends in South-East Asia. And with Indian foreign policy analysts' new perceptions on national security being entwined with regional and continental security equations, the making of South-East Asian friends would be an entirely unmixed blessing.

Indrani Banerjie/New Delhi

Russian glitter

The Soviet Mela in Delhi has brought enjoyment and excitement to the people and bound two nations even closer together

It was a cultural bear hug. As 28-year-old Varezh from the town of Ashkarak in Armenia sang the Kishore Kumar classic, *Dost dost na raha* in flawless Hindi, the crowd started clapping ecstatically. A college student hummed loudly and tears streamed down the cheeks of an old lady who had come with her son and three grandchildren to the Soviet Mela at the India Gate lawns in the capital. It was perhaps one of the greatest tributes the young singer would ever get on foreign soil. And it was proof of the Russians' newly acquired skill of gracefully staging a propaganda coup.

The two-day-long Soviet Mela (8 and 9 October)—the first ever—was Russia's answer to the Indian *utsavs* held at Moscow, Leningrad and Tashkent. It was a riot of colour, music, rhythm and spectacle. Russians from various regions in the USSR—Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Siberia, and others—in vivid shades of red, blue, yellow, green and gold with stone-studded tiaras and embroidered jackets sang, danced and mingled with the crowd. There was a Russian circus, Russian food, Russian craftsmen demonstrating their exquisite art, and much more. It looked as if culture had suddenly tumbled out of closets and air-conditioned auditoriums meant for a select few, into the open for everyone to see.

"No closed structure, whether it be a stadium or auditorium, could accommodate so many people and we thought that the most important thing was to let in the common people. Russians and Indians should get together, sing together, dance together and have meals together. Mela was the answer," says Igor Shapovalov, chief choreographer of the Mela, which marks the final phase of the Soviet Festival in this country and which will be seen in in nine Indian cities, Trivandrum being the last.

The Mela, more than any other Festival programme that the Russians have organised in the past year, conveyed the spirit of *glasnost* pervading the Soviet Union right now. The singers and the dancers, who enthralled the crowds with renditions of folk dances and melodies from remote corners of the USSR, were not professionals. They were ordinary people and they appealed to the common people here.

Varezh, who became a darling of the crowd by singing songs from Raj Kapoor hits like *Sangam* is an official in the department of culture in his home town, Ashkarak in Armenia. He does not speak Hindi, but is an ardent fan of Hindi films. Whenever a Hindi movie is screened in a theatre in his town, Varezh goes to the hall with a tape-recorder and records the music. He then comes home and learns the words and tunes. He confesses that he has to depend on a translator to understand the meaning of the songs. He loves Kishore Kumar numbers and looked heart-broken when he learnt that the popular singer had died.



Russian dancers: animated performance Rakesh Sahai

During the two days of the Mela, it seemed as if a Russia fever had gripped the capital. Everybody wanted to witness the spectacle and there was a mad dash for the tickets, which, interestingly enough, were available at licensed liquor shops for a week before the event. Anyone who went to buy a bottle of booze was given the Mela tickets as 'change'. Soon, the word spread and all tickets were sold out.

One of the greatest attractions at the Mela was Russian food. Delicacies such as *obi nan, patir*—both Russian breads—vegetable *pulov* and kebabs were snapped up and demand far exceeded supply. The 'base kitchen' was at Vigyan Bhawan—normally the venue for dull seminars and workshops. It was here that the Russian masterchefs worked with their counterparts in the Ashoka Hotel and prepared the mouth-watering fare.

As the evening drew to a close and the Mela came to an end, the sky exploded into colour. While the people gasped at the breathtaking fireworks display above the Russian performers gathered on the stage below and broke into a song whose message was brotherhood. The crowd chanted along, "We are brothers forever." This was the stuff of what Pupul Jayakar would call "cultural diplomacy".

Patralekha Chatterjee/*New Delhi*

The two-day-long Mela—the first ever—was Russia's answer to the Indian *utsavs* held in the USSR. It looked as if culture had suddenly tumbled out of closets and air-conditioned auditoriums meant for a select few into the open for everyone to see

The anniversary-centenary industry

What would Jawaharlal Nehru have made of a committee that celebrates his centenary by printing expensive diaries? Ask Romi Chopra

Venue: the former mini-hospital in the Asian Games village, New Delhi, refurbished at a cost of approximately Rs 30 lakhs by Mrs Sumta Kohli, Rajiv Gandhi's favourite interior designer

Cast: Members of the Implementation Committee for the 40th anniversary of India's Freedom and the Jawaharlal Nehru centenary and heads of leading advertising agencies.

A meeting is called to order. "Gentlemen," says a leading light of the Committee, "you know how to sell soap, how about selling patriotism?" Audio-visual presentations follow.

Some of the results have already been seen—*Freedom Torch*, a TV capsule featuring sports stars running to "spread the light of freedom"; *Mera Bharat Mahan*, another three-minute TV programme on national integration studded with luminaries like Shabana Azmi, Sharmila Tagore, Kamalahasan; *The Great Freedom Run*, a reenactment of the Dandi March. The "*mati* ceremony" at Rajghat shows soil being collected from various places associated with the freedom struggle and being brought to Delhi. The Rs 225 Jawaharlal Nehru commemorative diary set is also one of the offerings of the Committee.

Supposedly, much more has been done—from distributing smokeless *chullahs* to hapless villagers, to instigating public sector undertakings to adopt villages. But what exactly has been accomplished since the Committee came into existence by a gazette notification in 1986, and at what cost to the national exchequer, remains shrouded in secrecy.

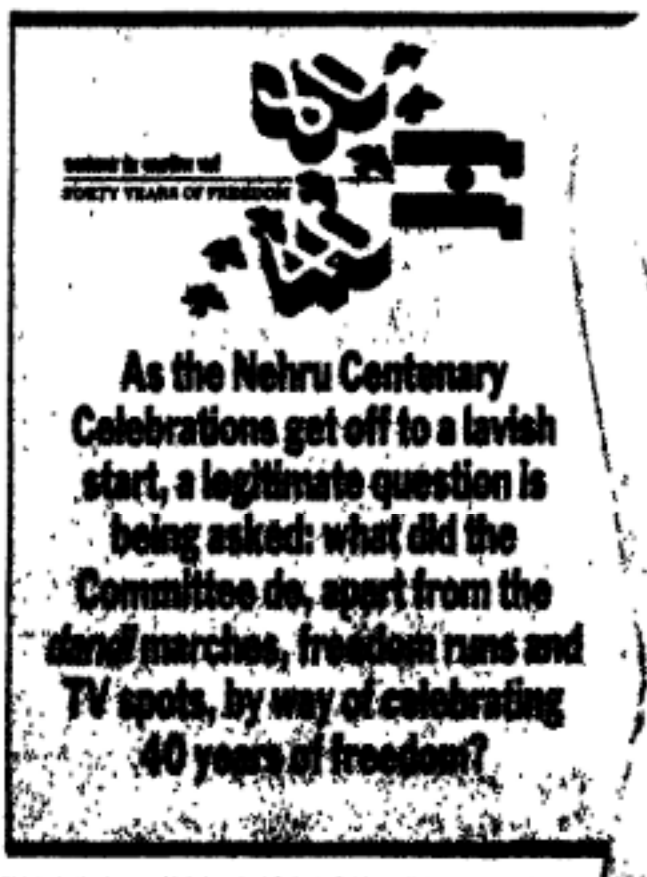
What is known is that few of the 295 eminent persons who form the national committee for the Freedom 40 and Nehru 100 celebrations have time for the adventurous and esoteric projects thought up by the brains trust. The work, or what passes for it, is carried out by five members of the Implementation Committee assisted by a secretariat of 80-odd bureaucrats, and a number of so-called experts and consultants, headed by M Varadarajan, Bhaskar Ghosh's predecessor in the department of culture.

And even they have other responsibilities that keep them busy. Chairperson Sheila Dixit has a crucial ministry to look after, Sam Pitroda is too wrapped up with C-Dot and his technology missions, Romesh Bhandari, has to occupy the hot seat of Lt Governor of Delhi, Jitendra Prasad, MP, has his own constituency to look after—which leaves only the retired general Narendra Singh, former director general of NCC and Romi Chopra, ad-man and friend of the Prime Minister.

Chopra is in charge of the communication and design committee, one of the 20 sub-committees under the purview of the Implementation Committee, which in turn is under the Cabinet secretariat. Chopra is not too communicative when it comes to discussing what exactly his team is up to, except to say that the "task ahead is very challenging, and one should talk only after one has done something."

Chopra told SUNDAY that the job at hand involves making everyone realise that "Jawaharlal Nehru was an ordinary man, and that if he could achieve what he did, so can we...". For the major part of last year, Chopra was involved in making Indians feel proud of their country. An example of how this sense of patriotism and nationalism was instilled in the masses is the TV spot *"Jo sur mile mera tumhara/to sur bane hamara..."* by the Lok Sewa Sanchar Parishad.





But the project that lies closest to his heart as the Nehru Centenary celebrations get under way, is clearly the Jawaharlal Nehru Commemorative Diary set. A glossy brochure proclaimes that "to make Jawaharlal Nehru and his multifaceted personality come alive," the Implementation Committee for the Nehru Centenary has designed a composite set of diaries—one being a formal desk diary, presenting Nehru, the great leader, international statesman and builder of modern India. The diary has an international, one-week-at-a-glance format. There is also a section dealing with India's growth and development, her place in world affairs—full of statistical abstracts, economic indicators and quotes from social scientists. The second is a "personal pocket diary, presenting Nehru the man." The price of the diary set Rs 225.



Romi Chopra: the lion's share of the work

But as one of the Committee members put it, since "sunshine super printing paper" and imported art paper were used, how could it cost less? Public sector undertakings and government departments have been "requested" to send in their orders. Committee members believe that the diary set would make "an ideal presentation set", but sorry, there is no discount. According to the Implementation Committee's own report presented at the third meeting of the National Committee on 29 April this year at the Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, the finance required for the commemorative diary project is Rs 50 lakhs.

The other thing that is much discussed during the meetings convened by the Implementation Committee is the Nehru calendar. At a high-powered meeting on 9 September, with Implementation Committee secretary M. Varadarajan, the resident commissioners of various states, senior officials of public sector undertakings and representatives of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), sought an exemption from the ban on calendars because these were much cheaper than fancy diaries as a method of reaching a wide audience. Even as the white paper on the public sector prepared by the Krishnamurthy Committee is gathering dust, public sector undertakings (PUCs) are being persuaded to become involved in a big way in the Nehru Centenary celebrations. Member of Parliament from Shahjehanpur, Jitendra Prasad, who is in

'We will focus on Nehru's relevance even today'

M. Varadarajan, secretary, Implementation Committee, says the approach will be thematic

SUNDAY: Apart from commemorative diary sets and calendars, what is being planned for the Nehru Centenary?

Varadarajan: We are planning to have something every month. The approach is going to be thematic. Like Nehru as a champion of secularism, Nehru and the scientific temper, Nehru and the public sector, Nehru and women's rights. I think these are eminently celebratable themes.

We plan to have lots of seminars, symposia, commemorative functions—basically create an awareness of Nehru and establish his relevance today and what the country has achieved since Nehru. The other thing we are planning is grassroots level conferences which will be attended by not so much officialdom as people who really matter—*panchayat* members, folk artists, writers, etc. We hope to bring them over, make them reflect on and review our achievements in the last 40 years. These divisional conferences will culminate in state level ones, and finally there will be one at the Centre. We hope this will give us policy perspectives which can be applied not only in the year of Nehru but also in the future. Thirdly, we have suggested the various state governments do something concrete, like setting up science and technology parks, and planetariums, institute productivity awards, etc.

But how are these projects going to be implemented? The Implementation Committee, I believe, is not giving any funds to the government undertakings and states. Where do you think the money is going to come from, for these planetariums and parks?

Personally, I feel that the existing budgets of the state governments, in addition to the central grants they receive, is quite enough. A lot can be achieved with existing resources if there is a will. We need to sit up, reflect and review why certain things are not happening.

But many of the projects, according to your own estimates will require additional financial outlays. Where will that materialise from?

We hope to get some funds, but how much I can't say right now.

What is the budget of the Implementation Committee and what is it spent on?

We have an operational budget of Rs 4-5 crores which mostly goes towards posters, lapel pins, and assisting divisional seminars and other functions.

Has any time frame or target been fixed for the projects and programmes the Implementation Committee is undertaking?

No.

Supposedly, much has been done—from distributing smokeless *chulahs* to hapless villagers, to instigating public sector undertakings to adopt villages. But what exactly has been accomplished since the committee came into existence remains shrouded in secrecy

charge of roping in the PUCs in the programmes and projects of the Nehru Centenary denies emphatically that a Nehru cult is being promoted through unnecessary advertsing splashes. "We have specifically told the public sector undertakings not to incur any additional expenditure. Whatever they are planning to do for the Nehru Centenary must be within their resources. The Cabinet Committee does not have any budget of its own. We had asked for additional resources last year, but it being a drought year, it wasn't possible to allocate any extra funds..." Prasad stresses that with some innovative reorientation of public relations and a new framework for publicity policy, the suggested programmes and projects could be implemented.

But within the Implementation Committee, there are sharp differences of opinion as to how this "reorientation" of publicity policy can take place. People like V.C. Tandon, former PR manager, BHEL, and currently a consultant to the Committee, feels that PUCs should avoid costly calendars. Instead, they should sponsor a series of high-quality, long-lasting posters with themes from the freedom struggle which could be sold at subsidised prices or offered free to school children. Or they could sponsor debates/seminars for students and give them free tickets/accommodation to some place of national importance like Nehru Samadhi or Sabarmati. Others feel the PUCs should purchase the specially designed Nehru diaries and calendars and gift them to visiting dignitaries.

In Bangalore, a Joint Coordination Committee has been formed covering BEL, HAL, ITI, HMT and BEML. These PUCs have been asked by the Implementation Committee to provide more medical facilities and welfare programmes in the villages they have adopted, organise special competitions for school children, set up a Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for the Performing Arts in the city, take up afforestation projects, provide "*bara khanas*", etc. But typically, the Committee members have been silent on the question of funds. "We are not forcing anything on anybody, it is just a request", said a joint secretary attached to the Committee.

But as the public relations officer of a losing government undertaking pointed out, "When the minister summons the chief executive and requests that such and such suggestions be implemented, what choice do we have....?"

Many of the suggestions submitted by the Implementation Committee to the



Sheila Dixit: a chairperson with too many responsibilities

national committee are unexceptionable—afforestation of the Himalayas, providing safe drinking water to villages, eradicating illiteracy, production of low priced books in various languages containing Nehru's speeches and synoptic reviews of India's experience through 40 years of independence. All of which, at least on paper, are part of the government's five year plans. But alongside these are suggestions for the production of what is called "freedom material"—posters, stamps, cards, buttons, brochures, shirts, slides, toys, etc. An international golf trophy has now been named after the 40th anniversary of India's tourism.

What are the priorities? Even the concerted efforts at instilling a sense of patriotism and pride among the young generation becomes suspect and fuels speculation that the Nehru centennial extravaganza is nothing but an electoral gambit aimed at getting votes for the grandson of the great man. Suggestions that an eight-part television serial be made highlighting India's developmental efforts since independence with *emphasis* on Nehru and Indira Gandhi, certainly lend credence to such suspicions.

Even the concerted efforts at instilling a sense of patriotism and pride among the young generation becomes suspect and fuels speculation that the Nehru centennial extravaganza is nothing but an electoral gambit aimed at getting votes for the grandson of the great man

A joint secretary attached to the Committee, who prefers to remain anonymous, pointed out that the Committee started out the wrong way. It was set up in a drought year. And with death, disease and starvation looming large on the horizon, people had little appetite for extravagant celebrations. To add to its troubles, the Committee became associated with controversial figures like Amitabh Bachchan, though eventually he resigned. Also the fact that the 40th year was chosen for celebrations, fuelled speculation as to the motives of those who set it up. People celebrate 25th anniversaries, 50th anniversaries, 100th anniversaries. Why the 40th? There was no answer that seemed good enough, and the launching of an austerity drive by a government that also talked of lavish celebrations in the same breath, lends credence to the uncharitable theories.



Sam Pitroda: other occupations

As the Nehru Centenary Celebrations get off to a lavish start, a legitimate question is being asked: what did the Committee do, apart from the *dandi* marches, freedom runs and TV spots, by way of celebrating 40 years of freedom? To what extent were promises of providing drinking water to villages and eradicating illiteracy kept? "We are in the process of quantifying these," says Varadarajan. Pragmatically he adds, that if nothing else, the omnipresent Freedom 40 logos and TV spots and seminars would serve as timely reminders of India's past to the younger generation. But will these capsules on patriotism really teach anything? And what would Nehru himself have thought of the *tamasha* carried out in his name?

Patralekha Chatterjee/*New Delhi*

COMPANIES

On the takeover trail

Even as Dhirubhai Ambani gets control of Larsen and Toubro, there is speculation that he is eyeing Siemens India

Dhirubhai Ambani is stalking the corporate boardwalk searching for ways to feed his insatiable appetite for growth. The day his son Mukesh entered the Larsen and Toubro boardroom for the first time, rumours were afloat that Dhirubhai was buying into Siemens India. Simultaneously, Reliance struck an agreement with a small cooperative company, Lijjat Pappad, agreeing to provide technical services to help them make detergents.

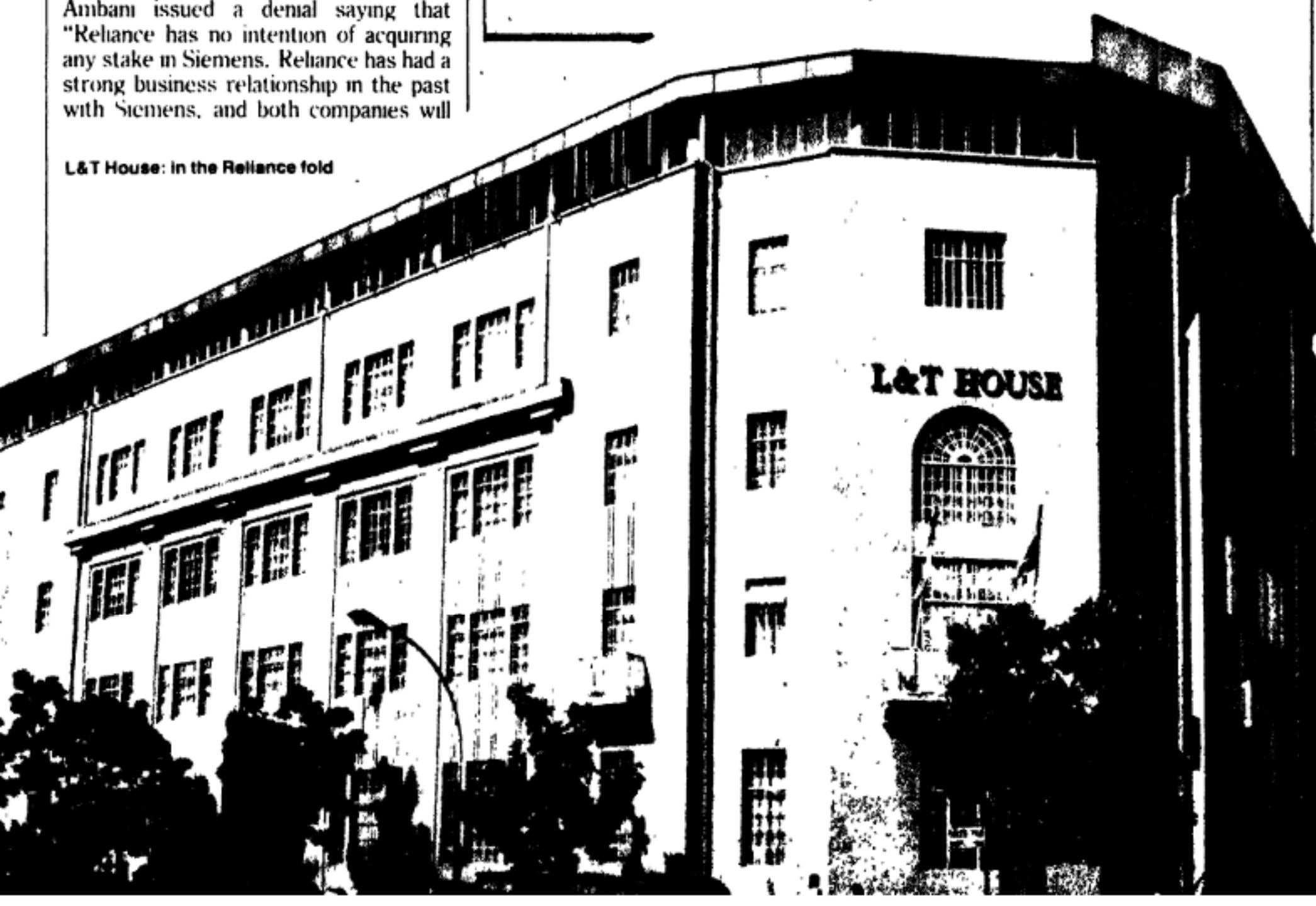
Whether Reliance was making a takeover bid for Siemens quickly became the hottest subject of speculation on the Bombay Stock Exchange. Reliance is said to have purchased 25,000 Siemens shares. However, for the present, both sides deny that there is any takeover move. A day after the first reports appeared in the newspapers, Ambani issued a denial saying that "Reliance has no intention of acquiring any stake in Siemens. Reliance has had a strong business relationship in the past with Siemens, and both companies will endeavour to continue the cordial business relationship in the future." Siemens also tried to squelch takeover rumours and said that there was no way any Indian businessman could get onto the board of the company.

The takeover of Larsen and Toubro (L&T) was undoubtedly a corporate coup unparalleled in recent times. The company has a turnover of Rs 600 crores with diverse interests in construction and engineering. It has a reputation as the foremost construction company in the country, and has fit the bill for Reliance perfectly. Even more importantly, it was easy to get L&T chairman N. M. Desai, one of the largest shareholders with under five per cent of the company's equity, to agree.

The takeover of L&T was undoubtedly a corporate coup unparalleled in recent times. The Rs 600-crore premier construction company fits the bill perfectly for Reliance

Says Udayan Bose, chairman of Creditcapital Finance Corporation, "Reliance will have projects worth Rs 2,500 crores to Rs 3,000 crores in the next few years and L&T is the best civil engineering firm in the country. L&T was bound to go one day given the distribution pattern of its shares. It had to be plucked."

Old-time corporate watchers compare

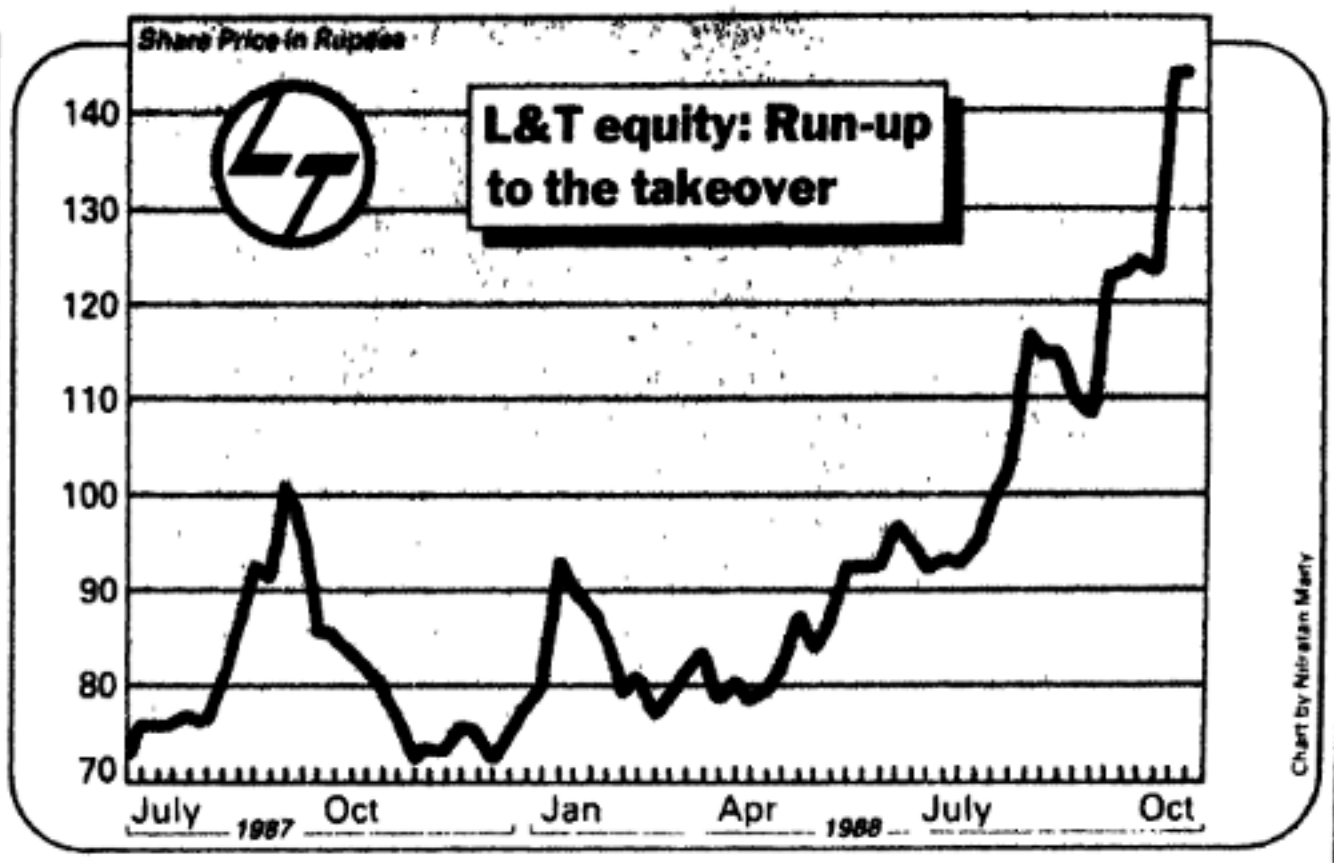


L&T House: in the Reliance fold

the L&T takeover to G. D. Birla's acquisition of the Wadia-owned Century Spinning and Weaving Mills. Birla pulled the strings from behind through a *benami* named Pilani and before the Wadias knew it, the mill was out of their hands.

The behind-the-scenes moves that led to the L&T takeover was a corporate cliff-hanger that has been taking place for several months. In one corner was Dubai-based businessman Manu Chhabria, and on the other was Desai. But towering above them both was Ambani who was keen to have control of L&T which has always handled Reliance's major construction projects.

Did Desai favour the Ambanis over the Chhabrias? Soon after the takeover there was strong speculation that Desai was indebted to the Ambanis as they had got him off the hook during his battle with the Company Law Board But there





Mukesh (left) and Dhirubhai Ambani: planning takeovers ; (inset) N.M. Desai: giving in

was no proof to back this allegation. Desai claims that he went strictly according to track record of the contenders for L&T. While sparring questions during the L&T extraordinary board meeting, Desai said that Dhirubhai Ambani had asked whether he would mind if Reliance bought shares. Desai said he had indicated that he would have no objections. He also added that "Ambani has never let down his shareholders and I have no hesitation to invite the Ambanis." Desai was also said to be personally of the opinion that between the Chhabrias and the Ambanis, the latter had a better track record.

The actual buying of L&T shares started when the company's share prices were around Rs 85-90. With the stock market in the dumps, rumours started the moment the scrip began to climb to Rs 95-105. Chhabria made a statement to the effect that he was buying shares as an investment and denied that he had intentions to take over the company. However, the tussle for shares continued till the price reached Rs 118. Towards the end of September, L&T held a board meeting where the issue of convertible debentures was announced. The share went down the next day to Rs 100 and then began to move up again. Analysing the share movement, Ebrahim Rangoonwala, general manager, investment research, Aridhi Investments, said, "After the board meeting the market rumours were sure that with the help of the financial institutions and the government, Ambani would get L&T. There was a lot of speculation in L&T, and Reliance brokers are said to have sold 1.5 lakh shares on the second day after the board meeting. They sold at Rs 118 till it came down to Rs 100 once again and then started buying till the price went up to Rs 114. It is estimated that they bought around three lakh shares during his period...Ambani is thought to have around 12 per cent holding in L&T though there are many who say that his holdings are far lower."

At the moment, L&T has four vacancies on the board and two more are likely to come about next year when two vice-presidents, D. L. Pradhan and C. R. Ramakrishnan, are due to retire. But already there is no doubt about who calls the shots at L&T.

Olga Tellis / *Bombay*

Did Desai favour the Ambanis over the Chhabrias? There were reports that he was indebted to the Ambanis as they had got him off the hook in his battle with the Company Law Board. But Desai claims he went strictly according to the track record of the contenders.

Does your dudhwalla supply milk at 10 in the night?

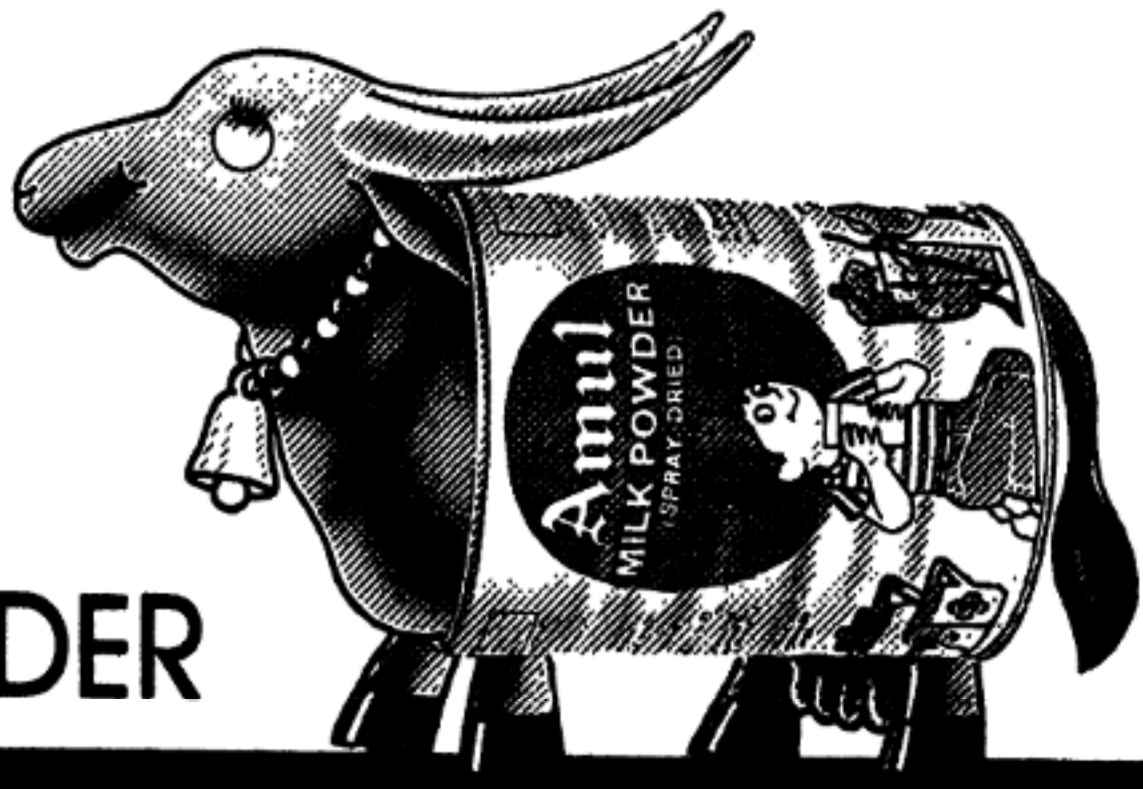


My dudhwalla does.

Your son wants to study late at night and needs coffee. Grandma wants milk instead of dinner. Where do you buy milk at that hour? Keep Amul Milk Powder at home, so the milk is never late, never runs out, never turns sour.

With Amul Milk Powder you have pure, rich, creamy milk mixed and ready in minutes. Good to drink, for tea and coffee, dahi, lassi, kheer, custard, cakes, rasgollas...





Amul MILK POWDER

It's like having a dairy in your home

Marketed by: Gujarat Co-operative
Milk Marketing Federation Ltd., Anand 388 001

RADEUS/AMP/1-98

TRAVEL

The coming budget hotel boom

All the major chains are planning new three and four-star hotels

India's leading hotel groups—traditionally catering to the business traveller and the well-heeled foreign tourist—are now beginning to reach out to the country's middle class. If current trends are any indication, this increasingly moneyed, quality-conscious, and pleasure-seeking group of almost 100 million people is being looked upon as the harbinger of the industry's second wind.

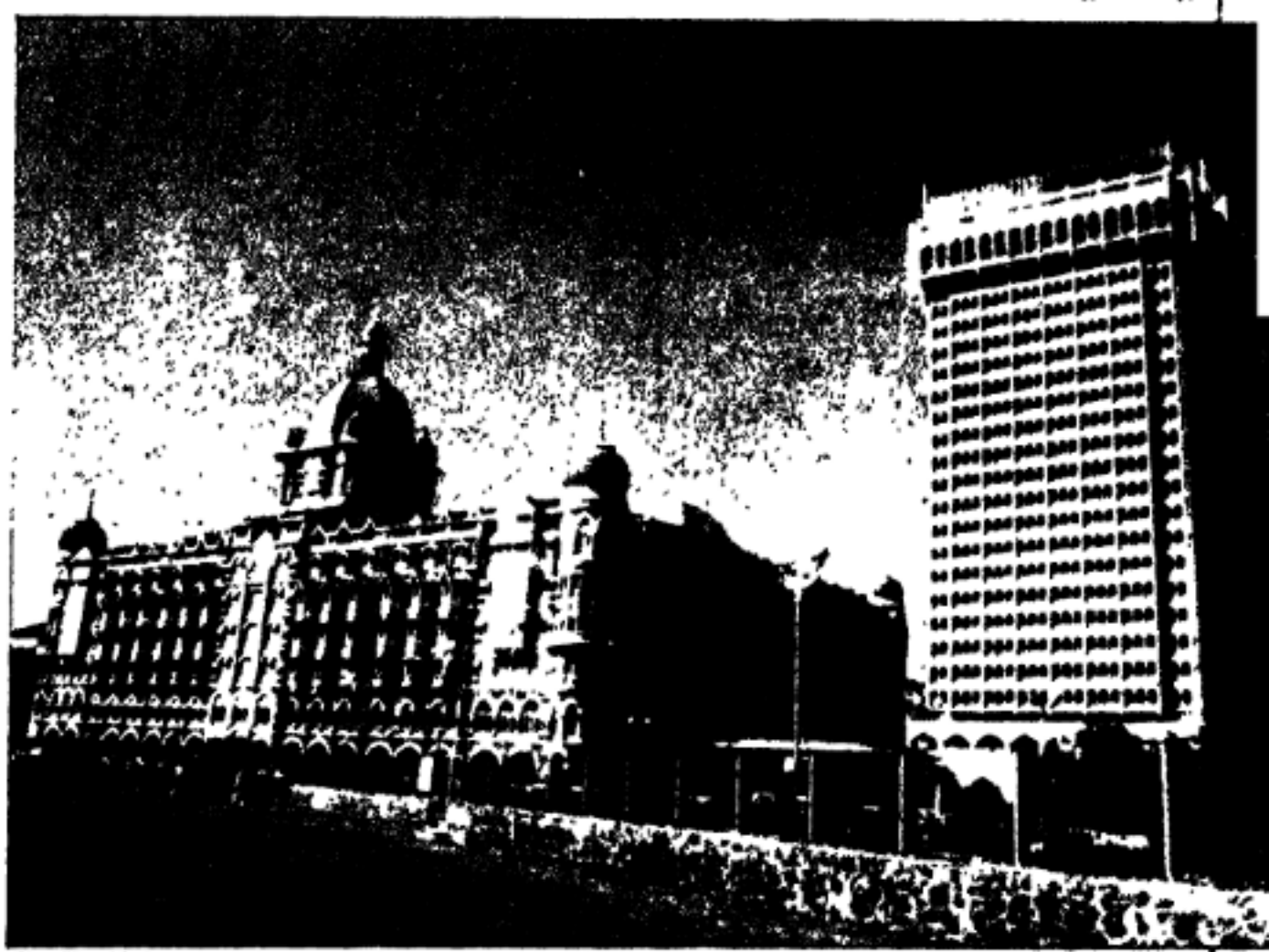
Beginning in 1987, all the major chains—the Taj group, the Oberois, ITC's Welcomgroup, the Clarks group from Uttar Pradesh, and Asian Hotels which owns the plush Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Delhi—have approached the government for permission to expand into medium-budget three and four-star hotels.

The Oberoi chain has already made a start in the medium-budget business by unveiling the Trident group, which at present operates a hotel in Madras. The Taj group is planning to launch a similar chain under the Gateway Hotels banner, and is actively scouting for possible hotel sites in places as far apart as Lucknow and Visakhapatnam. Asian Hotels is discussing the possibility of setting up three and four-star hotels in emerging commercial centres like Baroda. According to Sushil Gupta, joint managing director, Asian Hotels is planning a four-star hotel in Lucknow. He feels that all state capitals need medium-budget hotels. Says Gupta, "There was no reason to go in for smaller hotels earlier. Domestic tourism is a recent phenomenon and the scope is tremendous. It helps that the economy has been growing at a steady pace too. It's all related." Concurs Chandni Luthra, a vice-president with India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC): "Now it makes sense to go in for all categories of hotels."

Fuelled by increasing incomes, generous leave-travel schemes and an urge to travel, more and more Indians are packing their bags to travel around the country. Although not all 100 million travel at the same time, the number of domestic middle-class travellers is placed conservatively at around 10 million every year. This is ten times the number of foreign tourist arrivals during the same period. For India's recently awakened and still stumbling tourism industry, domestic travellers can no more be scorned or neglected. Their rupee is as welcome as the ommpotent dollar.

Budget hotels, with rates way below five-star levels of Rs 800 or more per person for a night of stay—often less than half the amount—certainly help attract more of the Indian travelling public. These humbler establishments cater to people who travel with their families for a holiday, are content with a clean, possibly air-conditioned room and a reasonably priced and hygienic place to eat, gladly passing up the health clubs, French cuisine restaurants and private bars that are behind the sky-high rates at deluxe hotels. These are the people who pay their own way, as opposed to the business travel norm of letting one's company pick up the tab. Typically they have around Rs 5,000 to spare for a family holiday, usually at two or more destinations.

Hotels have been mushrooming all over the country to cater to this growing multitude. Mostly owned or operated by small-time entrepreneurs, these hotels and their high occupancy rates have shown them up as a collective goldmine. It seems that large hotel chains have had to take the cue from lesser rivals.



The Taj Mahal, Bombay: a shift to Gateway budget hotels

Mostly owned or operated by small-time entrepreneurs, the budget hotels with their high occupancy rates are turning out to be goldmines. It seems that large hotel chains have taken the cue and are expanding into the medium-budget segment

To judge the growth and scope of budget hotels, it is worth taking a look at frequently advertised and visited Goa, which by every reasoning should already have enough hotels. Not quite. Two years ago, Goa only had six hotels meeting the needs of the middle class. Today, there are 17, all claiming high occupancy rates throughout the year. By the end of next year, Goa will have

11 more budget hotels to house the ever-increasing numbers of domestic visitors.

"The way we (the medium budget hotels) are getting domestic business, we may soon have to say no to foreign visitors," says A.M Mubarak Ali, manager of the three-star Hotel Mandovi in Panjim. "We have a good potential even without advertising," says Ali, adding, "In future, when we expand, we're really going to be looking at the middle class for business." Countrywide, the budget hotel business is estimated to be growing at a steady 10 per cent every year, higher than the five-star industry's growth

Despite this new interest in budget hotels, however, five-star hotels continue to be safe investments and a major source of revenue. According to industry analysts, deluxe hotels and budget hotels form two completely different segments of the market, with no chances of competition from one segment edging out the other. The government has recommended building 50,000 additional hotel rooms to accommodate increasing numbers of tourists, so there is place for everyone.

Fuelled by increasing incomes, generous leave-travel schemes and an urge to travel, more and more Indians are packing their bags to travel around the country. The number of domestic middle-class travellers is placed at around 10 million every year. The tourism industry can no more scorn or neglect them

(Inset) The Delhi Ashok: ITDC is moving away from this kind of deluxe property; a holiday village in Goa: the new boom will be in hotels like it



Moreover, five-star hotels still bring in more than 50 per cent of the revenue, occupancy rates are looking up—with them being touted as convention centres--and corporate high-flyers, who account for most of the earnings, would not stay anywhere else. Although there is a glut in major cities like New Delhi and Madras, other metropolitan centres such as Bombay and Calcutta still have the five-star business clamouring to get a piece of the action. Industry executives speak of a boom especially after 1990, when the government's efforts to woo more foreign tourists and conferences should finally begin to pay off.

Then there is the cost of land. For example, "If land costs Rs 5 crores, and the government doesn't care whether you're building a five-star hotel or a three-star one, why not make it a five?" ventures Gupta of Asian Hotels. "There's definitely higher returns from a five-star hotel. Land must be made available for budget hotels at a cheaper price," he says.

Hoteliers also mention that generous interest rebates on term loans for budget hotels would help smoothen the ride for large chains keen on diversification. Better debt-equity ratios would also help the effort, they say. However, this grievance hasn't prevented both the big fish and small fry from going in for budget hotels. The prospect of the sheer volume of domestic travellers appears to have countered any qualms entrepreneurs may have had about going headlong into the business.

The government's concessions over the past one year to the hotel industry—ranging from concessional rates of interest linked with foreign exchange earnings to easier guidelines for foreign collaborations—have also given a push to India's hotel industry.

The current mood of India's hotel industry is upbeat. And while some in the industry may still question the contribution of the burgeoning middle class as new messiahs of prosperity for hotels, they are swamped by people who have their eyes focussed where it matters: the bottom line, and it is steadily moving up.

Sudeep Chakravarti/*New Delhi*

NATIONALISED BANKS

Trying to catch up

After being shown up as sloppy by the private sector, the state-owned banks have suddenly introduced a whole range of sophisticated services

For years India's public sector banks have been slow on service and slow to grab opportunities. But while snarling rows all over the country may still be the order of the day, the nationalised banks are moving into high gear to grab the opportunities which are suddenly appearing before them. Says M.N. Goipuria, chairman, Central Bank of India: "A competitive spirit is in the air amongst the nationalised banks and vast avenues are opening up."

Suddenly the banks are racing to outdo each other to provide a supermarket of sophisticated financial services. A handful of banks are hammering at the doors of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for permission to start merchant banking subsidiaries. Others are looking for ways to use their financial muscle to expand into areas like hire purchase, housing, finance and credit cards. And several banks are tumbling over each other in the race to introduce modcons like automatic teller machines (ATMs) which were introduced last year.

Suddenly banks are racing to provide a supermarket of sophisticated financial services. A handful of them are hammering at the doors of RBI for permission to start merchant banking subsidiaries



S.M. Parande: into merchant banking

At the cutting edge of the banks newly found combativeness are companies like SBI Capital Markets (SBI CAPS) and Canfina. The two companies are wholly-owned subsidiaries of the State Bank of India (SBI) and Canara Bank respectively. During the last two years since they came into existence, the two companies have moved into the growing world of Indian merchant banks with the speed and elan that can match any service the foreign banks have to offer. Says S.M. Parande, executive director, SBI CAPS: "Competition is very strong. Increasingly, earnings from banks will come not from lending but from fee-based services."

But success has bred imitators. A handful of other banks are now lining up to set up merchant banking subsidiaries of their own. The Bank of Baroda has launched its BoB fiscal services in June and Punjab National Bank is getting ready to start its merchant banking outfit. The Central Bank of India has gone into partnership with the Unit Trust of India and the Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) to start a subsidiary called Infrastructure Leasing and Services Ltd in April this year. A bunch of other banks are also at the starting blocks and rearing to go. Bank of India has been pleading with the finance ministry to be allowed to get into the merchant fame and Vijaya Bank is also gearing up for an entry into merchant banking. Even some of the smaller banks like the New Bank of India are getting ready to put together proposals for starting merchant banking subsidiaries.

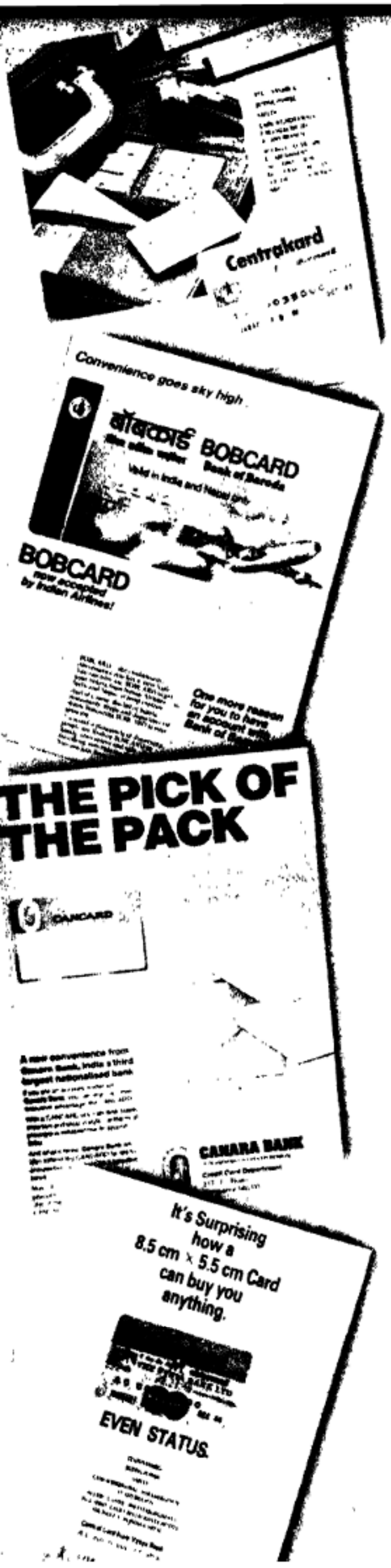
The reasons for the sudden rush into merchant banking are not hard to explain. On the one hand, the need for merchant banking services has expanded with the growing sophistication of the stock market and the Indian industrial scene. And on the other is the fact that SBI CAPS and Canfina are perhaps the most visible success stories in the public sector banking world.

SBI CAPS offices both in Delhi and Calcutta are as swanky as any foreign bank and all its employees are in the executive cadre. This year SBI CAPS, in particular, has gone to great lengths to leave behind the negative traditions of public sector banking. It has even paid careful attention to the cosmetics of the game. SBI CAPS went out of its way to hire talent by recruiting four management trainees from the Indian Institutes of Management at Ahmedabad and Calcutta—and it paid considerably higher salaries to its new recruits than what is normally offered.

But it is not merely the cosmetics which have changed. The demand for sophisticated financial services has grown tremendously and both SBI CAPS and Canfina have grabbed every opportunity that has come their way. SBI CAPS, for instance, was the first to go in for fully bought out issues, where the company bought the entire stock of a promising new company. It has broken through in other areas such as offering public sector bonds in the secondary market. There are now plans for it to have a commercial paper issue in this country. Canfina has made its own innovative moves and is now planning to get into factoring another area where Indian banks have never trodden before. Says N.D. Prabhu, chairman, Canara Bank: "The scope for growth in banking is tremendous. Whether it is boom time for industry or depression, banking plays a vital role."

In other areas, the two subsidiaries are moving in parallel directions. Both SBI CAPS and Canfina are getting into the increasingly popular mutual funds business in a big way. SBI's mutual fund had 92,000 investors. The newly formed Canstock and Canshare have also performed creditably giving out hefty interim dividends. Says Prabhu: "The spurt of enterprising customer service can be traced directly to the emergence of the equity cult. Customers are now willing to take risks in investments and they are no longer satisfied with savings."

Both SBI CAPS and Canfina have big



plans for the future. SBI CAPS, for instance, is planning a second mutual fund. Besides this, it also has a whole lot of new funds up its sleeve. In the next few months it is likely to launch at least three or four new schemes involving anywhere between Rs 50 crores and Rs 100 crores to attract investors. Amongst these are a scheme for NRI bonds, and another for pensioners.

Besides this, Canfina and SBI CAPS are leaning heavily on the finance ministry for permission to become members of the stock exchange. This, however, has been blocked so far by the stock-broking lobby which fears that the move will cut into their own business.

Inevitably, the public sector bank subsidiaries have also gone heavily into the leasing business. Two years ago the law was changed to permit banks to get into the leasing business. Canfina, for instance, has sanctioned leases totalling Rs 41 crores.

Almost all banks are getting into the battle for a share of the growing credit card business. Amongst the front-runners are Bank of Baroda and Central Bank. But the early starters are discovering that all of a sudden everyone wants a piece of the action

All the businesses have undoubtedly reaped rich profits for the two banks. Canfina, started only in July 1987, has announced profits of Rs 3.20 crores after taxes only after 10 months. SBI CAPS earned a profit of Rs 2 crores in its first year and expects to double it this year.

But merchant banking is not the only high growth field of the banking world. Competition has spread to a host of other fields as well. Almost all the banks are getting into the pitched battle for a share of the growing credit card business. Amongst the front-runners in this game are the Bank of Baroda with its Bobcard, and the Central Bank of India which got into the credit card business. Central Bank now has 38,000 card-holders. The Bank of Baroda has 20,000 and plans to raise this over the next one year to 30,000.

The early starters are, however, discovering—as in the merchant banking business—that all of a sudden everyone wants a share of the action. Practically every nationalised bank has introduced a



An automatic teller machine: convenient servic

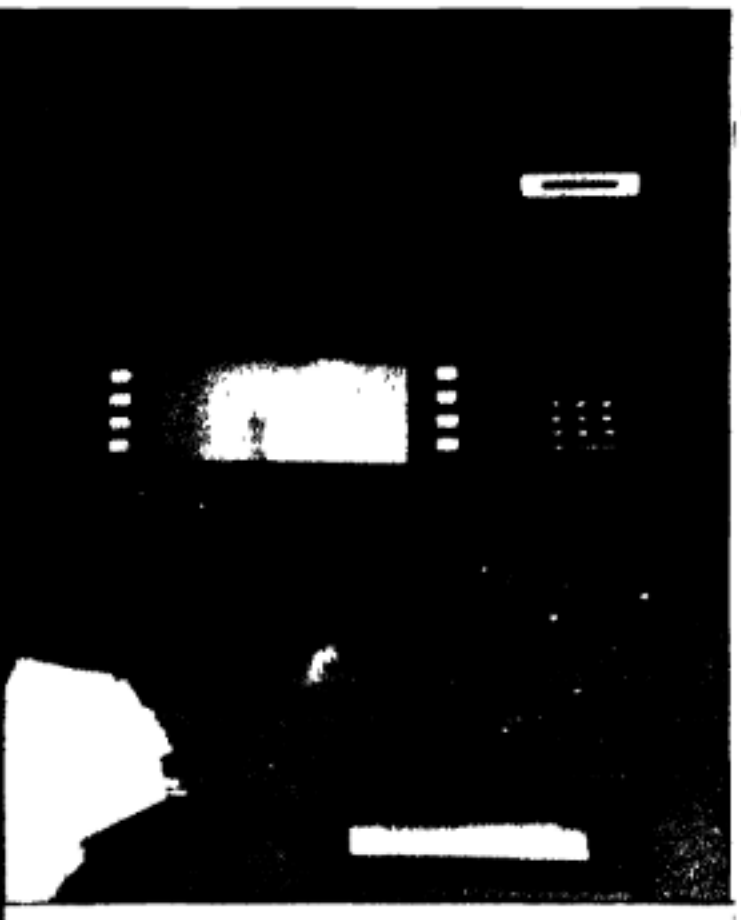
card of one kind or another. Six months ago Vijaya Bank tied up with Andhra Bank to launch its own card. Now Vijaya Bank is getting even more ambitious. It is planning to link up with the US company, Mastercard, and get into the business on its own. And the Vijaya Bank credit card will be unique in another way: it will be the only card which can be used to operate the ATMs which Vijaya Bank is installing.

Similar deals and tie-ups are being struck throughout the banking industry, as each bank looks for the quickest way to get into the credit card business. Bank of Baroda expects to tie-up with Visa by November. The United Bank of India, Vysya Bank and the Bank of India are planning to ride piggyback into the business by tying up with Central Bank.

In the midst of this frenzy to get into the credit card business, the Indian Banks Association is also trying to persuade the banks to team up and form a jointly owned company which will operate a single card for all the banks on the lines of the Mastercard system in the US. The move is, however, being opposed by the leaders of the business like Bank of Baroda which is unwilling to cede the headstart it already has in the business.

Despite all the hullaballoo, however, it still remains to be seen what profits can be picked up from the credit card business. Andhra Bank is said to have billings of around Rs 40 crores. But most banks insist they are not in it for the money alone. Says Goipuria: "It is more an ancillary service to the customers. We would like the card culture to grow."

Credit cards may be dismissed as a frill that does not go very far to help the customer. But there are other signs that the banks are trying to make life easier. Last year the international banks broke new ground by introducing ATMs in this



country for the first time. Though the ATMs have not become wildly popular yet, the nationalised banks are losing no time to get their own machines. Bank of India has stolen a march on its rivals by being the first to install an ATM in collaboration with Citibank at its Mahalaxmi branch in Bombay. Under the deal which has raised eyebrows in the banking world, Citibank will maintain the ATM. Bank of India is planning to have at least one more ATM in Bombay in the near future and may even install them in other metropolitan centres.

But while the Bank of India has beaten the others to the draw in this particular game, the others are not far behind. Indian Bank has installed an ATM at Madras despite protests from employees who demonstrated against the new machine during the inauguration ceremony. Vijaya Bank has leapt quickly into the ATM bandwagon and installed one at its Indira Nagar branch in Bangalore, and it is going ahead with plans to install more.

And though many bankers, including SBI chairman D.N. Ghosh, are sceptical about the efficacy of the ATM, it seems certain that more and more banks are getting ready to jump into the fray. Says R.C.Suneja, chairman, New Bank of India: "It is part of the drive to improve customer service."

But while fierce struggles are taking place over credit cards and even as the rush to introduce credit cards and ATMs picks up, other new avenues with vast potentials for growth are rapidly opening up. The banks are the only organisations with the clout to move into the finance business where there is an urgent need for their presence. Canara Bank will soon be setting up a subsidiary called Canfin Housing Ltd, which, as its name suggests, will offer housing loans in a big way. And while Canara Bank will operate mainly in its southern strongholds, the State Bank of India will soon start a housing finance subsidiary which will concentrate on the eastern sector. Vijaya Bank has also sensed the enormous potential for growth in this area and has also applied for permission to start a housing finance subsidiary. SBI is even considering another venture which will operate similarly to mortage banks in the West where a person deposits his money in the bank for a fixed period of time and then collects an equivalent amount as loan from the bank.

Even more ambitiously the SBI has quietly taken its first tentative steps into the hire purchase business. Only one month ago it first advertised its big buy scheme which will enable customers to buy almost any consumer durable from cars to stereo systems with monthly payback. The response to SBI's first advertisement was so heavy that the bank decided to stop advertising. Other banks are also formulating their own hire purchase schemes and more importantly the RBI now seems ready to give them the go-ahead.

The banks are also making a small beginning to improve customer service. The SBI is opening a special branch in Bombay which will cater specially for non-residents. The branch will be fully computerised and will have a hotline to foreign offices which will enable them to give quick advice about payments. Bank of Baroda is also going ahead with a pilot project to completely computerise its Churchgate branch in Bombay. And the SBI has recently set up its telecommunications network called the SBI Net which allows voice and data transmissions. Bombay and Delhi have already been connected and the system should help to speed up cheque clearances.

One reason why the banks have been forced to sit up and move more smartly is that the RBI has been scrutinising their activities very closely. RBI governor R.N. Malhotra has given strict orders to the banks to improve their internal housekeeping. He has put a brake on branch expansions which were the main criteria of growth in the 70s. And he makes a detailed quarterly review with each bank to see if they have met their targets.

Despite all this there is a Herculean task ahead. A hoarding in Bombay put up by the Indian Banks Association promises that all chequebooks will be issued within 30 minutes. But when the customer starts getting good service over the counter, that will be a banking revolution all by itself.

Paran Balakrishnan and Olga Tellis/ *Bombay* and Prakash Belawadi/*Bangalore*

ATTENTION MARRIED COUPLES!

UNHAPPY? LACK OF URGE & STAMINA? DIFFERENCE BREWING UP?

The only stimulant for male & female

TRY

CUTE (Syrup & Tablets)

AN AYURVEDIC RESEARCH PRODUCT

It contains essential nutrients and vitamins to boost up

MARRIED LIFE

* URGE * VITALITY * STAMINA

No Side-effects

A MUST FOR EVERY MARRIED COUPLE

Postal or Door Service available.

For free medical advice write to our ethical department.

FROM THE HOUSE OF :

HERBID (INDIA) PVT. LTD.

1/1, Kimber Street, Calcutta-700 017

Phones: 43-1451, 44-8904

Available at all leading retailers.



HI/E-2A/88

Financially sound Distributors/Stockists/ C & F Agents required all over the country

When rivals join hands

Arch rivals Dhirubhai Ambani and Nusli Wadia are for once on the same side of the fence in their battle against PTA and DMT users. Reliance and Bombay Dyeing have both jacked up PTA and DMT prices by Rs 8350 and Rs 9700 per tonne respectively in the last two months.



Nusli Wadia: profits first

For Wadia, it is a case of running with the hare and hunting with the hound. As a leading member of the Indian Cotton Mills Federation, he has been fighting the PFY and PSF manufacturers, mainly Reliance, for not passing on the budgetary reliefs. But now, as the largest producer of DMT—the raw material for making PFY and PSF—he has hiked its price.

The truth is that both Ambani and Wadia are victims of the high import duty on paraxylene, the raw material for making PTA and DMT.

Lining up for food processing

The big boys of Indian industry are starting a headlong rush to get into the food processing industry. Amongst those at the starting line are Escorts which has got a big order to export pineapple slices and Apollo



H.P. Nanda: new venture

Tyres which has also had big enquiries from abroad. The Singhanias and Mohan Meakins are also making big plans to get into the industry.

Bringing Wrigley's

If Pepsi comes, can Coke be far behind? And now that Coke is talking to Godrej, it is only a matter of time before Indian teenagers start chewing Wrigley's spearmint chewing gum made in this country. Wrigley's, the world's biggest chewing gum



Raghu Mody: a tie-up

maker, is at present getting ready to tie up with Calcutta-based industrialist Raghu Mody who controls the Rasoi group. For Mody, whose main product is cooking oil, the tie-up with Wrigley's will be a big leap into the 21st century and it will give Indian teenagers a fruity slice of American life.

Aristocrat bows to VIP

The cut-throat competition in the moulded luggage industry has taken its toll on one important combatant. Dilip Piramal of Blow Plast, makers of VIP luggage, has controlling interest over his strongest competitor, Universal Lug-



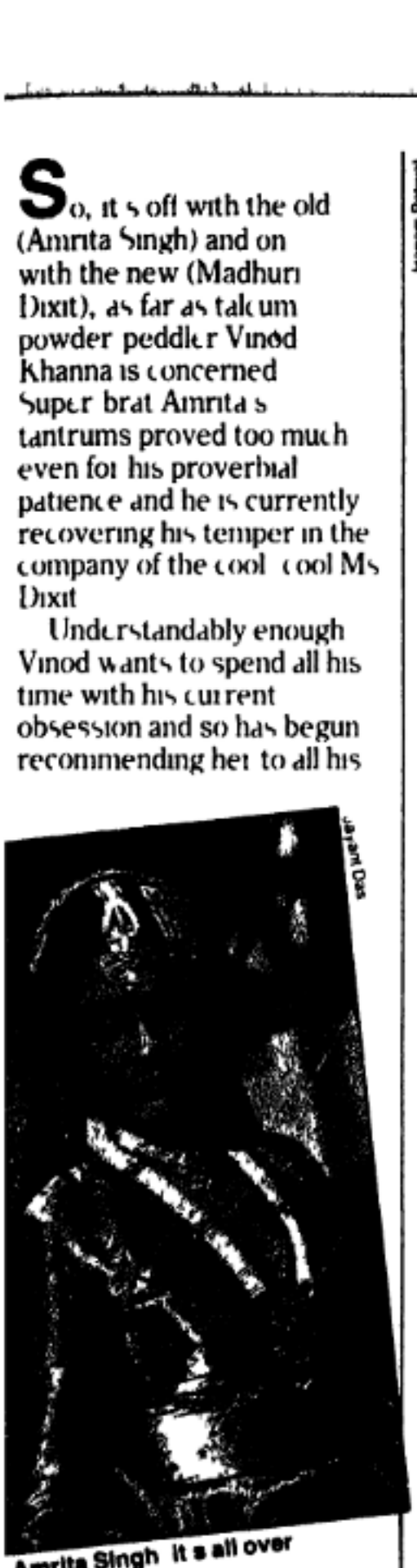
Dilip Piramal: new baggage

gage which makes the Aristocrat range.

Piramal and his associates have bought up 45 per cent of Universal's shareholding from its owners, the Engineers. With Aristocrat in his corporate baggage, Piramal is now the undisputed king of the moulded luggage industry, controlling 80 per cent of the market.

So, it s off with the old (Amrita Singh) and on with the new (Madhuri Dixit), as far as talcum powder peddler Vinod Khanna is concerned Super brat Amrita s tantrums proved too much even for his proverbial patience and he is currently recovering his temper in the company of the cool cool Ms Dixit

Understandably enough Vinod wants to spend all his time with his current obsession and so has begun recommending her to all his


Jayant Das

Amrita Singh it s all over

producers Perhaps that explains why Dimple has been eased out of *Mahasangram*, to make way for the desirable Dixit

How the mighty have fallen! Anupam Kher could not believe it when he lost a prize role to Raza Murad (now better known as the sexy Sonam s uncle) and who could blame him?

And who do you think was most happy about the loss? None other than adoring wife Kiran Not because, as you may fondly imagine, it s all over between her and her bald heart-throb, but because she is reduced to grasping enthusiastically at any straw which will give her


Hanoon Porwal

Vinod Khanna off with the old

some more time with her husband Now at least we will be able to go on holiday she is believed to have told a friend

Now now isn t that greedy Kiran? After all you've more than had your share of the fun considering the frequency with which you accompany dear husband on location

Amitabh Bachchan is back with a vengeance Taking into account the number of films he is signing

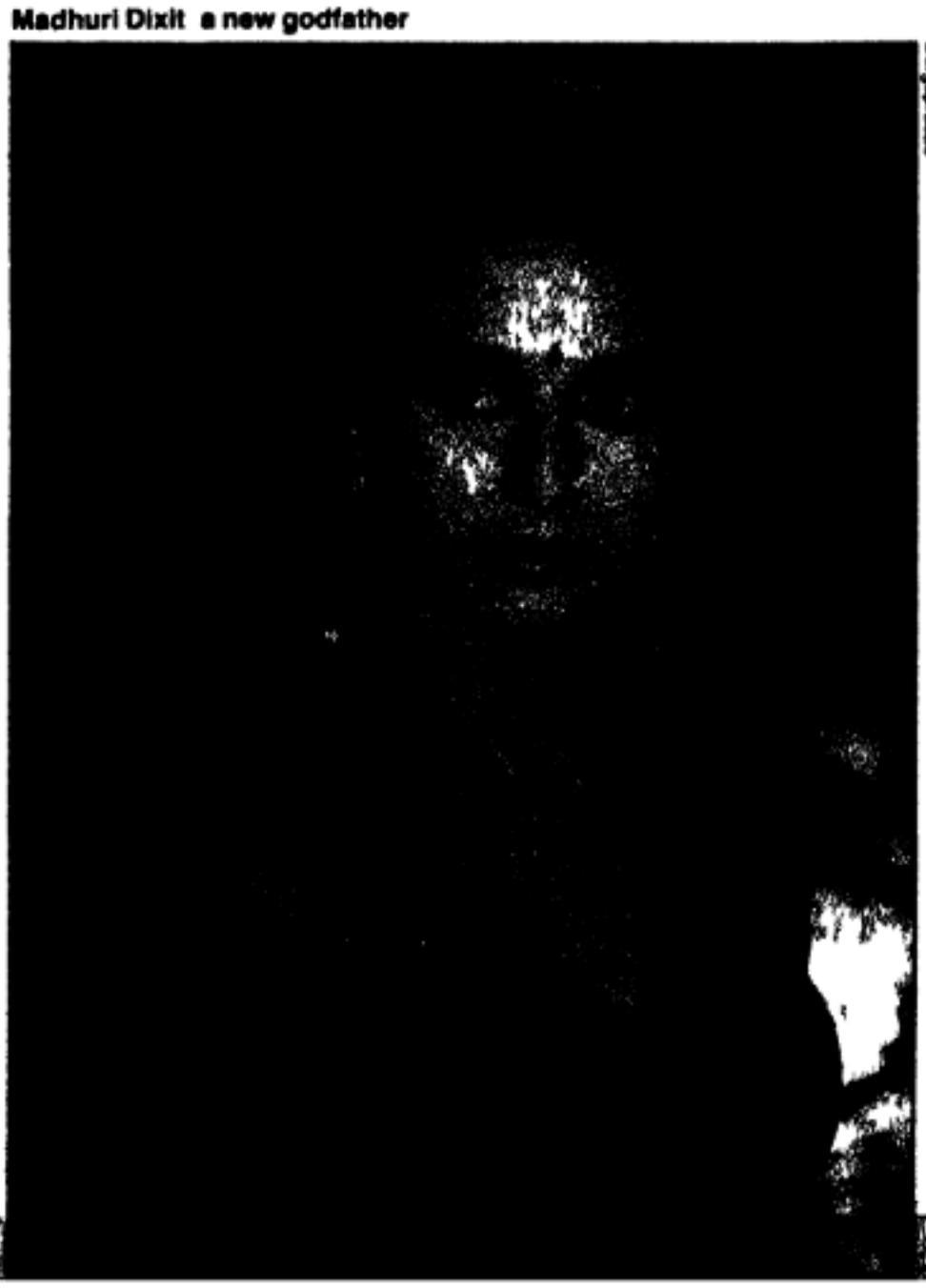

Raju Upadhyay

Pankaj Kapoor successful marketing strategy

these days, it won t be surprising if he is forced to break his cardinal rule of never shooting for more than one film each day The starters mega star Bachchan has lined up include Manmohan Desai s *Ganga Jamuna Saraswati* and *Toofan*, Ramesh Sippy s *Akayla* Prakash Mehra's *Jadugar*, Shashi Kapoor's *Ajooba* Tinnu Anand s *Mahaakal* and Yash Johar's *Agneepath*

Along with Amitabh his

Madhuri Dixit a new godfather


Durgaprasad

make up man will have to work overtime After all time moves on and the depredations of age spare none

How do you get two stars for the price of one? Simple All you have to do is sign the carrot-chomping Karamchand of the tele screen Pankaj Kapoor,


Raju Upadhyay

Supriya Pathak selling herself short?

along with his doe eyed wife Supriya Pathak Evidently, so desperate is the newly wed duo for work that they are offering discount rates to producers foolhardy enough to sign them on together

As a marketing strategy it seems to have worked out well, with the pair sitting pretty with a number of films in their joint kitty And who do you think are most happy with this turn of events — small-time producers, who are making the most of the couple's selling themselves short ■

HER ELFIN face will be gracing yet another cassette cover **Penaaz Masani**, the current rage on the *ghazal* circuit as much for her haunting voice as her fresh faced beauty, will be releasing a *ghazal geet* cassette titled *Tu Hi Mera Dil Tu Hi Meri Jaan*. The music is scored by the sometime hit film music director O P Nayyar (of Asha Bhosle fame). This is the first time the duo have got together to make music and preview reports suggest that Masani has yet another hit on her beautiful hands. But, as they say, the proof of the pudding lies in the eating.

◆

SHE INSISTS that all unwanted children be assigned to her loving care. But when it comes to handing over orphans to foster parents, Nobel Peace Prize winner **Mother Teresa** of the Missionaries of Charity has very set ideas. While inaugurating a seminar on adoption organised by the West Bengal branch of the Indian Council of Social Welfare, she disclosed that she only let people physically incapable of having children adopt any. Why this discrimination against those wilfully childless? She feels that couples who have "done something to avoid having children" will not be able to give the adopted waifs "sufficient love and affection", a commodity they need above all else.



Mother Teresa adopting rules

Ashoka Chakraborty



Penaaz Masani haunting melodies

Avi Ghose

IT WAS a very surprised drunk we had at a busy traffic intersection in Calcutta the other day. Speeding dangerously down the road in his powerful truck, he was stopped short by the long arm of the law. Certain even in his drunken stupor, that he could get away by proffering a rupee or two to the officious cop, he was sanguinely reaching for his wallet when he saw the West Bengal finance minister, **Ashim Dasgupta**, loom into view. For, as the hapless truck driver's luck would have it, the minister had resumed his drive to check traffic violation (begun with such fanfare some time ago, only to be temporarily abandoned).



Ashim Dasgupta drive on the road

Pranab Mukherjee

But now Dasgupta is back in full cry. On one memorable day he, along with Gautam Chakraborty, deputy commissioner of police (traffic), detected 30 cases of traffic violation in a mere three-hour span.

Calcutta traffic, one feels, is beyond redemption. But yes, the drive may refurbish the minister's image among the harried electorate of the city. It is, after all, the thought that counts.

◆

HE IS second to none, not even to Delhi whiz-kid Sameer Mehra, when it comes to solving the latest clock puzzle of Hungarian Erno Rubik. **Sanjeev Jain**, a 16-year-old intermediate student of Little Flower Junior College, Hyderabad, can perform the feat in 22 seconds flat—a good three seconds before Sameer, who had his moment of glory when he made the clock show 12 in a respectable 25 seconds.

Sanjeev, an ardent Rubik buff, says solving mathematical puzzles is his favourite pastime. And about the Rubik clock: "I have found the mathematical pattern and I am improving with every effort. I can solve it in 20 seconds sometimes."

So, let's clock him the next time he attempts to solve the puzzle. Who knows, he may break his own record!

AFTER SOAP opera *Buniyaad*, it's an emotional tear-jerker that telestars **Alok Nath** and **Anita Kanwar** are co-starring in. The film, Amit Khanna's *Shesh*, is chock-full of National School of Drama (NSD) alumni, who hope (fondly?) that it will be among the movies shortlisted for entry in the Cannes Film Festival, thanks mainly to Masterji's masterful performance.

Alok Nath in *Shesh* falls somewhere between Rajesh Khanna in *Safar* and Anupam Kher in *Saraansh*. He starts off as a young college kid who loves Bach, Beethoven and Anita Kanwar (not necessarily in that order),





Nitin Sonar

Alok Nath and Ankita Jhaveri in *Shesh*; (inset) Anita Kanwar: pathos all the way

SO HE'S finally in the news for reasons other than Priya Tendulkar. Noted Kannada film actor **Anant Nag** is among the three people appointed to the Karnataka Legislative Council by the state Governor, P. Venkatasubbaiah. And his nomination was evidently due to chief minister S.R. Bommai (apparently, an ardent Anant fan) rooting for him.

Legislatures in India being what they are (much desk-thumping and chucking

Anant Nag: a new role



H K Rajashekar

graduates to become a successful executive and husband to Kanwar (now a trainee copywriter) and father to two lovely kids.

But then, the bottom drops out of their world. It is discovered that Alok has cancer. From then on it is pathos all the way, with the couple displaying (on screen) a rare fortitude.

Bombay's answer to *Love Story* (of Ryan O'Neal, not Kumar Gaurav vintage, though)?

around of microphones). Nag should find his histrionics standing him in good stead.

THE APOSTLE of peace and non-violence and the key advocate of the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) seem an unlikely combination. Nonetheless, it was this unlikely combination which got together to make news recently.

President **Ronald Reagan**, on the last leg of his presidency of the United States, decided to make what can at best be described as a pro-India ges-



Ronald Reagan: pro-India gesture

ture. He affixed his signature on a Bill (earlier passed by both Houses of Congress) which proclaimed 2 October, 1988, a day of recognition of Mahatma Gandhi's contributions to human freedom through his message of non-violent civil resistance. So, Gandhi finally gets his due from the American head of state and government.

What intrigues one considerably is how the Mahatma will be honoured by the US government. Perhaps, next we'll hear that Nancy Reagan has started a campaign against not just drugs but all intoxicants, dedicated, appropriately enough, to our prophet of prohibition.

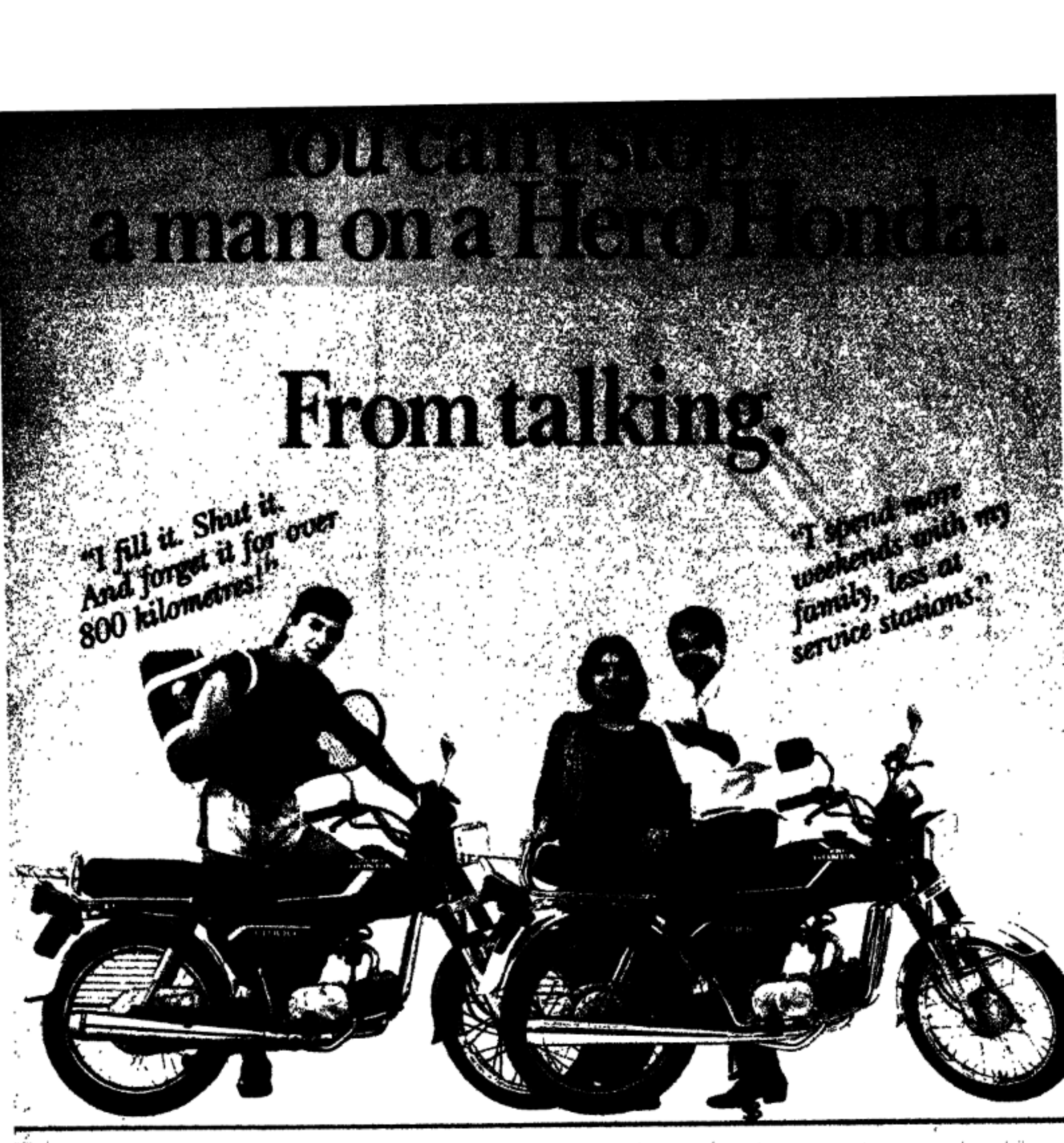
Compiled by Seema Goswami

You can't stop a man on a Hero Honda.

From talking.

"I fill it. Shut it. And forget it for over 800 kilometres!"

"I spend more weekends with my family, less at service stations."



When we launched the Hero Honda CD 100 in 1985, we knew it was a good thing. A fact confirmed by the owners.

Some are moved by the economy (80 km/litre*). Some by the easy maintenance. Others by the name of Honda. And all exult in the riding pleasure of India's only 4-stroke 100 cc bike. Honda engineering—Hero's choice.

In all, 200,000 happy owners, each with his own reason for feeling good. To all of you, we can say one thing. You've got a good thing going

* At 40 kmph/130 kg

All said and done...

You've got a Good thing Going!

HERO HONDA

The Third World on Four

Like its creator Tariq Ali, Bandung File, *the television programme on the Third World, bears a nonconformist stamp*

If it's your first visit to the *Bandung File* office, there's every chance that you'll walk right past it. There are no signboards, no helpful arrows and even the Block H mentioned in the address doesn't seem to exist.

It's only when you've skirted right round the building, narrowly avoided being run over by high-powered trucks and delivery vans that growl out from the rear, to come up against a wrought iron staircase which looks ominous, that you notice a minuscule sign saying *Bandung*.

Enter—and you're face to face with the man who made this little enclave possible. The familiar television personality is a tall, strapping man with lightly greying, dishevelled hair, who wears a blue track suit that's seen better days.

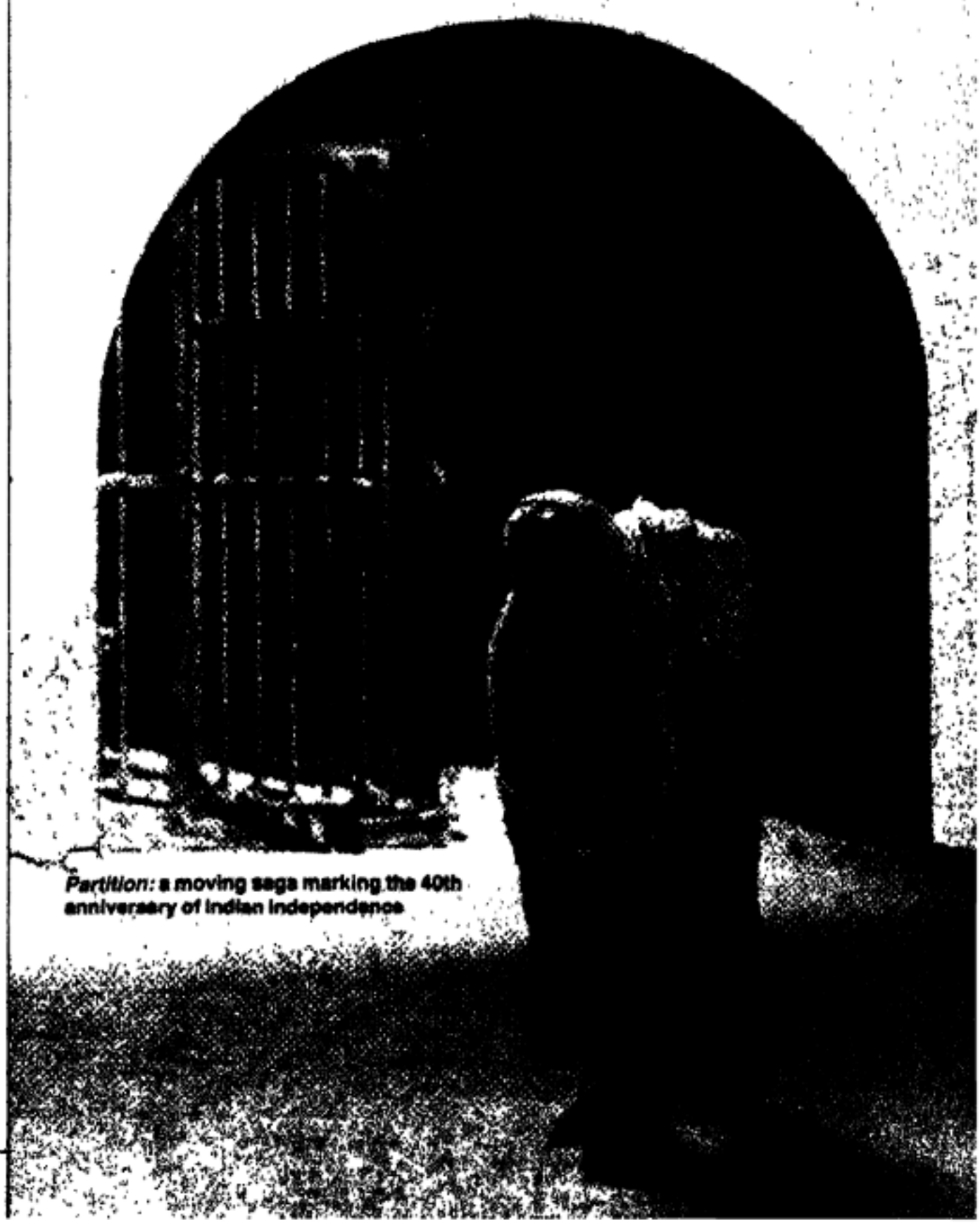
The message is clear. Tariq Ali is not the obvious stereotype of a television producer. And neither is his *Bandung File* a stereotypical programme. Quite the contrary, in fact emphatically so.

In the media world of the West, dominated as it is by rampant racism, blatant Eurocentricism and condescension if not hostility to the Third World bloc, *Bandung File* stands alone as the only programme committed to Afro-Caribbean and Asian causes.

Its one-hour slot at 9 pm on ITV's Channel Four is a welcome change from the BBC's relentless camera that loves to linger on floating corpses when they do a programme on the cleaning of the Ganga, or refers endlessly to India's chaotic traffic conditions whether they are interviewing the Prime Minister or doing a travelogue on the Grand Trunk Road.

As for Sudan and Bangladesh, listen to the BBC and you're convinced that they'd be sunk if it wasn't for British aid. Or worse still, watch the BBC's magazine programmes like *Network East* and all you see is Disco Bhangra with gaudily dressed presenters telling you about the top ten video hits, and clips of Anil Kapoor and Sridevi, doing their millionth rain dance sequence. And all this at the prime time of 2 pm on a Saturday afternoon with a repeat telecast at 11 pm, Sunday.

So *Bandung File* made its entry. As executive producer Tariq Ali said, "Because they did not take Black politics seriously. We wanted to produce a programme which anyone could watch, and was not a ghetto programme as such. Many of the things that we have done could be on any mainstream current affairs programme, if they had so desired. But they don't so desire because their priorities are different, which is why *Bandung* is pretty unique in the



***Partition:* a moving saga marking the 40th anniversary of Indian independence**

television networks here and also that of the United States."

While the initial idea of a current affairs programme specially related to the Third World was the brainchild of Farrukh Dhondy, multicultural commissioning editor for Channel Four, it was Tariq Ali and Darcus Howe who set up Bandung Productions in 1984.

Why the name *Bandung File*? Because it was at Bandung in Indonesia in 1955, that the first meeting of the newly-independent Asian and African states took place. The Bandung conference symbolised the end of colonialism and *Bandung File* was to symbolise the end of colonialism on the small screen.

With 20 one-hour programmes in a year, *Bandung* was to bring to television viewers in Britain reports on previously ignored fronts--bereaved women in India, angry youth in Haiti, oil workers in Trinidad, the heroin mafia in Pakistan and the views of prime ministers, presidents and exiles from the Third World. Rajiv Gandhi, Julius Nyerere, Robert Mugabe and Benazir Bhutto are among those who have been interviewed on *Bandung*.

Culturally, it was to transcend the video culture portrayed on the BBC. Writers like Nirmal Verma, R.K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Amitav Ghosh were profiled, sculptor Dhruva Mistry, painters Bhupen Khakhar and Sohail were featured and investigative reports ranged from dowry deaths in India to the hidden treasures in the India section of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

From 1986-87, *Bandung* began pioneering presentations of drama and films, and on its list for the 40th anniversary of India's independence was *Partition* –a film based on *Toba Tek Singh*, a story by Saadat Hasan Manto--directed by Ken McMullen and starring stalwarts like Roshan Seth and Saeed Jaffrey. "The mix is current affairs and culture," said Tariq Ali, "and by culture we mean high culture—no *nach, gana*."

On *Bandung's* list was an impressive line-up. Current affairs programmes include those relating to Black people settled in Britain, covering issues like immigration (*Too Many Questions*, 1985), housing (*Taking the Lid Off*, 1987- about Bengali families facing eviction in the Tower Hamlets area of East London), and education (*Baker's Bill*, 1987 –about the new education act which may allow Muslim children to be forced into fundamentalist schools.)

"We do programmes about the Black community which we feel needs to be done," said Ali. "But we don't sensationalise them because the aim is not to have shock or horror, but to explain the whys and wherefores of it."



The *Bandung* crew filming *Sati* : a sensitive issue

Bandung's latest series which carried a report on *sati* after the Roop Kanwar incident took the ITV team to Rajasthan to film the site of the tragedy with a hidden camera, and a report on the various *sati* shrines and the tremendous power that they had on the local people. It talked to Roop Kanwar's father-in-law and to those of the pro-*sati* lobby who were influencing politics in Rajasthan.

A sensitive issue, it was dealt with a little too tactfully by *Bandung*. Tariq Ali points out how the film would have been overtly anti-Indian and sensational if portrayed by the mainstream Western media. But in deliberately trying to avoid that pitfall, the film suffers by being not tough enough on *sati*.

The Indian high commission was pleased with the film, and there's a chance that it may be shown on Doordarshan. "We have shown the opposition to *sati* within India itself, which shows that India is a pluralistic society," said Ali, "and no one would be able to say the film is anti-Indian."

But though the Indian high commission seems pleased with Ali's projection of India--even Rajiv Gandhi came off quite well in an interview at the height of the Bofors scandal—the Pakistan government has been protesting to Channel Four about the special *Bandung File* programme on the aftermath of Zia's death.

In a one-hour special bulletin called *Pakistan After Zia*, Tariq Ali had not minced his words in decrying the dictator. Beginning with Zia saying, "Justice must be done" and hanging Bhutto, the film went on unrelentingly to expose all the horrors of Pakistan under Zia—public flogging, torture, suppression of democracy and the trauma of political



Bandung attempts to tackle the subcontinent for what it is worth. With a viewership of over a million, including an audience in the United States since CUNY-TV in New York started transmitting *Bandung File*, the going looks good for Tariq Ali and his team



Tariq Ali and Farrukh Dhondy practising for the Rajiv Gandhi interview: In anticipation

exiles.

"We are hated by all fundamentalists," said Tariq Ali, "and I'm proud of it. It means we're on the right track." Apart from fundamentalist Muslim opposition, *Bandung* also managed to enrage Hindu fundamentalists when it did a programme on the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

With its 35-member team including five researchers and four production staff, besides film editors and directors, *Bandung* is funded entirely by Channel Four and goes out on contract. Relations with Channel Four are good—thanks mainly to Farrukh Dhondy who is the commissioning editor. Dhondy and Ali have a long-standing relationship and the equation works perfectly. While Darcus Howe looks after the Afro-Caribbean side, Tariq Ali handles all the South Asian programmes himself.

Darcus Howe and Tariq Ali : proud of their brainchild



It's a ten-to-six day for all those at *Bandung* and the four editing rooms are constantly busy, specially as the telecast day draws close. "Setting up *Bandung* was an adventure," says Ali, "and I think what we have managed to do is to get the Third World taken seriously. Our programme has forced the BBC to make its programme on Asians and Afro-Caribbeans more serious. *Network East* now always has one discussion on an ethnic issue, and even *Ebony*—the Afro-Caribbean magazine programme—carried a programme on Steve Biko, which they would never have done in the past."

With a viewership of over a million, including an audience in the United States since CUNY-TV in New York started transmitting *Bandung File*, the going looks good for Tariq Ali and his team. "Fifty per cent of our viewership is ordinary people--no high-flying intellectuals, and that is where we have succeeded."

Bandung's success story doesn't seem to have passed through the usual trials and tribulations of any path-breaking television programme. "It's been a steady success," said Ali. No heartbreaking trials.

The BBC, of course, has always remained tight-lipped about *Bandung*--never commenting for or against any programme. Its attitude to India, says Ali, is obvious. "It is not a coincidence that Zia got a good press in this country," he said. BBC's *Panorama* programme which featured Rajiv Gandhi drew fierce objection from India, and the former high commissioner, P.C. Alexander, protested to the BBC about it. Later, a British minister visiting India apologised to the government for the film.

"BBC is a disaster as far as current affairs is concerned," said Ali. "And as far as India is concerned, they are ignorant. They read a few press clippings, have pre-conceived notions, and that's the way they project the country."

Whether it's ignorance or deliberate misrepresentation remains questionable, but inevitably every portrayal of the subcontinent has a strong negative element. Rajiv Gandhi's handling of Punjab has been likened to Pretoria's repressive regime, and Indian troops in Sri Lanka have been compared to the US invasion of Vietnam—to quote only a few examples from the BBC.

Bandung attempts to tackle the subcontinent for what it is worth. On Tariq's cards are programmes on the Indian Opposition (he himself thinks it's pretty pathetic, and that Jyoti Basu shouldn't go along with the right-wing forces) as well as other related programmes.

With his latest book on the Soviet Union to be published in November, there's every chance that the former activist who made waves in the Sixties and Seventies and was at the head of every street demonstration in the Wilson days, will take his camera and crew to meet the forces of V.P. Singh and Devi Lal this winter.

Meanwhile, the only television presenter who never wears a tie with his suit, looking conspicuous among others with their pin-stripped blues and greys, and who still retains his subcontinental accent despite his Cambridge years, remains a non-conformist. His programme remains a welcome break—its signature tune a familiar one for all serious television viewers.

Shrabani Basu/*London*



And now, a Bodoland

The Bodo agitation in Assam is gaining momentum

The cries are familiar and the demands strikingly similar. Only the characters have changed or rather reversed their roles. A few years back, the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) led by Prafulla Mahanta and Bhrigu Phukan had set the imagination of the Assamese on fire, forcing the Centre to sign the Assam accord. Today, the fire has not only spread among the Bodo tribals of Assam but is all set to engulf those who had started it. And, by a strange twist of fate, the protectors of Assamese ethnic and cultural identities suddenly find themselves forced to oppose the values they cherished and the philosophy they preached.

The Gorkhaland problem having been resolved, it is the demand for "Bodoland" that is now likely to occupy the centrestage of separatist politics in the east. Spearheaded by the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), the Bodo movement aims at creating a separate state for the plains tribals of Assam, of whom the Bodos comprise the largest group, along the north bank of the Brahmaputra. In the last two years, the ruling Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) government made just one attempt to bring the ABSU leaders to the negotiating table, but without any success. In any case, finding a solution to this problem is going to be far more difficult and complicated than the Gorkhaland one.

The demand itself is not new; it was raised some 20 years ago by the Plains Tribals Council of Assam (PTCA) but the movement made little impact as its leaders proved only too vulnerable to both the carrot and the stick, whichever was employed by successive Assam governments. The Bodos themselves never took the PTCA very seriously, while the ABSU dubs the party as "the greatest betrayers of the cause of the tribals".

The ABSU too was not particularly vociferous in its demand until the AGP came to power. Ironically, for the latter, the success of the anti-foreigners'movement led by its progenitor, AASU, had its fallout in other regions of the north-east. And the ABSU was among the first to take the cue. Its demand for a separate state stems from a fear that "the tribals have no security in Assam, because the Assamese feel that the state belongs only to them and want to assimilate all other ethnic groups". Much in the manner that the AASU used to reiterate that expelling "foreigners" from Assam was the only means of safeguarding Assamese identity and culture, the tribal agitation leaders maintain that a separate state is the only answer to their problems.

Not that the AGP was consciously anti-tribal, but two rather hasty and ill-conceived decisions it took shortly after assuming power proved to be its undoing and gave the necessary fillip to the Bodo agitation. One was the imposition of Assamese as a compulsory subject in non-Assamese schools in the state and the other was making the knowledge of Assamese a pre-condition for state government jobs. Although the government has since retracted both these measures, the seeds of suspicion were sowed in the minds of the tribals. And, suspicion gave way to belief when the AGP government sought to crush the agitation with the help of the police—just as the Congress(I) government of Hiteswar Saikia had sought to put down the AASU movement. But the move backfired and every case of administrative excess only strengthened the Bodo movement.

Today, the fire has not only spread among the Bodo tribals of Assam but is all set to engulf those who had started it. And, by a strange twist of fate, the protectors of Assamese ethnic and cultural identities suddenly find themselves forced to oppose the values they cherished

The ABSU alleges that over the last one year, 16 of its activists have been killed either by the police or by AGP supporters; their villages are routinely raided, and sympathisers and supporters picked up for interrogation. According to police sources, over 700 ABSU activists



Bodos demonstrating in New Delhi to press their demand for a separate state

have been arrested this year, of whom 80 were detained under the Anti-Terrorist Act.

Chinene Basumatary, a 28-year-old employee of the irrigation department living in Kasikotra village near Kokrajhar, said that he was arrested thrice on charges of looting and attempted murder, the last being in January this year. On that occasion he was detained in the police station at Sidli town for four days during which he was severely beaten up. There are many other examples of police excess. Hongla Basumatary for instance was bayoneted to death in the paddy fields outside his village in Kokrajhar district. Two others, Ullah and Parusuram Basumatary, survived their bayonet wounds. Recounted one of them, "A posse of policemen arrived at our village at 3 am on 25 September. Flashing searchlights they picked us out of the paddy fields, where we were sleeping, as none of us dares to sleep at home since the movement began. Then they attacked us." More recently, Jonai Basumatary, a peasant from Salbari village, who had gone to the Sidli police station merely to seek bail for three of his friends, was allegedly shot dead inside a police van which was carrying all four of them to another police outpost.

The police version is that their van was attacked by some ABSU activists who fired on them and accidentally killed Jonai. As "proof", they point out that they have in their possession crude weapons that they had impounded after repulsing the attack. ABSU president Upendra Nath Brahma alleged that "the police deliberately use such crude country-made weapons in such instances so that they can frame us".

The AGP government has resorted to other ploys as well, albeit unsuccessfully, to contain the agitation. It has propped up the PTCA as a counter force (the PTCA is believed to have been the unofficial ally of the AGP in the last Assembly elections). Ironically enough, after lying low for several years, the PTCA has suddenly revived its demand for a Union Territory with considerable vigour. It has drawn up an elaborate programme beginning with a mass rally in Dispur on 24 October. Asked Brahma: "Why is the state government adopting double standards? The PTCA has been granted permission to hold a rally while our requests have always been turned down on the ground that we will create disturbances."

The role of the Congress(I) is still suspect though it would be naive to suggest that it has no stake in the present situation. While the party is yet to make its stand public, it is widely believed that the Congress(I) is tacitly supporting the movement. Chintamani Panigrahi, the former minister of state for home, had invited Upendra Brahma to Delhi last April for negotiations, and the ABSU president, while denying that he has links with the Congress(I), nonetheless admits, "The Centre has got a channel to keep in close touch with us." In fact there is speculation within the government that the Centre might draw up a Darjeeling-like pact with the ABSU before the next elections in an effort to isolate the AGP.

A recent significant development is the ABSU joining hands with the All Cachar and Karimganj Students' Association (ACKSA), a Barak Valley-based outfit which represents the interests of the Bengali minorities ostensibly "to fight Assamese chauvinism". The ACKSA is widely believed to be backed by the Congress(I) which probably hopes to build bridges with the ABSU through this outfit. Such a belief gains credence from the fact that while the ABSU has always clashed with the PTCA supporters and has even attacked and killed some of them, it has always avoided antagonising the Congress(I).

Prafulla Mahanta (left) and Upendra Brahma: at daggers drawn



Sunday Challenge

But a section of hardcore ABSU activists have expressed their resentment over the ABSU-ACKSA relationship because of the age-old enmity between the Bodos and the Bengali minorities, who over the years were encouraged by various political parties to encroach on tribal land.

The dissension within the ABSU over this issue is among the many problems confronting Brahma. His dilemma lies in the fact that Bengalis constitute a sizeable chunk of the population of Kokrajhar district which is bordered by the Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts of West Bengal. Bengalis control most of the trade and commerce of this area, while the immigrants from Bangladesh constitute its working class. This section has been traditionally loyal to the Congress(I), but has itself not thrown up any important political leader. Therefore, Brahma is said to be banking on the ACKSA to bring the Bengalis into the fold of the movement as well as assure them that their interests would be safeguarded in the proposed tribal state.

The other important ethnic group of this region, the Koch Rajbanshis, are also apprehensive about their status in the tribal state. A senior bureaucrat in Kokrajhar said that the Santhal Adivasis, who comprise 20 per cent of the district's population, have already warned the administration that "a bloody riot will break out if autonomy is given to the tribals".

It is reservations of this kind expressed by small ethnic groups that reflect the basic character of the ABSU's movement: sectarian, which does not envision an order beyond one in which the tribals would enjoy complete autonomy and safety with vague notions of welfare, equality and justice untouched by any progressive ideology. Indeed, certain demands of the ABSU like the "detection and deportation of foreigners" have echoes of the AASU movement and have given enough reasons to rattle the minorities of the region. The AGP's stand on the issue remains intractable. Chief minister Mahanta has sworn that "we will shed our last drop of blood to prevent any further fragmentation of Assam."

Radhika Ramaseshan/*Guwahati*

Trial and error?

The 1988 Amnesty Report reveals a gross violation of human rights standards in India with the detention and abuse of political prisoners and civilians

Several thousand political detainees were held without charge or trial under special "anti-terrorist" laws and preventive detention legislation, which lacked basic legal safeguards required by international human rights standards. Hundreds had been held without trial for more than three years, among them over 350 Sikhs detained in Jodhpur jail since June 1984. Some were prisoners of conscience. There were reports of torture or ill-treatment of prisoners from most states and dozens of deaths in custody. Dozens of people were also sentenced to death, and there were an unknown number of executions. Extra judicial executions by police and army were reported from various areas including Punjab, Manipur and Uttar Pradesh.

Political violence was widespread, particularly in Punjab. The central government dismissed the state government and imposed direct rule from Delhi in May. Officials reported that 1,216 police officers and unarmed civilians had been killed in Punjab, many by members of armed Sikh groups advocating an independent Sikh state. There was also violent opposition in West Bengal, where the Gurkha National Liberation Front continued its campaign for a separate state within the Indian union, and in Andhra Pradesh where over 20 police officers were killed and eight officials kidnapped by Naxalite (Maoist revolutionary) groups.

The government furtherstrengthened special and preventive detention laws, which already lacked important legal safeguards. The National Security Act (NSA), which permits the authorities to detain people without charge or trial for security reasons, was amended in August to allow detainees in Punjab to he held for six months before review by an Advisory Board. Previously, as in the rest of India, the period was seven weeks. Under the NSA, detainees in Punjab may be held for two years compared to one year elsewhere. In amending the NSA, the government reintroduced provisions which had earlier been declared unconstitutional by the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Many people were detained under the NSA throughout India but it was impossible to estimate their number. Some, including three Sikkimese prisoners of conscience released in January, were held for the maximum period. Leaders of the Jharkhand movement seeking a separate state for the largely tribal population living in southern Bihar and neighbouring states, and political and religious leaders in Punjab, including leaders of Sikh Akali Dal party, were also detained under the NSA.

Some 366 Sikhs originally detained under the NSA in 1984 remained in custody despite repeated government assurances that their cases would be reviewed. Proceedings against them had not progressed since 1985.

The government also strengthened the provisions of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA). It created special courts whose proceedings would be conducted entirely *in camera*. A confession to a senior police officer could be admitted as evidence if the police had "reason to believe" that it was "made voluntarily", even though the Indian Evidence Act has long required confessions to be recorded before a magistrate as a safeguard aginst abuse. The burden of proof was shifted onto the accused. Bail was also made more difficult to obtain: Sikhs were particularly unlikely to be released on bail. However, in December the Supreme Court asserted that all citizens should receive equal consideration. Several of the Act's provisions, notably those changing the presumption of innocence and ensuring trial *in camera*, could contravene international human rights standards. The broad definition of "disruptive activities" in the Act could permit imprisonment for expressing peaceful political views.

150 Scheduled Caste families from Raunia in Bihar alleged that they had been tortured by the police. Excrement had been forced into their mouths and hot water poured over them. Tribal people in the Thane and Raigad districts said that they had been beaten and tortured with electric shocks by local police in collusion with landlords



Rajesh Kumar

In August the minister of state for home affairs said that special courts had been established under the TADA in 12 states and Union Territories—including Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Chandigarh—but that further changes were needed because of a large number of acquittals. In Punjab, he said, only six people out of 1,927 arrested under the Act had been convicted.

In Gujarat, a state in which no significant acts of political violence were reported, the number charged under the TADA was reportedly 2,230 by the end of October, of whom 1,800 were on bail. Press reports indicated that the TADA had been used in Gujarat to detain non-violent opponents of the authorities, including students who protested against a rise in milk prices, workers opposed to the contract labour system and farmers who campaigned for a reduction in electricity charges. Six trade unionists who led a pay strike by textile workers were held under the TADA in Ahmedabad. In November the state government announced that all cases would be reviewed.

Torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners was reportedly widespread



Victims of torture: innocent sufferers

and particularly common in Punjab. In Andhra Pradesh, people suspected of sympathising with Naxalite groups were reportedly tortured by local police, and in Tamil Nadu suspected members of the left-wing Indian People's Front were said to have been tortured in village police stations. In some cases, it appeared that local officials condoned torture or sought to obstruct investigations of torture allegations.

Members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, who are accorded special protection unde. the Constitution, were frequently reported to have been tortured or ill-treated For example, nine tribal leaders who were arrested in August after demonstrating for better conditions were alleged to have been tortured by police in Rajasthan. They were released after a petition to the Supreme Court. Earlier, in April, 150 scheduled caste families from Raunia in Bihar alleged in a petition to the Supreme Court that they had been tortured by police. They said that excrement had been forced into their mouths and hot water poured over them. In Maharashtra, tribal people in the Thane and Raigad districts, who had been deprived of their traditional lands, alleged that they had been beaten and tortured with electric shocks by local police acting in collusion with landlords.

Dozens of people throughout India were reported to have died in custody as a result of torture. Most were criminal suspects but in Andhra Pradesh, Punjab and Assam the victims included people who had been politically active. In several cases, official investigations found police officers responsible for torturing suspects to death, and few were prosecuted, notably in West Bengal, New Delhi, Rajasthan and Orissa. However, criminal prosecutions were few, and no police officers were known to have been convicted of causing deaths in custody. Police officers accused of torture were mostly transferred or said to be the subject of "departmental action".

There were new reports of extra judicial executions by police, para military forces and armed forces personnel. In Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, dozens of people were alleged to have been killed by the predominantly Hindu Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) in May after communal violence between Hindus and Muslims. According to eye-witnesses, the PAC arrested several hundred Muslim men on 22 May and drove them to the Upper Ganga canal, near Muradnagar, where they shot several dozens and threw their bodies into the water. The government denied the allegations but at least 32 of those arrested "disappeared". Next day, members of the PAC were alleged to have gone on a rampage in the village of Maliana, near Meerut, shooting unarmed men, women and children indiscriminately. Some 80 bodies were later found. Five others were alleged to have died in custody as a result of beatings. The state government subsequently denied that any unarmed civilians had been killed by the PAC but appointed a committee of investigation. Its findings had not been disclosed by the end of 1987. The findings of a judicial inquiry into what occurred at Maliana village were also not known by the end of the year.

In Bihar, police were said to have deliberately killed landless labourers and marginal farmers, including members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, in the context of land disputes. In some cases, there was evidence suggesting cooperation between landowners, state politicians and police, resulting in deliberate killings of villagers by police or private armies. In a few cases, such as the killing in September of seven members of the scheduled castes in Kirichatra village, Jehanabad district, police were suspended from duty. However, the alleged killers later had all charges against them withdrawn.

A number of political activists were killed in what the police described as "encounters", particularly in states where armed opposition groups were active and where police were given shoot-to-kill powers.

Dozens of people were sentenced to death, most for murder, and an unknown number executed. In April the Supreme Court ruled that those convicted in connection with the murder of young brides should be sentenced to death. In October the death penalty was introduced in Rajasthan for abetting *sati* and in December the Indian Parliament extended this throughout India.

Following reports of killings by the PAC in Meerut, Amnesty International called for a full and impartial inquiry, whose findings should be made public. However, the government did not respond and in November Amnesty International published a report on the killings. In October Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi criticised Amnesty International's work, saying that he doubted its credibility and seriousness, and in December stated in a television interview that Amnesty International would not be permitted access to the Punjab to investigate alleged human rights abuses.

Amnesty International submitted details of 32 "disappearances" which occurred in May at Meerut to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

Amnesty International appealed in January to the Indian authorities to ensure that tribal villagers seeking refuge in India should not be returned to Bangladesh against their will if it appeared that they would be at risk of torture, execution or imprisonment as prisoners of conscience. ■

Brahmins It is pointed out that there is only one Bhumihar DM and not a single Rajput as district magistrate But Jha's critics are a shade unfair for among the Brahmin officers there are a few from neighbouring states However in a caste conscious state like Bihar who is willing to see or talk reason? Commented Ajit Sarkar a CPI MLA *Jati bad* (casteism) has gone to extremes In most of the 39 districts of Bihar the CM depends on one caste to administer 'One day in the near future Sarkar warned there will be bloodshed because of this funny style of administration

Apart from the politicians the bureaucracy have other reasons to be upset Hardworking and honest civil servants had heaved a sigh of relief when Bhagwat Jha Azad was chosen to rule Bihar For Jha was believed to be a stickler for discipline But the upbeat spirit lasted only for a short while since all that the new chief minister did was change all that his predecessor had done He promoted his chosen officers breaking all norms In earlier regimes for example transfers took place twice a year Now it's a weekly affair" lamented a senior bureaucrat 'Junior officers have been placed in important posts This has eroded the CM's credibility in the eyes of the people," he added Take the example of Arun Jha, the DM of Bhagalpur Though there are a number of IAS officers senior to Jha in the state none of them have been given responsibility of a district yet

All this spells doom for the party, said Congressman S P Roy It is an accepted fact that a party which cannot keep its non gazetted employees teachers engineers and doctors in line will find itself in great difficulty, come election time The Bihar government has been plagued by the demands of doctors and teachers Till the time of writing the six lakh non-gazetted employees have yet to get back to work after more than 50 days of strike, despite warnings of dire consequences by the government And recently the striking employees passed a resolution to vote against the Congress(I) in the coming elections It was a veiled warning to the chief minister and his party, for, these non-gazetted employees are requisitioned for election duty and a word or two from them in rural polling booths could mean a world of difference to the ruling party

In such a situation, it is no wonder that the bureaucracy hardly pays heed to the CM's orders Sometime ago, the chief minister received an adverse vigi-

"All members are free to air their grievances"

But it should be done through a proper channel, says Bihar CM Bhagwat Jha Azad

SUNDAY: One hears a lot about the dissidents in the Bihar Congress(I). What do you think is the real reason for the dissidence?

Bhagwat Jha Azad: I too want to know the cause for the dissidence. I assert that the Congress is a democratic party and there is enough freedom for the members of the party to air their grievances on different subjects. But all this should be done through the party forum and the leader Whatever differences (the partymen have with me), they should be put down in a memorandum to the leader. The moment this golden rule is followed, we can iron out our differences.



Arch-enemies Jha and Jagannath Mishra

I expect my colleagues to come to me and discuss their problems. So, I for one, cannot tell you what the differences are. All I am told—and I have often heard this—is that I have an abrasive manner and my style of functioning is different.

Why don't they like your style of functioning?

I concede that my style of functioning is different because this style does not recognise any caste in the state—whether Brahmins, Bhumihars, Rajputs, etc. My style recognises only two castes: the good and the bad. And I will not hesitate to use coercive methods—many like to call it that—against those who have plenty. I call upon them to part with some of their property and wealth and give to the poor because a hungry man knows no law and follows no law

In the last few months I have taken strong action against the cooperative mafia, the Dhanbad coal mafia, the land-encroaching mafia and the water mafia. So, if this style of functioning does not suit some persons in the state, well, I am sorry I can't help it I will be even more harsh in the coming days

One of the complaints the MLAs have made concerns a speech you delivered in Hazaribagh. It is reported that you called the MLAs cheats and thieves?

I strongly deny it. I never said any such thing. Those who have told you so are political novices

But if the party is not united, what are the chances of Congress winning the elections? Are you optimistic?

Optimistic! I shall win hands down. I am not bragging What I have done in the last seven months has given me the confidence. In spite of interested persons belittling the achievements of the government, the Congress will win hands down

There are allegations that you have been grooming your son, Kirti Azad. Also, he has been known to dabble in Bihar politics. Is it true?

No, I am not grooming him up to be a politician. But tell me, why can't a politician's son become a politician too. My son is not a grass-cutter He is educated and is an international cricketer. I have only told him to look after the people of Bhagalpur who have been very good to his father. The constituency has been electing me from 1962. Since I do not have much time nowadays, I have asked Kirti to help me out.

lance report about the director of agriculture, D.N. Ram. Accordingly, he ordered the case to move swiftly—the director was retiring in a fortnight—and sent the relevant files to the chief secretary. Strange are the ways of the secretariat for the files made their way to D.N. Ram who sat over them till the day he retired. Ram is today a free man while the government has been left holding the files.

It is not only the inept handling of the corrupt that has raised eyebrows. Jha, on his part, has not been able to get rid of a coterie of Congressmen, mostly ministers, with questionable pasts. There is, perhaps, a reason for this. When he was asked to take over in Patna, Jha could not align himself with his predecessor Bindeswari Dubey's supporters nor could he be close to the Bihar strongman Dr Jagannath Mishra or his followers. So, he was left to form his own group. Jha's ministers—or at least those who hover around him—have not been known to be either smart politicians or even good administrators.

Neither is the chief minister believed to be above board in his dealings. For a man who promised to root out corruption, Jha has been unable to shake himself free from the clutches of his brother-in-law, Amarender Jha, popularly known as Bachcha Babu. Today, it is Bachcha Babu and the CM's cricketer-son, Kirti Azad, whom anyone wishing to get any work done must meet. Though the chief minister denies that his family members are involved in the governance of the state it is well-known how much clout the two possess.

All the chief minister's faults would have been forgotten had he kept his tongue in check. In a recent speech he delivered at Hazaribagh, Jha was only being blunt when he said that there were many blind men in the Congress(I) because they had been unable to perceive the threat emerging from within the party ranks. This coupled with the oblique barb aimed at Jagannath Mishra ("I will not stoop before those who have constructed palatial mansions by selling sand from the Kosi river") upset many MLAs who, in turn, went out of their way to discredit the chief minister and tarnish his image. They got a stick to beat the chief minister with when a CPI MLA, Ramendra Kumar, alleged in the Assembly that Bhagwat Jha Azad and his family possessed nine houses in Delhi alone. Bhagwat Jha Azad strangely refused to reply to the allegations in the House (later independent inquiries, however, revealed the houses were not in the CM's name).

More than his style of functioning, what has turned a majority of Congress MLAs into dissidents is the fact that Azad has hit them where it hurts most: the money-spinning cooperatives. He superseded three apex bodies of cooperatives which together had an annual turnover of several hundred crores and even instituted criminal cases against the office-bearers for misusing funds. The cooperative lobbies have been fostered by past CMs of Bihar because cooperative employees, who have excellent rapport with farmers, make good election managers.

The war between the ministerialists and the dissidents is hotting up. "So far," said Dr S.M. Issa, a Congress MLA, "we have gone about in a most disciplined way. We waited for six months to see how this chief minister functioned but the law and order situation has been worsening and there is a lack of relief and rehabilitation. To add to that the CM has been making irresponsible statements. A change for the better should be brought about by the high command."

Will Dr Issa's and the dissidents' pleas be heeded to by New Delhi? For the moment, Bhagwat Jha Azad continues to rule and is even optimistic about the chances of the Congress(I) in the next elections. "I am not bragging," he said, "when I say I will win hands down." He went on to detail what his government had done. And all of it, he said, had been carried out on the Prime Minister's orders. Said the chief minister: "The Prime Minister has given me a target for food production: 130 lakh tonnes this year and 140 lakh tonnes for the next year." To achieve this target, the farmers had to get fertilisers, seeds and loans. That is why "I have superseded the cooperatives," said the chief minister. "Today, the fertiliser that was being sold at Rs 123 a bag is being sold at Rs 107 a bag. The message of the new government," he declared, "has reached every house in Bihar."

What is the message, ask the dissidents. Sanjeev Kumar 'Tony', a Congress MLA, laughed away the CM's pompous boasts, saying: "He is insane." Tony might have been too harsh but in private conversation most Congressmen are of the view that Bhagwat Jha Azad has done precious little. Yes, three cooperative institutions were superseded. Why, question some of the dissidents, could not the Bihar State Housing Cooperative Federation be taken over too. Is it because the CM has a vested interest in it? In tackling the Dhanbad coal mafia, the state government has not moved a finger. Though the chief minister takes credit for moving ahead with the cases against the mafia leaders, what the district administration has been doing is merely following up the cases which had been instituted long ago—much before Jha came to Patna. As for the law and order situation, Jha's critics gleefully point out how a youth, fed up with the chief minister's assurances to the Harijans of Jehanabad district that no one would touch them again, picked up enough courage to blacken the CM's face in public.

The chief minister, however, remains unfazed. A poet and a dreamer, he believes he was sent to Bihar because he alone could "deliver the goods". Quoting a couplet from his recently-composed epic on life and death, the chief minister said that since he was the "maker of his own destiny, he would neither become anyone's slave nor accept slavery". Brave words, but will the Congress(I) high command be impressed?



The CM's face is blackened in public: vain promises

Tirthankar Ghosh/*Patna*

The day after...

The banning of The Satanic Verses *draws mixed reactions*

Opinions, obfuscations, distortions and demagoguery triggered by the whiff of opportunity are the stuff of any controversy in today's 'secular' India. The complex and bizarre battle over the banning of Salman Rushdie's book is no exception.

Public figures have made strong statements for and against, and some of them have come out equally strongly saying neither. Of the statements given below, some are already on record and some are from telephone interviews conducted by SUNDAY. *But for every definite statement given here, there were at least two non-committal ones. Many of the people questioned (musicians, sportsmen, filmstars, politicians, intellectuals) not only refrained from comment but also made strong requests that their refusal to comment not be mentioned. "Leave me out of this," was a recurrent response*

SATYADEV DUBEY

Drama critic

□ I've been very confused about this, you see...it's such a confused situation ...There's always been a censorship of theatre...a full bench of the Supreme Court has decided that there can be 'a reasonable restriction of freedom'...magazines always need something to write about...there has never been such a hullabaloo about an Indian writer.

AMJAD ALI KHAN

Musician

□ I would like to keep my thoughts under wraps for some time. I have, in the last few years, made my thoughts too public. So, on this issue, I would like to refrain from any comment.

FOR

RAFIQ ZAKARIA

Islamic scholar and well-known Congressman
In an open letter to Salman Rushdie

□ You say in your letter to Mr Gandhi that you "strongly deny" that your book is a direct attack on Islam"...I have read your book. Like you, I have also been a student of Islam. Your statements, therefore, surprise me. I feel you are going back on your own objective to get the ban lifted. There are many coincidences. You, unlike most authors, have not mentioned that the characters in your novels do not bear any resemblence to persons living or dead. Can you, with your hand on your heart, say that they really don't resemble the characters and situations in the life of the Prophet of Islam and if they do, what should the authorities do to control a likely occurrence which you, as well as I, know may disturb the tranquillity of the land. ...I ask you in the same manner as you have asked Mr Gandhi, our Prime Minister, whether you consider this ban as really uncalled for, in view of the danger that many persons in public life feel it poses to communal harmony and peace. Is democracy a licence to do or undo anything by anyone or every one?

KHURSHID ALAM KHAN

Congress(I) MP

□ I have read the book from cover to cover and I find it disgusting, offensive and prurient in places. It is bound to hurt the religious sentiments of many people in India. I am for the ban, otherwise the book could create religious chaos.

IMAM BUKHARI

Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid

□ Rushdie is a *shaitan*. I have not read the book but I have seen the reviews. If Rushdie has criticised our Prophet he is the biggest *shaitan* of them all. There are more knowledgeable people around who have read the book, and they pushed for a ban. I support them entirely.

SYED SHAHABUDDIN

Janata Party leader

□ The novel, *The Satanic Verses* is cheap gimmickry—Rushdie's primary intention was to create a money-spinner. He was actuated by indecency and greed. The book is an exercise in the vilification of the holy Prophet, an intentional attack on Islam as a religion, an act of blasphemy and an offense to the religious feelings of any believing Muslim...Literary freedom cannot be permitted to degenerate into abusive licence.

DR ZAKI BADAWI

Principal of the London based Muslim College and chairman of the Imams and Mosques councils

□ I would compare the novel with the *"Last Temptation of Christ"*. We are all very unhappy about the book. It is an outrageous attack, he mocks our religion in many respects.

YUSUF ISLAM (CAT STEVENS)

Rock star

□ I would like to add my voice to the demand that this vile and wicked book be withdrawn from civilisation immediately ...What about the two million Muslims in U.K. and one billion worldwide who will be shocked and mortified to read of the scandalous way in which the divinely inspired messenger of god, the Prophet Mohammad, and his noble family and companies have been treated in Rushdie's book?

IQBAL MASUD

Film critic

□ Unlike in Europe, where Salman is safely making money out of his books, in India, religion is a part of life. In a totally volatile situation like the one in our country, any publication hurting the sentiments of a religion can lead to law and order problem. A book like Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* has to be banned.

DR MOHAMMAD MANAZIR AHSAN

Leader of the Leicester Islamic Foundation. First to draw the attention of the Muslims in Britain to the book:

□ When I read Rushdie's novel, I found that he has left nobody untouched. I thought I had to inform others and did so.



Raghubir Singh

AGAINST

SATYAJIT RAY

Filmmaker

□ I'm against banning books. I have not read Rushdie's novel, so I can't comment on it. But I am against banning books. That's all.

MRINAL SEN

Filmmaker

□ There was a similar situation when the government banned Louis Malle's film on Calcutta because poverty was shown in it. I'm pretty certain the government didn't see the film...these things are for political means

GIRISH KARNAD

Stage and film personality

□ The Indian government's decision to ban Salman Rushdie's book is nothing short of scandalous. It is terrifying that the government could act like this. If we are a free and open society, then everybody has a right to express his or her views through the medium of art, literature journalism or in other ways. In the case of Rushdie, what is of added significance that he is criticising his own heritage: it's not that a non-Muslim has written this novel. If even this is not acceptable then I must say we have reached the limit.

ROMILA THAPAR

Historian

□ I haven't yet read the book, so I wouldn't be able to comment on the advisability of banning it. But let me be clear about one thing in principle, I am totally against the banning of books, however mischievous they may be.

NIKHIL CHAKRAVARTTY

Editor, Mainstream

□ I have read the book and I must say that it is well written and imaginative, perhaps a little too imaginative at times. I found no portions which were offensive and derogatory to the Prophet. In fact, Shahabuddin had to confess that he had lobbied for a ban without reading the book. This, in our day and age, is a prime example of cavalier irresponsibility.

HANIF KUREISHI

London-based playwright

□ I find the ban ridiculous and narrow-minded. What a shallow society those who have banned the book must want, if they're not prepared to accept the self-examination that literature is. I call on Rajiv to lift this absurd ban immediately, before India becomes the laughing stock of the democratic world.

TARIQ ALI

London-based writer, left-wing intellectual and television producer

□ The Indian Government seems to think that secularism means being *nice* to all religions. In fact secularism means rationalism and modernism, and, unless something violates that code it should not be banned. An atmosphere for violence already exists, I mean, communal violence is as Indian as the *rossogolla*. It's silly to think that a book could do it. It is ironic that this ban is being imposed in the year of the centenary of Jawaharlal Nehru.

SAEED NAQVI

Journalist

□ While you have been somewhat irresponsible, Mr Rushdie, the members of Parliament who precipitated the ban have been downright foolish. The ban creates the impression I abhor, that it makes Indian Muslims out to be a bunch of humourless touch-me-nots intolerant of elegant verse or an irreverant idea.

DOM MORAES

Author

□ How the government managed to bring about this latest catastrophe (the ban on Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*) is beyond one's comprehension. It is not a literate government, except for Mr Natwar Singh. Banning books is not really a matter for governments, and has not been since Hitler rose crowing over the dunghill of Germany in the middle of the 1930s.

Compiled by Ruchir Joshi and Subadhra Rangamani

Satan holds his own

Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses *may be blasphemous; but literature it is*

The most important line in a poem is the first, the most important chapter in a novel, the second. In the first chapter authors are allowed to play around as much as they want — somehow, the reader feels obliged to beat with that. Even if the chapter is not particularly readable we accept it as a necessary evil, much as a foundation is for a house. But if the author cannot show his metier by the second chapter and justify the writing of yet another new book — then it seems hardly worthwhile reading such a book.

In *The Satanic Verses* Salman Rushdie has electrified us in the very first page. The story begins in a most dramatic fashion with two living human beings dropping down to earth from a plane that has exploded in mid-air. One of them, Gibreel Farishta, is singing out of tune. Such a beginning may raise doubts as to whether the book can be taken seriously or not. But the extraordinarily humorous language rivets the eye. And a few pages later it becomes quite evident that Rushdie's playful language is carrying us along on its own momentum. He uses language in a far more colourful and lively fashion here than in his previous books. But the importance of this novel is not to be measured in terms of language alone.

Both the characters we meet at the beginning are from Bombay, both are actors. One of them, Saladin Chamcha, is a non-resident living in London. Gibreel Farishta is modeled on Amitabh Bachchan. Like angels or devils, they descend from the heavens. The Indian plane in which they were travelling has been destroyed totally by Khalistani guerrillas but not these two passengers. By the second chapter it is clear that this novel is mainly about the journey of these two characters. They travel sometimes within the known limits of a twentieth-century world and sometimes forage outside the boundaries of known time and space. The author even mentions a specific altitude of 29,002 feet as the scene of the accident. Obviously he even wants to include the Himalayas as a character in his book!

The Satanic Verses is a novel, not an analysis of history or philosophy. It is a work of superb craftsmanship. One can say without hesitation that it is a significant work of modern literature that can be read over and over again. It is definitely admissible to debate the subject-matter of a novel or the perspective of the writer. But no one can deny that it is a most uncivilised act to forcibly ban a work of fiction.



Rushdie: smiling contemplation

In places, this reviewer did feel that the author was taking too much of a risk, almost to the point of foolhardiness. Despite the change of names it is quite easy to make out who Mahound is, and where Jahilia is supposed to be. Nor is Mahound an unfamiliar name. Rushdie himself comes from a Muslim family, he is also an Islamic scholar. Given this background, it is quite amazing to see him set foot on such dangerous territory in the second half of the book. He must have known that the biography of the Prophet Mohammad, written by the French researcher Maxim Rodinson, has been banned in many countries. It is forbidden in Islam to express any doubts about the divine revelations on Mount Hera. And yet, he has made fun of the encounter between the Prophet and the angel on the mountaintop.

The truth is, as any reader of literature knows, that blasphemy is also a part of literature. It is an established literary technique to hit out at many well-entrenched articles of faith. Literature progresses by reassessing the past again and again, by reinterpreting history. There have been many instances in Indian literature of poking fun at Hindu gods and goddesses. The Hindu religious texts, the Vedas, are believed to have been received directly from heaven. And yet some writers have got away with treating the Vedas as a collection of poems, almost like Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*! But such instances of precocity from writers have never shaken those who are intense believers, for there is no connection between faith and religion. Literature, for its part, is enriched by the freedom given to writers.

In the course of depicting the conflict between good and evil, showing Satan and the angel changing places, the mingling of time and timelessness, of reality and super-reality, Rushdie has also played around with faith and disbelief. Since his language and stance are consistently comic—he does not hesitate to refer to angelic visions as "mother fucking dreams"—he tends to hurt the feelings of devout believers. Fanatics cannot have a sense of humour—conversely, those who do have it, can never be fanatics. Even if it is possible for fanatics to tolerate unbelievers, it is absolutely impossible for them to put up with anyone poking fun at their beliefs.

The story ends with these two characters returning to Bombay. The 547-page fantasy is almost comparable to *Don Quixote*. No ban can possibly suppress such a powerful piece of literature. This is a novel that will be read for a long time to come.

Sunil Gangopadhyay

The Satanic Verses is a work of superb craftsmanship. One can say without hesitation that it is a significant work of modern literature that can be read over and over again. In places, this reviewer did feel that the author was taking too much of a risk, almost to the point of foolhardiness

The Satanic Verses, by Salman Rushdie, published by Viking 1988; Price: £8.95

Savage interlude

Ivory-Merchant's latest saga, The Deceivers, *capitalises on India once again to present a kaleidoscope of violence and horror*

In the heat, dust and savagery of India Ivory and Merchant find the much-needed themes for their extravaganzas. But the latest saga of the thuggee cult, *The Deceivers*, leaves the audience sick with shock and horror.

Based on the novel by John Masters, the film is about a resident collector of the East India Company who, in 1825, stumbles upon the existence of secret band of thugs or "deceivers". Worshippers of Kali, the deceivers mingle with innocent travellers and later catch them unawares and strangle them. Once the killers have looted their victims' possessions, the bodies are buried in hastily-dug graves.

The weapon of strangulation is a silk *rumal* (handkerchief) with a coin attached at one end. Brutality is the dominant theme and the audience gets liberal doses of the techniques of strangulation—not to mention several extended sequences of panting, choking and screaming, culminating in the snapping of the vertebrae in the victims' necks.

Resident collector William Savage (played convincingly by Pierce Brosnan) is naturally horrified by the cult and is determined to wipe it out. Yet his captive thug, Hussein (Saeed Jaffrey)—tells him that the only way he can expose the thugs is by joining the cult and learning about their work.

Savage darkens his skin and becomes a deceiver—a move known only to his pretty English wife Sarah Wilson (Helena Mitchell), and gradually learns the secrets of the thugs. He begins as a grave-digger who throws up at the first kill, but progresses swiftly after that.

In time, the English collector becomes a good deceiver—he strangles innocent travellers, eats the consecrated *gur* and indulges in sexual escapades, while wife Sarah sits at home and plays the piano, lying profusely to her father and her admirer about Savage's whereabouts.

As the thugs move along picturesquely-shot locales in Rajasthan and Gujarat, the unending violence goes on. In deceiving the deceivers, Savage becomes one of them. He uses his *rumal* to perfection as he kills another thug. Many killings later, Savage, torn by guilt and confusion, wants to get back to civilisation, but the thugs discover his identity. A chase follows, reaching a climax in the killing fields of Rajasthan. Finally, a British cavalry unit makes a timely charge and overpowers the deceivers. Savage returns home, triumphant but broken.

The notorious thuggee cult has been dealt with extensively and director Nicholas Meyer seems to have particularly enjoyed filming the sequences of brutality. Mass graves, skeletons, and corpses—all the paraphernalia of a horror show—are there.

Parallel to the thug brutality is the brutality of the villagers who all gather to watch a *sati*. The wife of Gopal the weaver is to burn herself to death because she's sure her husband is dead. The wife (Neena Gupta) sits against the fading dusk with flowing hair, red sari and silver jewellery and talks about how her soul has already been united with her dead husband's and only the body has been left behind.



A scene from *The Deceivers*: damp squib

Brutality is the dominant theme of *The Deceivers* and the audience gets liberal doses of the techniques of strangulation, and sequences of panting, choking and screaming, culminating in the snapping of the vertebrae in the victims' necks

The government had debated at one time over banning the film because of its depiction of *sati*, and it had every reason to do so. Gopal the weaver's wife sees visions, has revelations, and is every bit the devoted Indian woman who willingly climbs the funeral pyre and burns with a smile.

Nicholas Meyer has spared no details in capturing the brutality of the thugs. But his depiction of *sati* gives the brutality of this practice a total miss. Romantic and totally unfounded, it almost seems justified to Savage after he returns home confused and shattered after his experiences with the deceivers.

Also shocking is how actresses like Neena Gupta, who have been involved with more meaningful cinema, can accept such blatantly negative roles. Surely the glamour of an Ismail Merchant production should not be such an inducement.

Saeed Jaffrey, of course, is as near being perfect as he usually is. As Hussain the thug, he couldn't have been more convincing. Brandishing his *rumal* and strangling victims without the flicker of an eyelid, he's the only reason you sit through this torment.

As for Shashi Kapoor, one wishes he would simply stop his celluloid appearances. He gets progressively worse in every successive film. Tariq Yunis as Feringeea does a good job and Rajesh Vivek seems to have become a professional in playing eccentric priests and fakirs. Remember him as the doom-predicting fakir in *Junoon?*

All in all, a sad show. And as a small audience of exactly five watched the show in a London theatre last week, it became evident that Ismail Merchant will have to give his "India" angle a little rethink. Much has been said about raj nostalgia, and the glamour of Indian heat and dust, but not to be deterred, Merchant is apparently coming back with another — *Hullabaloo in Jaipur*— written while the *The Deceivers* was being shot.

Shrabani Basu/*London*

The wrangle for power

The Indian Olympic Association elections promise to be a keen political battle

Will Rajiv Gandhi have to step into the sports arena once again? While it can only be good for sport if he lends a helping hand the present situation only warrants his intervention in an unseemly wrangle for administrative power

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has for about a decade now become an extension of the general political scene where there is an unending scramble for the loaves and fishes of office Sardar Buta Singh had tried to inch his way in eight years ago but the then Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi, had preferred Raja Bhalendra Singh to stay as president of the association Buta Singh, of course went from the ministry of sport to the far more important home ministry

Today, Suresh Kalmadi, an MP from Maharashtra, is trying to emulate the Sardar, hoping, perhaps, to get the PM's nod for the sports ministry—after being told to let the IOA be But Kalmadi is a very recent entrant into the arena, without any sporting background Besides, his bid for the presidentship of the IOA may be thwarted by B Sivanthi Adityan, the officiating president, who is the natural candidate

For the politician sport has largely been a vehicle for frequent, almost daily, publicity – free of cost and mostly non controversial V C Shukla, Lokpati Tripathi, Jagdish Tytler, Sharad Pawar- . the list down the line of sporting federations headed by politicians is a long one, several of them central and state ministers whose official portfolios are supposed to keep them busy throughout the year

Except for Shukla all the names cited above will feature in the 27 November IOA elections And they are expected to decide on who will run sports in the country for the next four years

Officially the IOA is the supreme sporting body in the country but over the past few years the government has not only intruded into the functioning of the IOA but its affiliated federations as well While most sports lovers feel that some government control and overseeing is necessary to try and prevent the gross irregularities in some federations, there are others who believe that government interference could ultimately kill sport

Now, Kalmadi is in direct confrontation with the secretary-general because he has chosen as his "running mate', Air Vice marshal (Retd) C L Mehta who is expected to contest Randhir Singh's seat Mehta was a past secretary general of the IOA who was involved in a bitter battle with the government for not quitting office after two stints as secretary, as per the guidelines

But Mehta may not be Randhir Singh's only competitor Waiting in the wings is Dr Rasiklal Anand, former director general of the NSNIS and at present the president of the Handball Federation of India Dr Anand was brought in by V C Shukla as secretary general of the IOA when Mehta was forced to quit But Shukla himself fell foul of the government and thereby hastened Dr Anand s departure In fact one of the principal issue at the requisitioned meeting of the IOA last year was Dr Anand s status as secretary general Anand maintained all along that he had been brought in mid term Therefore, it could not be treated as a full term in office If he entered the elections he should be treated as a first term candidate

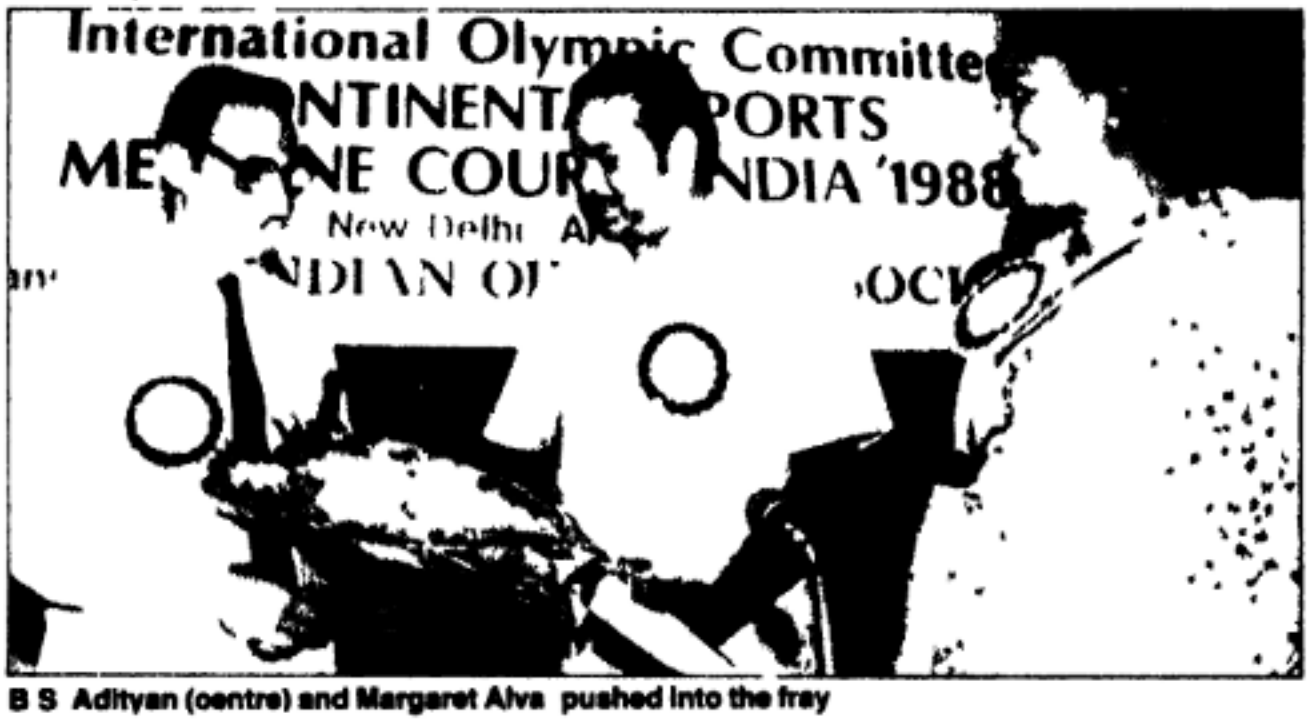
But, according to sources close to Mehta, both Mehta and Anand are in the same camp and ultimately only one of them would contest This would prevent a split in the 'opposition' votes

However, the *modus operandi* of Kalmadi may yet cause a split He has approached the IOA elections as he would a parliamentary poll He had allegedly told Randhir Singh even two days before his announcement that he was not contesting The Mehta camp feels that his mediation on the Mehta Anand issue could offend one party

The situation is even more queer because Shukla and the new IOA members who still listen to him are backing Dr Anand If Kalmadi does so, it would mean he has arrived at an understanding with Shukla

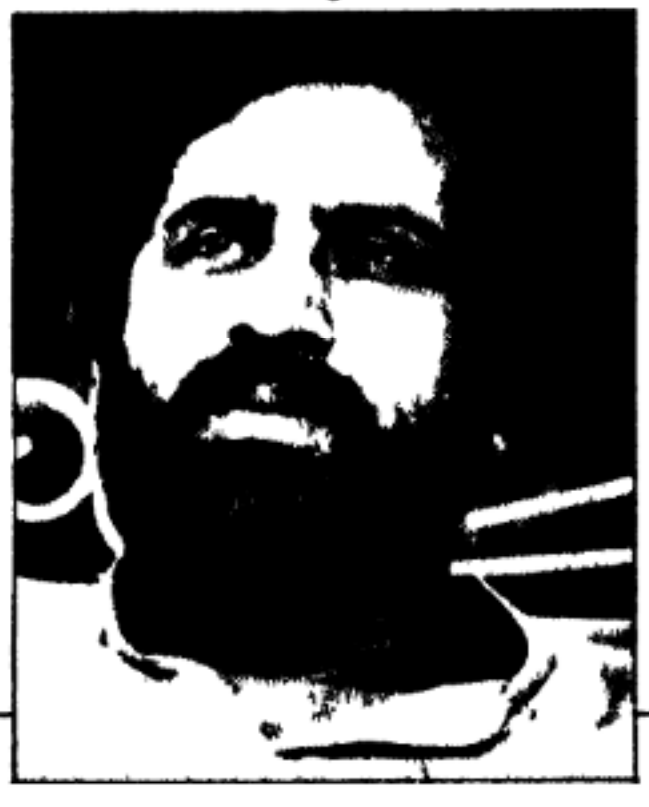
But the crucial factor here is Raj Chopra, the IOA treasurer who has always been close to Shukla It is clear that Kalmadi will need a lot of help from this businessman if he has to increase his chances in the election Politics does after all, make stange bed-fellows

Apart from the sports department's interference, the influence exerted by politicians has mostly worked to the detriment of sport Vidya Charan Shukla, after his post-Emergency fall from



B S Adityan (centre) and Margaret Alva pushed into the fray

Suresh Kalmadi strong contender



grace, tried to inch his way into the political mainstream through sport. The presidentship of the All-India Council of Sports (AICS) was followed by the chairmanship of the Snipes board. This gave him ministerial status. And his position was further bolstered by his election to the post of IOA president.

Shukla's decline was again brought about by the government. Adityan, aTamil Nadu press baron, was pushed into the fray with government blessings and he succeeded in getting Shukla ousted. But now Adityan faces a peculiar situation.

Initially chary about the IOA post, he was almost forced into it by the Centre's proddings, since the government wanted Shukla to go ever since he veered towards the dissidents within the Congress(I). Today, Adityan finds another Congressman pitted against him. And he does not know whether Suresh Kalmadi has entered the fray with government blessings. The requisitioned meeting held last year had only made Adityan officiating president. But he had expected that, having used him to oust Shukla, the government would now help him take full control.

However, the sudden entry of Kalmadi suggests that he has not really been projected as the "government candi-

For the politician, sport has largely been a vehicle for frequent publicity. V.C. Shukla, Lokpati Tripathi, Jagdish Tytler, Sharad Pawar, *et al.* Over the past few years, the government has not only intruded into the functioning of the IOA but its affiliated bodies as well

date". Officially, the government never takes sides in elections to sporting bodies. But there is a method of "letting the mind be known". Almost all members of the IOA get to know this before each election is held. And most of them take the government line.

Kalmadi's entry was indeed every sudden. Although there was a rumour to that effect circulating through the IOA, he had all along denied it. According to sources in the IOA, he was waiting to be ratified president of the Amateur Athletics Federation of India (AAFI) before announcing his candidature.

One point that goes against Adityan is his inability to communicate effectively with people. One of the stories going round the IOA corridors is that Adityan lost India's bid for the 1994 Commonwealth Games. After the secretary to the department of sports, Varadarajan, had spoken at the meeting to decide the venue of the '94 Commonwealth Games, sports minister Margaret Alva made a strong plea for New Delhi. But Adityan, who was supposed to make the official bid because it is not the government but the IOA which has to make the plea, remained silent. Worse, he is reported to have ignored the wishes of seven members of the Commonwealth when they greeted him before the meeting. A wave of the hand could well mean a dismissal. All these seven votes went against India.

In the case of sports federations, it could well be national level participation in the sport concerned. For the IOA, it could be international participation. That way, only outstanding sportspersons would be eligible to contest posts. The idea that all sportsmen are weak administrators has to be dispelled. And this way, all sportsmen would regain confidence in the federations and the IOA. And this will not automatically disqualify politicians. After all, there are people like K.P. Singh Deo to fill the bill.

Arijit Sen / *New Delhi*

NOW ON SALE

Woman's era

DIWALI SPECIAL

NOVEMBER (FIRST) 1988



A multifaced bumper issue aglow with a glittering bonanza of innovative ideas on how to celebrate the festival of lights...

With special articles on decoration, preparation of sweets, entertaining and with heartwarming short stories, it will add a great deal to your joyous mood.

Buy a copy yourself and for your friends too.

It will be a very welcome gift.

Woman's era

Builds your personality • Builds a happy home.

Quality. Technology. Innovation.

Bharat Electronics' new 3-pronged identity.



A company synonymous with the state-of-the-art in electronics, we are now poised for accelerated growth. Through a series of new initiatives.

Starting with our vibrant new symbol. Embodying our commitment to excellence on many fronts :

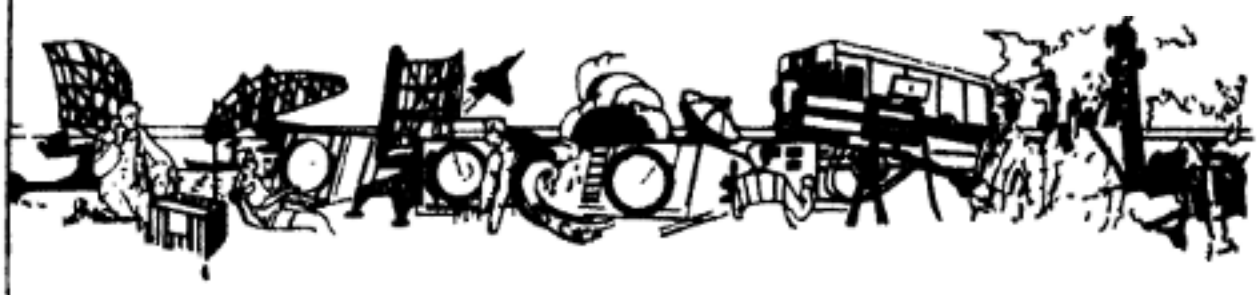
Quality *in all our activities.*

Technology *of our products and production processes.*

Innovation *in our R & D, for greater self- reliance.*

This is the thrust our new symbol represents... ushering in an exciting future, taking off on our dynamic present.

R K SWAMY/BEL/3745



Bharat Electronics Limited

(A Government of India Enterprise)
Registered Office : Trade Centre
116/2, Race Course Road
BANGALORE-560 001.

SUNDAY WEEK

BEGINNING 6 NOVEMBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) You will suffer mental strain this week The professional front will be disturbed too. You would do well to shelve love and romance for the moment Property matters may also cause anxiety You may lose a few valued friends as a result of your outspokenness. You are advised to be patient and to wait for better times
Good dates: 6, 8 and 10
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: West



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) Lack of funds may hold you back from implementing some of your long cherished plans The time, however, is favourable for those who are seeking employment Love and matrimonial affairs will make steady progress. Legal cases, if any, will be solved in your favour. You are advised to conserve your resources
Good dates: 7, 9 and 11
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 8
Favourable direction: North



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) Be prepared to undertake a new kind of assignment this week The time is ripe for creative work You will gain financially Matters of the heart and those related to your family are well signified. A tricky problem may arise, and you will do well to rely on your intuition. You are advised to plan a journey as that may be the answer to one of your pressing problems.
Good dates: 8, 10 and 12
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: South



CANCER (21 June—20 July) Provided you take reasonable risks on the professional front, a fair measure of success is in store for you. Financial gains are likely. The advice of a friend may help you solve a pressing problem. Letters will bring good tidings and you are advised to keep up your correspondence with both friends and relatives.
Good dates: 7, 8 and 9
Lucky numbers: 6, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North-west



LEO (21 July—20 August) Your earlier efforts will meet with outstanding success this week But, if you are not careful about what you say or write, you might lose a few friends You might face problems while dealing with family members. Your health may suffer as a result of overwork You are advised against being impulsive.
Good dates: 6, 7 and 9
Lucky numbers: 3 6 and 9
Favourable direction: East



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) You will enjoy good company this week Too much of idealism and righteousness may hinder your progress You are all set to take up new challenges Many opportunities for change will come your way, do not fritter them away You are advised not to get involved in political or controversial issues
Good dates: 9, 10 and 12
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: South-west



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) You will overcome all your problems this week The time is particularly favourable for intellectuals and those connected with the arts But you are advised to be tactful and to guard against deceit Your efforts will be crowned with success, provided you go about your work with dedication. Do not build castles in the air. Concentrate on future plans
Good dates: 10, 11 and 12
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: North



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) You may incur financial loss this week as a result of faulty planning in the past But opportunities to make amends will come your way The time is particularly favourable for those who are seeking jobs You will benefit through the good offices of someone in authority You are advised not to get into disputes.
Good dates: 7, 8 and 10
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: South-east



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) A good measure of fortune and success is in store for you this week. Friends and acquaintances will be your source of inspiration. Do not hesitate to compete with others as the time promises good results Guard against accidents Pay attention to professional details
Good dates: 8, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: North-east



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) You have reasons to be worried this week. The attitude of your well-wishers will cause anxiety You will feel lonely Even family members will be relatively aloof Errors made in the past may take a heavy toll on you However, you will find comfort in the company of your loved ones You are advised to face your problems
Good dates: 6, 9 and 12
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: West



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) Someone close to you will cause anxiety But that will be amply compensated by the affection and understanding of new friends A particularly favourable phase for investments You can afford to take reasonable risks Your domestic front will not be free from trouble New responsibilities may have to be shouldered. You will gain financially Look after your health
Good dates: 7, 11 and 12
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: North



PISCES (21 February—20 March) This will be a very busy and hectic week Be prepared for unforeseen troubles The time is favourable for those who are appearing for examinations You may have to undertake a journey You will benefit through an unexpected source. Love and matrimonial affairs are not well signified
Good dates: 6, 8 and 11
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: South

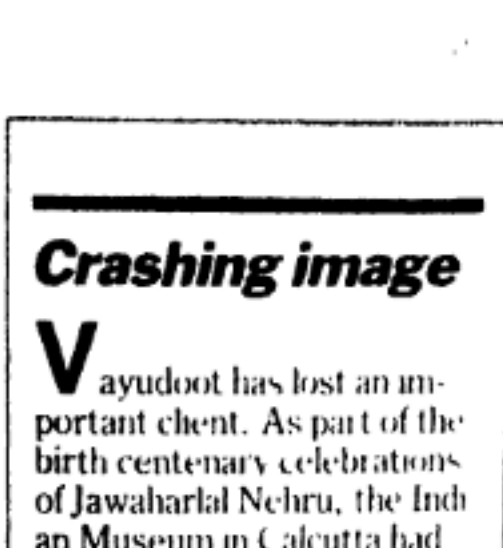
Star Partners: Taurus-Leo

Both being stubborn, there are chances of a few heated arguments Neither should try to reform the other Instead, the Leo woman should be understanding and the Taurus man should control his fiery temper. However, they will share a common desire for a happy domestic life.

Crashing image

Vayudoot has lost an important client. As part of the birth centenary celebrations of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Museum in Calcutta had planned to use India's third level airline to airlift priceless artefacts to Shillong for an exhibition to be held later this month. All was well till 19 October, when disaster struck.

A Vayudoot Fokker Friendship aircraft on a routine flight from Silchar to Guwahati crashed, and with that the resolution of the



Indian Museum authorities. Nothing, it seemed, would make them take chances with the rare exhibits. The crash made them have second thoughts about the reliability and safety of air services in the country. They couldn't take the risk of losing part of India's heritage to an unreliable airline which is increasingly facing flak for its poor operational norms. Given Vayudoot's track record, can anyone blame the decision of the museum authorities?

Festival impact

Undoubtedly, the much touted Festivals of India in the USA, Japan and the USSR have been the grandest cultural shows ever put up by the country in foreign lands. The objectives were perhaps both: a gigantic PR exercise in international understanding or merely to bring two nations and its peoples closer. While no estimates are readily available, the Festivals have cost crores to the exchequer.

But has anyone wondered about the actual impact these 'mini-Indias' have had on the Americans, the Japanese and the Russians? Or *vice versa?* Market research is the name of the game these days. The advertising agency Sistas has undertaken a novel project - in the four Indian metros--to monitor the Festival of the USSR to gauge the impact it has had on Indians' perceptions and interest in Russia. The preliminary findings indicate a positive response. The final results should come up with more interesting details.

Donkeys' day

The day belonged to the donkeys from Gujarat. The thousand horses and 500 mules were no match for these hot favourites in the Donkey Mela held at Luniawas in Yanganer *tehsil* of Jaipur district recently. Held annually, this century-old fair attracts merchants from remote villages of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan.



While similar fairs at Kota, Mathura and Agra do not impose restrictions on the kind of animals sold, this one at Luniawas is unique, in that only donkeys, mules and horses exchange hands.

While a particular donkey fetched a price as high as Rs 4,600, other owners too struck good bargains. Gujarat's donkeys easily stole the show with merchants from all over the country trying to outbid each other to buy these animals. However, what was most surprising was the fact that there was not a single buyer from the state which had produced the best donkeys.

No one questioned this peculiar trend. They were busy applauding the merchant, Bakuram Pushram—he had bought 140 donkeys!

Husbands' rights

Dowry deaths, harassment by in-laws, driven to suicide by their spouses... is this the lot of the fairer sex alone?

No, says the Delhi-based Akhil Bhartiya Patni Atyachar Vidrohi Morcha, which aims to highlight the atrocities committed on men by their wives and relatives. According to R.P. Chugh, general secretary of the movement, it has become imperative on the part of husbands to put up a united front against the crimes perpetrated on them by their wives.



While society had been gullible enough to believe that it was always the woman who had been wronged, what it often overlooked was that in nearly all the cases the husband had been victimised. In extreme cases, a man would be implicated in false cases of dowry demands, and even murder at the hands of his wife and her paramour.

The organisation has called for the closure of the Delhi police's crime against women cell, because it feels it is not really needed. So, if you are a husband and think you have been given a raw deal, do not despair: the Akhil Bhartiya Patni Atyachar Vidrohi Morcha will give you a fair hearing.

THIS INDIA

•SANTIPUR: This is a tutorial home with a difference. It claims to impart training in copying in a modern and scientific way! According to leaflet advertisements, those who skip their classes and would yet like to pass their examinations, should contact the tutorial home immediately—*Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Shyamal Gupta, Burdwan)

•BELGAUM: A primary school teacher in this district has not reported for duty for eight years. He is said to be on medical leave. Revealing this at a *zilla parishad* meeting, a member also told the others that the headmaster of a middle school had come to the school drunk—*Indian Express* (V.V. Kadam, Bangalore)

•MADRAS: A woman whose husband is alive, secured a medical seat under the 'destitute and widow' category by producing a 'widowhood certificate'! Prem Anandi, 32, who had got admission in Coimbatore Medical College in 1986-87 on the basis of the certificate, was dismissed from the college after the Madras High Court rejected the document as false—*The Hindustan Times* (B.B. L. Sharma, New Delhi)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

Illustrations: Debashis Deb

Strange directive

The Hyderabad office of the Telugu Desam chief minister N.T. Rama Rao recently issued a rather strange directive. No foundation stone-laying or inaugural function should be organised by any department without the consent of the relevant minister, said the order.

What prompted this was the rivalry between different members of NTR's Cabinet over who would lay foundation stones for various projects. Tension ran high as the organisers of some of the programmes did not even invite the ministers concerned. To grab the limelight, even district chairmen, MLAs and *mandal* chairmen presided over gala occasions without so much as bothering to inform state ministers.

Some political observers feel that health minister Dr Venkateswara Rao got the order issued to cramp the style of Chandrababu Naidu who has cut more ribbons than the Prime Minister himself. The two men—both sons-in-law of NTR—are bitter rivals. And though not in the government, Naidu wields enormous clout.

Anwar's resolve

Why has the Bihar PCC(I) chief, Tariq Anwar, shaved his moustache? The story goes that Anwar took the extreme step when Bihar chief minister Bhagwat Jha Azad started having problems with dissenting partymen. The dissenters—well aware of the chief minister's unfriendliness towards the PCC(I) chief—have started looking up to Anwar as their leader. It is learnt that some dissident Congressmen even requested Anwar to convince the high command to get rid of Bhagwat Jha Azad. Anwar, in turn, has made a promise that he will not grow his moustache till he accomplishes his mission.



Rao: clipping Naidu's (left) powers?



K.M. Kishen

Anwar: promises to keep

Changing customs

Being a member of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) has always been a heavy duty job but never quite as heavy as it has become of late. Customs authorities at both Madras port and the Tambaram air force base have been unsparing in levying duties on all electronic goods that officers of the IPKF have been bringing back nowadays. There was a time when the goodies were allowed duty-free but now the old custom, as it were, has changed. Fervent pleas by IPKF personnel that they be allowed "small mercies" for risking life and limb are falling on deaf ears.

Recently, a colonel landed at Tambaram with about half a dozen VCRs in tow. He was slapped Rs 2,000 per set, a rather lenient levy as it would have cost a civilian upwards of Rs 10,000. But some IPKF men have been satisfied with nothing less than a complete waiver. About a month ago, a senior customs officer was assaulted by some members of the force when he tried to slap duty on goods they were trying to smuggle in. The hapless officer was injured in the attack and had to be rushed to a hospital for treatment.

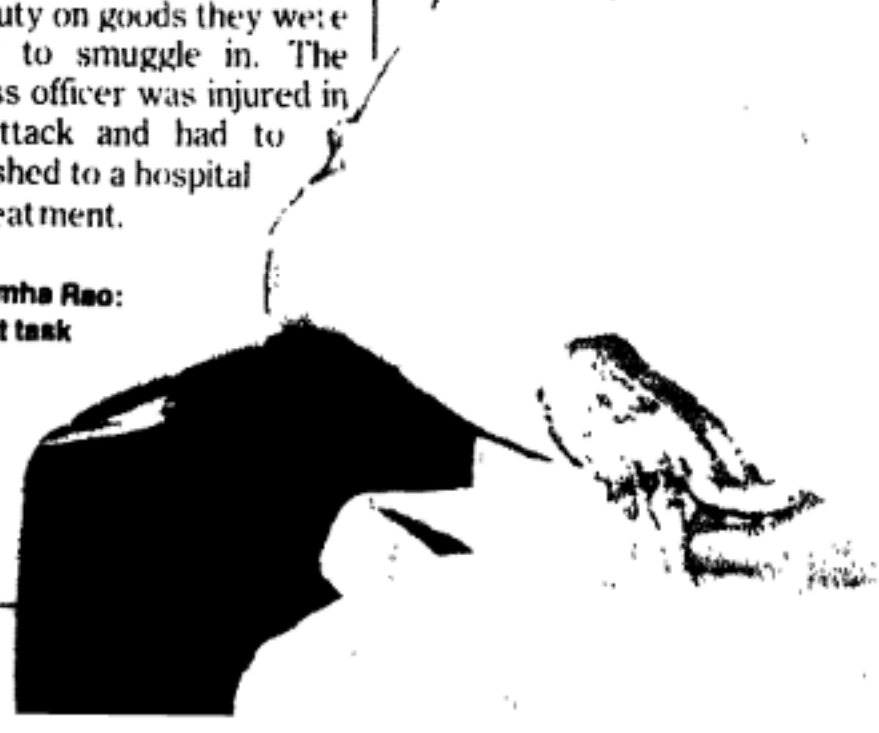
Rao breaks his vow

Ever since he got defeated in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections, external affairs minister P.V. Narasimha Rao had vowed never to visit his home state, Andhra Pradesh. Now, he seems to have broken his promise: he was seen recently conferring with party leaders at Hyderabad to select a new PCC(I) chief, after J. Vengala Rao's exit.

After Vengala Rao's 'resignation' from the party post was accepted by the high command, Rajiv Gandhi's task of finding a successor is becoming more and more complicated every day with various power groups in the state staking their claims. Narasimha Rao faces an onerous task indeed.

Whoever becomes the PCC(I) chief will find it rather tough to handle a highly disorganised party outfit. Disunity has been so pronounced in the APCC(I) that the rival faction took out processions to remove Vengala Rao from the presidentship.





Narasimha Rao: difficult task

D.E. NIZAMUDDIN

Will Menaka come back to the Congress fold?

Scribes and gossip mongers are attaching a lot of importance to a chance meeting between Menaka Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi - yes, Sonia Gandhi! The two daughters-in-law of the Gandhi family met recently at a social gathering and even chatted for a while. The grapevine has it that Menaka is coming back to the Congress. Since Menaka and her friend Akbar 'Dumpy' Ahmed are not on very good terms with V.P. Singh and Arun Nehru, Mrs Gandhi's estranged daughter-in-law is looking out for greener pastures. This seems to be the season for the return of the prodigals.



Ajit Kumar

Menaka and Sonia Gandhi: a change of mind?

Devi Lal's feelers

Of late, there have been frequent parleys between members of the Devi Lal faction and arch rival Chandra Shekhar. The Lal group has chalked out a new strategy whereby it can keep in touch with V.P. Singh but join forces with Chandra Shekhar at the same time. The man acting as the principal intermediary between the two groups is industrialist Kamal Morarka, owner of *The Afternoon Despatch and Courier* and *Chauthi Duniya*.

The plan was hatched in Bangalore, during the 11 October Opposition conclave, when the Janata Dal was formed. Morarka arranged a meeting between Chandra Shekhar and K.C. Tyagi and Sharad Yadav. (It is well known in the capital's circles that Tyagi and Yadav are very close to each other.)

Two days later, Chandra Shekhar met K.C. Tyagi again. The mediator again was Morarka, who made arrangements for Tyagi's stay in Bombay. The grapevine has it that Chandra Shekhar and Devi Lal are planning to visit Ballia (the former's constituency) to gang up against V.P. Singh.

Raj Babbar's new role

Filmstar Raj Babbar likes to think he is the son of a farmer. At the farmers' rally on the lawns of the Boat Club, V.P. Singh was not allowed to speak by Tikait's lieutenants on the grounds that the rally was of a non-political nature. A perturbed Singh left the dais, but he did not give up: he sent actor Raj Babbar to address the peasants. But Babbar's speech was not without its incongruities. For instance, he ranted, in true *filmi* style, that he was the son of a farmer. The truth is Raj Babbar's father works in the railways.



Devi Lal with Chandra Shekhar (left): new strategies

Babbar: farmer's son?



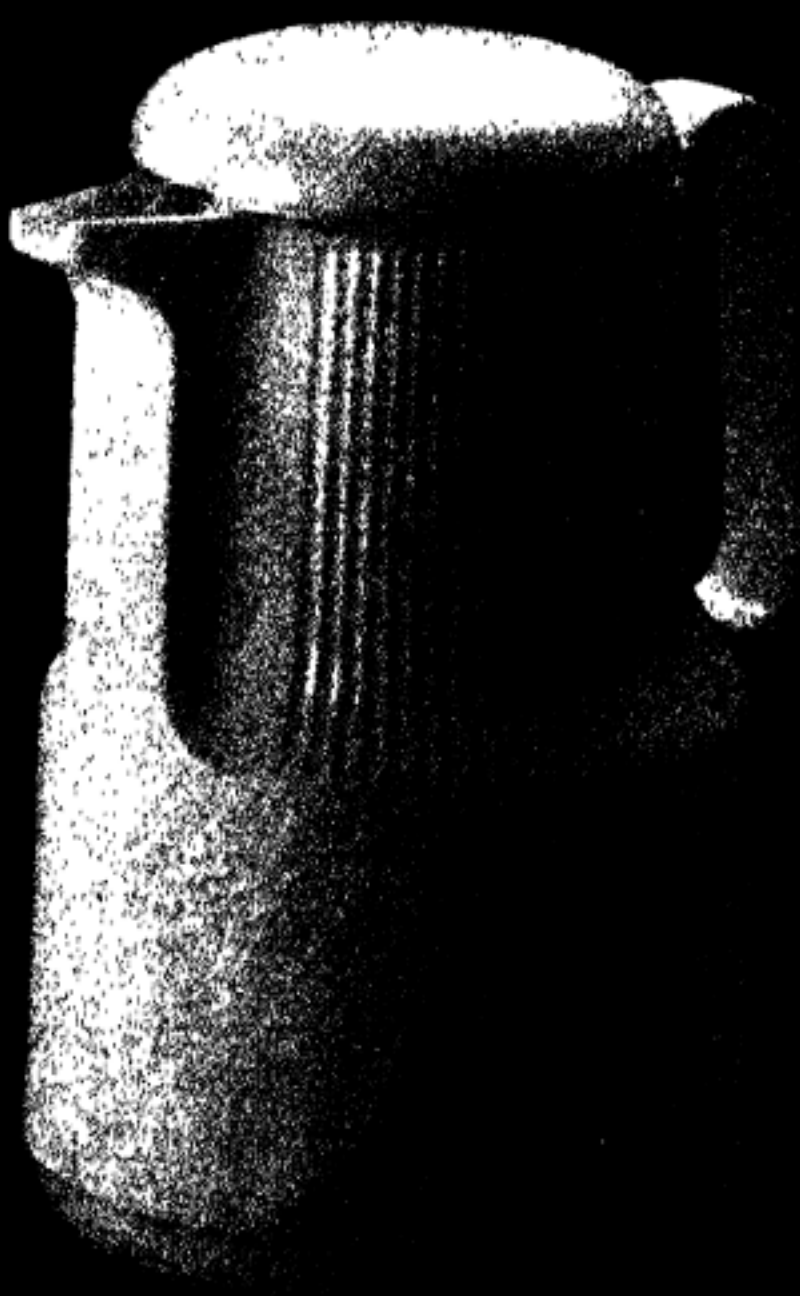
Vijay Yadav

Mishra's *faux pas*

Whenever Dr Jagannath Mishra opens his mouth, he puts his foot in it. On 14 October, at a seminar on electoral reforms in Patna, Mishra launched into a lengthy tirade against the high command and the party, much to the embarrassment of Congressmen who had gathered there. Mishra started his speech by arguing that it would be wrong for the cricketer son of Bhagwat Jha Azad, Kirti Azad, to stand for the byelection from Bhagalpur for the Lok Sabha seat. He remarked that the Congress high command was damaging the interests of the party by not taking a firm stand against terrorists. The pro-Azad Congressmen were, however, happy at this unexpected turn of events. The man most perturbed was Tariq Anwar, who had for some time been campaigning for Mishra to get a good post in Delhi. Anwar has now made it clear to everyone in Delhi that he is not responsible for Mishra's views. ■

EAGLE JUGS

Simply irresistible



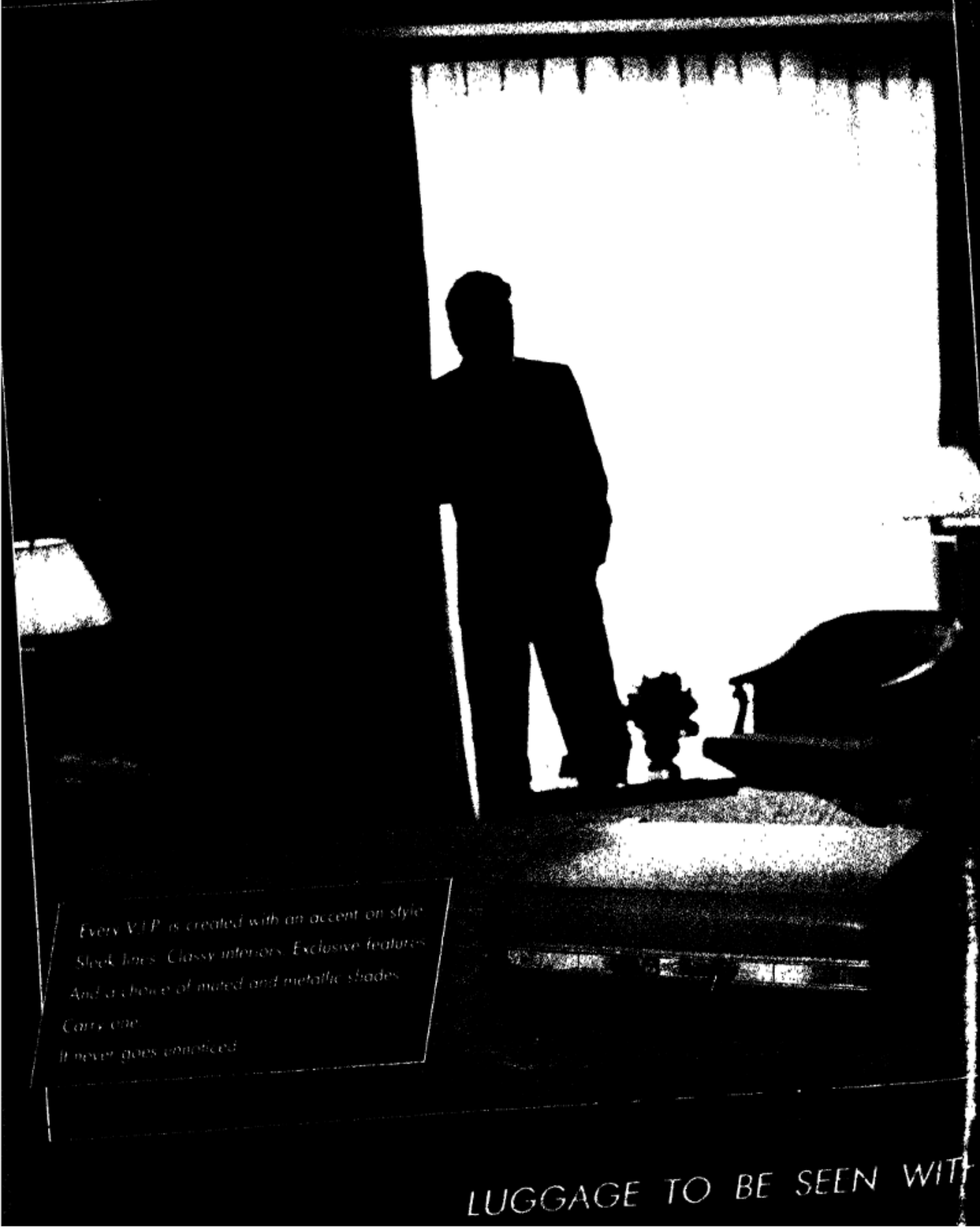
EAGLE FLASK INDUSTRIES PVT. LTD.

Vacuumware * Ironmware * Crockery * Gas Lighters

There's a lot you can do with Eagle



HO'S THAT CARRYING A V.I.P.?



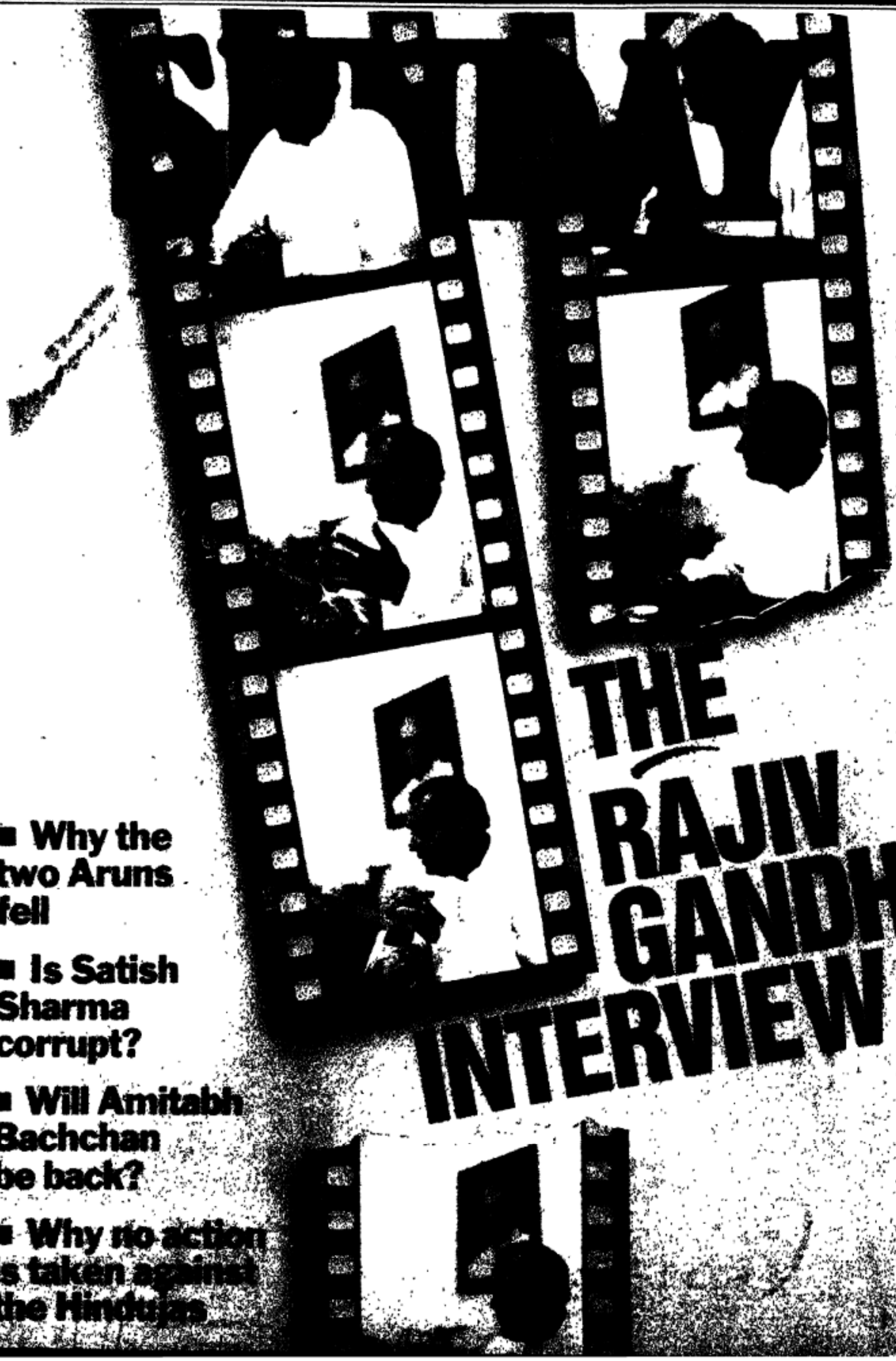
Every V.I.P. is created with an accent on style. Sleek lines. Classy interiors. Exclusive features. And a choice of muted and metallic shades.

Carry one.

It never goes unnoticed.

LUGGAGE TO BE SEEN WIT

TAMIL NADU: THE CONGRESS(I)'S SOUTHERN OFFENSIVE



THE RAJIV GANDHI INTERVIEW

- Why the two Aruns fell
- Is Satish Sharma corrupt?
- Will Amitabh Bachchan be back?
- Why no action is taken against the Hindujas



Warm. Comfortable. And classy. Cotswol colours are perfect for all styles. All generations. Check out Cotswol today.

BINNY

Cotswol

Checks • Plains • Tartans • Prints.

A classic is forever.

CONTENTS

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 50 RS 6.00 **SUNDAY** AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

13—19 NOVEMBER 1988

2/12/11/88 Serampore Krishna Public Library

COVER STORY **41**

PLAIN SPEAKING

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi speaks on a wide range of topics—Bofors, the two Aruns, Satish Sharma, Amitabh Bachchan and the Gang of Four and much much more.

SPECIAL REPORT **12**

DO GAWKERS MAKE VOTERS?



Rajiv Gandhi's recent trip to Tamil Nadu drew large crowds But he is not sure whether this will mean a large number of votes for his party in the ensuing Assembly polls in the state.

NEWSBEAT **30**

MALE MACHISMO

India intervenes to crush a coup attempt in the Maldives.

AVIATION **29**

SEARCH FOR CAUSES

New leads into what led to the recent Vayudoot crash.

ENTERPRISE **65**

A GUJARATI RENAISSANCE

Led by Dhirubhai Ambani of Reliance, Praful Shah of Garden-Vareli, and Karsanbhai Patel of Nirma, the community is well on its way to re-establishing its entrepreneurial leadership.



Page 41



Page 65



Page 66

COMMENT
Letters 4
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 9
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 18
Sight and Sound 10
Business Diary 75

OTHER DEPARTMENTS
Random Notes 101
Delhi Diary 102

Cover photograph: Gautam Patole
Artwork: D.S. Thapa

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Biplab Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001 Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura, 20 Paise, North-Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup, Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts of Assam, 30 paise

FILMS **76**

WHERE DOUBLES DARE



Behind every hero's daring escapade is a little-known stuntman who risks his life time and again.

PEOPLE **87**

THE STAR EVADER



Tina Munim is charged with violating foreign exchange rules.

PROFILE **88**

SWAMY AND FRIENDS

Nobody tells it quite like Subramaniam Swamy does.

BOOK EXTRACT **90**

HOSTILE NEIGHBOURS

Stephen Philip Cohen examines Indo-Pak relations in the perspective of the security of South Asia.

Khaas Baat 83
Spotlight 84
Sundayweek 100
Odds and Trends 99



Propaganda machine

The cover story provided a good insight into the functioning of Doordarshan (*The medium is the mess*, 16–22 October). However, it failed to highlight the possible reasons for Bhaskar Ghosh's sudden exit. The incomprehensible transfer of Doordarshan's director


Bhaskar Ghosh: shunted out

general indicates the high-handedness that Mandi House is often subjected to. What is disturbing is the lack of decorum that was shown while dismissing a person of such a high rank.

Bhaskar Ghosh, in all fairness, it must be said, acted according to guidelines of the government. However, it was during Mr Ghosh's tenure that the 'myth of liberalisation' was floated by Doordarshan in the form of programmes like *Janvani, Newsline and Sach ki parchhaiyan*, all of which were subsequently discontinued without any explanation.

On the other hand, the I&B ministry could not have dismissed Ghosh for less coverage of the Prime Minister because all one gets to see on television these days is Rajiv Gandhi, and more Rajiv Gandhi. What the ruling party fails to realise is that television can neither ensure electoral triumph, nor lead to a poll debacle. The need of the hour is to provide more autonomy to Doordarshan in the selection of programmes.

B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur (Bihar)

■ No bureaucrat, howsoever efficient he may be, is indispensable. Doordarshan, however, will be the loser as a result of Bhaskar Ghosh's transfer before the expiry of his term. It is well-known in political circles that when an officer is transferred before his term, it is because he has annoyed those in positions of authority. Much to the chagrin of the authorities, Ghosh tried to make Doordarshan into an autonomous unit.

Khudiram Bhattacharyya, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ The present state of affairs at Doordarshan is a subject of hot debate. Today, television has become the most important medium of mass communication. Eyebrows were naturally raised over the hasty manner in which Bhaskar Ghosh was shifted and the glib with which *Ramayan* was granted a 26-episode extension. When the government itself is reluctant to hand over the second channel to state governments, its own action does not speak well for itself.

Sachchidananda Satpathy, Hirakud (Orissa)

Counter-view

It is difficult to understand the rationale behind the dope test in competitive sports (*The scandal Olympics*, 16—22 October). A competition as the word implies is an attempt to try and outclass one's opponent and one has to work towards that end. Physical strength and stamina occupy a pivotal position in getting a sportsperson in top form and surely there are ways and means, both qualitative and quantitative, of getting oneself in top gear. So what is wrong if drugs are also one of them? Today, if drugs are banned, tomorrow it may be the turn of specific diets and even the extent of exercise an athlete puts in.

The role of anabolic steroids in muscle-building and stimulating vigour is still controversial. Also, there are loopholes in testing competitors for drug abuse apart from the fact that discrimination is practised. It is time the International Olympic Committee lifted the ban on dope, or else the world will see the end of competitive sports.


Ben Johnson: duped or doped?

Dr M.S. Narasimha Murthy, Bangalore (Karnataka)

■ On the one hand, the Seoul Olympics will be remembered for its grandeur, and on the other, for its doping scandal. About ten cases of doping, three of which cost athletes their medals, cast a gloomy shadow on the proceedings. The numerous instances of drug abuse have proved that for some players winning is far more important than participating. Though one cannot rule out the possibility of some deception in Ben Johnson's case, one wonders why he declined to learn a lesson from the Bulgarian weightlifters who were earlier stripped of their gold medals.

Shashank Shekhar, Meerut (Uttar Pradesh)

Need for stringent laws

Apropos your report (*A lost heritage*, 9–15 October), it is time the government sat up and took notice of the reasons behind the Bidar massacre. There are two reasons for the mayhem: social and economic domination of one group over others, and eve-teasing. While the former is worsened by the state government which allows total monopoly to one particular community in institutions of higher learning, the latter abounds under the safe cover of an ineffective judicial system. The problem calls for a practical approach. The newly constituted Law Commission under the chairmanship of Justice Thakkar would do well to eradicate this problem.

P. Siva Ram Prasad, Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh)

Of medals and nations

The columnist points out that many Indians were not even aware of the existence of some island countries till their names were mentioned in the list of medal —

winners in the Seoul Olympics (*Byline*, 16—22 October). He also laments that a big country like India failed to earn even a single medal, and even wonders at the underlying causes.

Let us not shed exaggerated tears over the fact that the Indian flag was never seen fluttering even once over the Seoul Olympic victory podium. There are more distressing matters on hand. A true patriot should worry more about the fact that the country is in the midst of a socio-political crisis.

M. Chandran, Gangtok (Sikkim)

Ban is undemocratic

I read the article on Salman Rushdie's novel with interest (*Verse or worse?* 16—22 October). The ban on *The Satanic Verses* is undemocratic. India refused to send its Davis Cup team to Israel because it did not want to hurt the sentiments of the Palestinians. Now it is the sentiment of the entire Islamic community which is at stake. One can't help but wonder if it is really the sentiments of the Islamic community that the government cares about, or just simply the Muslim votes. It is time the communalist Congress (I) stepped down and paved the way for a new party.

Samir Mahajan, New Delhi

■ The ban on the book by the Indian government only shows that the fundamental right of expressing one's ideas in this so-called democratic country exists only in a theoretical form and can never be implemented practically. The reason given for this unwarranted action is that the book might lead to an inimical and antagonistic attitude developing among some religious sects which in turn could give rise to hitherto buried communal feelings. Such a situation could assume disastrous proportions in the future.



Salman Rushdie: In the eye of the storm

However, the real reason for imposing the ban is that the government by its action hopes to secure the support of the Muslim community. The support of the Muslims means the acquisition of a larger number of votes for the ruling party. At this moment the government would do well to give up its selfish motives and strive to uphold the high ethics enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

Chitra Hariharan, Calcutta (West Bengal)

Myopic picture

Dr Bimal Jalan has presented an ambivalent and confused picture of our economy (*The man who shaped India's economic policy*, 16—22 October). He has admitted that employment generation in the organised sector has stagnated owing to increasing capital intensity, which has resulted in labour displacement. Considering that the incremental capital-output ratio is high in the secondary sector, it apears that we are operating in the absence of a visible tradeoff between employment and capital use in the short run.

Second, he has pointed out the resilience of the economy by saying that inflation was kept at 10 per cent despite last year's drought. But the experience at the marketplace shows that inflation at a conservative estimate, averaged between 15 and 20 per cent, depending on the location. Dr Jalan has evidently used the wholesale price index for this purpose, which conceals rather than reveals the true picture.

Madan Sabnavis, Bombay (Maharashtra)

Who is responsible?

As was expected, the Indian contingent returned goldless, silverless and bronzeless from the Seoul Olympics (*Out of depth at Seoul*, 16—22 October). Who is responsible for the dismal performance of the Indian athletes? Everyone has a different answer to offer. In this respect, a sentence in a Calcutta daily impressed me: "It is not 800 million (Indians) that matters, but a couple at the top who do not allow these people to progress."

Rajib Das, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

Elitist attitude

Apropos the article (*Gossip sweet and sour*, 16—22 October), by permitting PepsiCo to set up a food processing and soft drink concentrate unit in Punjab, the government has committed a grievous mistake. Some ministers have claimed that a collaboration with PepsiCo will be more convenient for India than with any other multinational in the world. The question of convenience is irrelevant here. One wonders why India should seek foreign technology in a field where there is no dearth of technical knowhow.

It is clear that the government in order to gratify a section of the rich Punjab peasantry has entered into this deal. But this decision will not help the peasants as much as it will benefit the rich landlords. This elitist attitude will only alienate it from the common man.

Amit Mukherjee, Calcutta (West Bengal)



A section of the Seoul-bound Indian contingent: dismal showing

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager (U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta-700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta



"Strength.
The ability to meet challenging situations head-on.
The drive to get what I want.
These have all contributed to my success.
Naturally, I opted for the strongest general insurance company.

New India, of course."

At the heart of a truly successful enterprise, there's always a strong core of motivation...
Boldness in thought and action.
The courage to take on new challenges.
The confidence and the innovative spirit to be the first in its field.
All this has made New India Assurance a Rs.500 crore premium company — and the leader in general insurance in India.
Always the first with so many policies... such as the Cancer Cover, Unborn Child Welfare Scheme and the Borewell Scheme — to name a few...
And the first to provide high-risk covers for the nation, as well as enterprising individuals...
Has resulted in unique policies for Satellites, Antarctic and Everest expeditions, the Himalayan Car Rally... even horticulture.
It is this combination of boldness, strength and innovative thinking, that has made New India the largest general insurance company.
But, most important, with every cover New India offers that something extra...
The personal touch.
And a genuine concern for each and everyone.

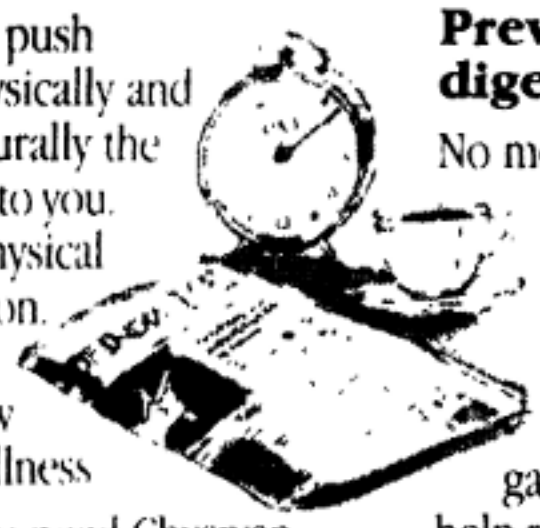
You name the risk. We insure it.

NEW INDIA ASSURANCE

A subsidiary of the General Insurance Corpn of India

The New India range of assurance covers:
Personal: Mediclaim, Cancer Insurance, Unborn Child Welfare Scheme, Janata Policy, Personal Accident, Householder's Policy, Overseas Medical Insurance, Travellers' Baggage Insurance. **Commercial:** Court Bonds, Government Bonds, Money in Safe, Shopkeepers' Insurance.
Industrial: Electric Equipment Insurance, Fidelity Guarantee, Satellite Insurance, Burglary & Housebreaking Insurance, Motor Insurance
Rural: Hut Insurance, Animal Driven Cart Insurance, Silkworm Insurance, Gobar Gas Insurance. And many more ..

Everyday you push yourself – physically and mentally. Naturally the pressure gets to you. Mental and physical fatigue. Tension. Digestion problems. Low resistance to illness



That's why you need Chyawan Shakti – nature's own formula to fight symptoms of stress–created with over 46 precious herbs. Brought to you by Dabur.

Chyawan Shakti–combats stress, revitalises mind and body

The effects of stress on your nerves can be disastrous. Chyawan Shakti has ingredients like Draksha, Ashwagandha, Akarkara and Gokshur. These act as demulcents and tonics, while Kesar and other herbs build up physical vigour and invigorate the mind.

Prevents acidity and digestion problems

No more antacids and anti-flatulence pills. Herbs like Akarkara, Lavanga, Madhu and Mukta Shukti Pishti prevent acidity, help digestion, stimulate appetite, relieve gastric and intestinal pains and help regular bowel movement.

Rich in Vitamin C to fight illness

Who needs orange juice!

Chyawan Shakti has an abundance of Amla, the richest source of Vitamin C.

This, along with other herbs in Chyawan Shakti, acts as a powerful immuno-stimulant to build up resistance to common ailments.

Fountain of youth

Chyawan Shakti supplies you with Iron, Calcium, Minerals, Magnesium, Phosphorous and acts as an all-round health tonic.



Keeping you feeling young and raring to go. And since it is wholly natural, there are no harmful side effects. So go ahead and give it a try.

You have nothing to lose except the adverse effects of stress and strain!

SPECIALLY CREATED FOR PEOPLE WHO WORK HARDER



NEW Dabur CHYAWAN SHAKTI



AYURVEDIC TONIC
TO KEEP YOU GOING STRONG

Dabur INDIA LTD.
Harsha Bhawan, Block E,
Connaught Place,
New Delhi-110 001.

everest/d88/DIL/281-

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Being buttonholed



One problem that people living in small towns face is avoiding running into characters they want to avoid. I have to face it every time I go to Kasauli. It is a one-hill town with only two roads encircling it. If you spot somebody you want to avoid walking ahead of you, the only options are to keep your distance from him by regulating your pace to his. Or turn back. If you take the latter option you may find yourself in the same predicament, or worse. You may come face to face with someone you would rather dodge. There is no escape; the road is narrow and the hillsides steep. You can't very well scamper uphill or dive downhill into the underbrush. Most of it consists of nettles, *bicchoo bootee*—scorpion bush.

All small towns have their quota of avoidable people. One set consists of people who are ever wanting to borrow money: they are easy to handle once you teach yourself to say a firm 'no'. The more difficult to shake off are the lonely on the look-out for victims on whom they can offload their worries. Their opening gambit is usually, "*Yeh desh kahan ja raha hai*—where is this country going to?" They insist that you must know the answer. And if you do not, they are more than willing to enlighten you at great length. Their analyses and prophesies are usually gloomy: the country is going to the dogs.

I have found an apt Italian word for this kind of human pest. You will understand why I am trying to pick up a few Italian words. The latest addition to my vocabulary is *attaccabottoni*—a buttonholer who grabs you by the lapel of your coat or a button and doesn't let you go till he has told you of all his miseries. For sound reasons *attaccabottoni* rhymes with "a lot of boloney". The Italian dictionary defines him as "a doleful bore, the kind who buttonholes hapless acquaintances or total strangers who are too kind or innocent to flee at the first word, and proceeds to tell long and pointless stories of misfortune, unhappiness, and bad circumstances". The word can be used as a verb. If you have been truly buttonholed and bored, you can say you were *attaccabotoed*.

In a place like Kasauli it is almost impossible to escape buttonholers. Every season brings up a new lot who take you by surprise. It is a favourite holiday resort for retired soldiers. You can take it from me that retired soldiers can be bigger bores than retired politicians or bureaucrats. Without as much as a by-your-leave they will tell you of the battles they fought, medals of gallantry they won, the injustices heaped on them when they were superseded and forced to ask for premature retirement. There are one or two to be found in Kasauli every holiday season. This time it was a retired Sikh colonel. One evening he *attaccabotoed* me on the road. The next day when I spotted him coming towards me, I beat a hasty retreat to my villa. He followed me into my den. "I know you are a very busy man, but I have some important things to discuss; I won't take more than five minutes," he said.

I offered him tea. He told me at great length why he did not drink tea or coffee. Or anything stronger—because they were bad for his health. When the five minutes had extended themselves to 25, I got up to show him my collection of rare prints of the Anglo-Sikh wars, over 150 years old. He was impressed. "You must have them photo-copied and give them to the Golden Temple Museum. Their collection was destroyed by Operation Bluestar."

I readily promised to do so. He continued praising my pictures and remarked, "Your collection is absolutely worthless."

I realised he meant priceless. But bless him for giving me something to write about.



Illustration Debashis Deb

All small towns have their quota of avoidable people. One set consists of people who are ever wanting to borrow money; they are easy to handle once you teach yourself to say a firm 'no'. The more difficult to shake off are the lonely on the look-out for victims on whom they can offload their worries.

HINDI-ROOSI BHAI BHAI

S. K. Rampal of New Delhi is of the view that the Seoul Olympics in which the USSR was on top of the medal tally and India at the bottom, opens up new avenues of Indo-USSR collaboration. He writes: "We should list certain disciplines in which the two countries should participate in setting up joint ventures so that we can win a medal or two with their help. Why spend crores of rupees on sports and come back empty-handed?"

LINGUISTIC LAPSE

A young English lady visiting India picked up as much Hindustani as she could during her stay. She did, however, mix up some of the vocabulary including the words *chaprasi* and *chapatti*. Giving an enthusiastic account of a meal in a gourmet restaurant, she wrote to her mother, "Dear Mom, last night I had a lot of *chaprasis*. They were delicious. But if you have too many of them, they are apt to lie on your chest all night."

(Contributed by Harjeet Kaur, New Delhi)



R K Laxman *The Times of India*

"

Whenever the Opposition does not cheer me I know I am doing something right

RAJIV GANDHI *when asked if he was upset that the Opposition had not cheered when he announced in Parliament the decision to send Indian troops to the Maldives*

The politicians who are tigers here become sheep in Delhi

BAL THACKERAY, *Shiv Sena leader at a function in Bombay*

I don't know if the Prime Minister will remain Prime Minister for the next 100 days

SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY, *Lok Dal leader*

The most irritating part of being a member of the Janata Party is that I never know whether I'm coming or going

MENAKA GANDHI, *Janata Party leader*

The Congress culture is finished

ABDUL GHAFOOR, *Congress(I) MP*

Unlike the Congress(I), we cannot run the government under a cloud of corruption

JYOTI BASU, *West Bengal chief minister*

It is proved beyond doubt that Jyoti Basu is not cleaner than Rajiv Gandhi

JATIN CHAKRAVORTY, *former West Bengal PWD minister,in* The Sunday Observer

Janata is synonymous with quarrels, and in the last six months they have done nothing but quarrel.

K P UNNIKRISHNAN, *general secretary, Congress(S)*

Let him (Bahuguna) form his own Lok Dal and lead the party

DEVI LAL, *Haryana chief minister*

We thought we would entertain the farmers with a burst of Bruce Springsteen And why not?

ROMESH BHANDARI *Lt Governor of Delhi,on the music played from police vehicles during the farmers' rally*

It (the music) is also in tune with Mr Rajiv Gandhi's craze for everything foreign

P UPENDRA, *Telugu Desam MP*

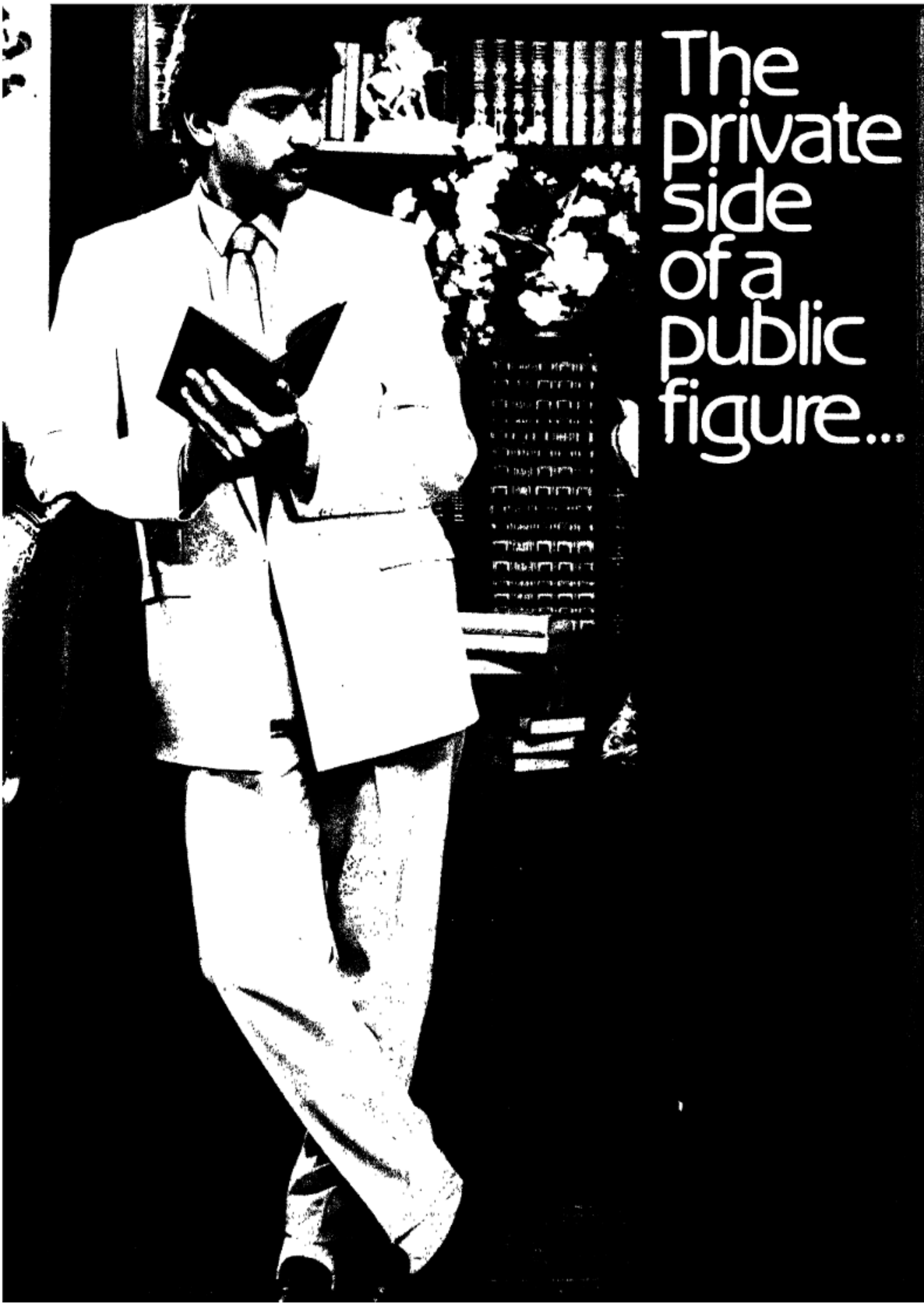
The Indian state has never been so oppressive as it is now

RAJNI KOTHARI, *political scientist*

Why shouldwe term experimental anything that deviates from the normal? Anything offbeat is bound to be experimental till it's accepted. Even traditional theatre was experimental once upon a time.

SARITA JOSHI, *winner of the Sangeet Natak Academy award for best actress*

"


The private side of a public figure...

The southern offensive

Rajiv draws massive crowds in Tamil Nadu. But do gawkers make voters?

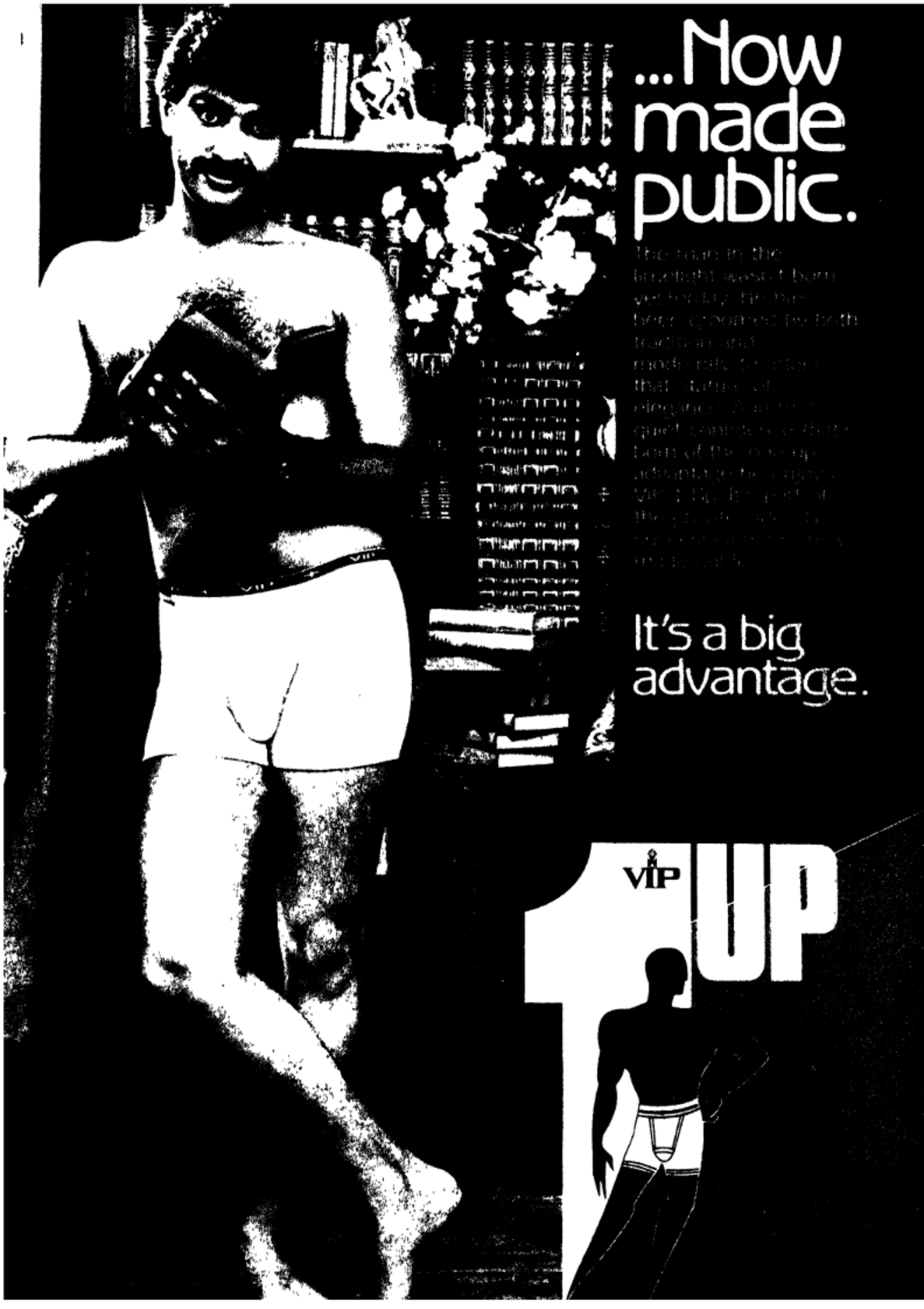


There is a lovely road that runs from Madurai, across open undulating scrubland, to the foot of the Palani Hills The road runs through a countryside dominated by thorn trees, exotic palms and outcrops of rock This is a remote southern corner of the subcontinent· the heart of Tamil land. As unique as the landscape are the people, who understand only Tamil and have been ruled for over two decades by political parties that have championed the Dravidian identity and to whom northern, Hindi-speaking politicians are anathema. Yet, when Rajiv Gandhi sped through this road last week, he was greeted by hysterical crowds at every crossing, village and town square

Old women wept, senior citizens presented ceremonial towels, the religious offered prayers, women ululated, boys shinnied up poles and tree tops, grown men climbed onto ledges and the crowds strained at makeshift barriers to get a closer look at Rajiv Gandhi. They had all come to gawk at their Prime Minister and heir to the legacy of 'Indira Amma' (mother) And for the three triumphant days (October 25-27) that he toured the five districts of southern Tamil Nadu, it was clear that the politics of parochialism had not succeeded in destroying the appeal of a national political figure—or, for that matter, the appeal of a Nehru

State Congressmen, long resigned to playing second fiddle in Tamil politics, suddenly woke to the thrilling possibility of power Equally fast to react were the two major AIADMK factions For the first time, supporters of the Janaki Ramachandran faction turned up at the Prime Minister's roadside meetings in an attempt to signal that they too were available for an electoral alliance. The other AIADMK faction led by Jayalalitha, having already expressed its desire for an alliance, used the opportunity to point out the need to jointly oppose the state's major Opposition party, M. Karunanidhi's DMK.

Even the Prime Minister's tour organisers were amazed—the overwhelming response, its spontaneity and warmth far exceeded expectations. Most of the people who waited –at times till the early hours of the morning—to see him had come with little idea of what he was actually like. "We have come to see Indira Amma's son," was the common refrain. Many even did not know his name. But they evidently liked what they saw. And an exultant Prime Minister responded with boyish abandon. He made it a point to stop his cavalcade at every point where people had gathered; at times. he surprised peasants on their


...Now made public.
It's a big advantage.
VIP
UP

way to work and talked to th[illegible] at the most crowded of gatherings flushed Prime Minister threw coconuts and towels and garlands back at the people, and at every meeting, he 'confessed' how much he was touched by the welcome accorded to him.

If the reception was heady, its implications were not. For, it raised the inevitable question: do gawkers make voters? And the Congress(I)'s failure to distinguish between gawkers and voters has proved more than embarrassing on several earlier occasions in other states. In Tamil Nadu, the distinction will prove crucial. Especially since the reception to Rajiv Gandhi has stoked the political passions of state Congressmen to fever pitch. Excited state Congressmen, including normally level-headed leaders like the present chief of the Tamil Nadu Pradesh Congress(I) Committee, G.K. Moopanar, are now advocating a bold, even foolhardy, bid for independent power.

The time has come, Congressmen like Moopanar believe, to cast aside all alliances with the so-called Dravidian parties and go to the hustings alone. The popular response to Rajiv Gandhi is being interpreted by the power-hungry state Congress(I) as an indication for change.

"The people in Tamil Nadu go after personalities," adds PCC(I) general secretary Tindivanam K. Ramamurthy. "They elected Kamaraj because of his image as a simple man with a shrewd political mind and administrative capacities. For a brief period, there was Annadurai who founded the DMK and, after that, the people here got bowled over by MGR's charisma." Most Tamil Nadu Congressmen believe that now Rajiv Gandhi will neatly fill the void created by MGR's death.

Moopanar, who organised this tour and the three earlier ones, also feels that "there is a qualitative change" in the crowds thronging to see Rajiv Gandhi. "This is a crowd that has not just come to watch but a crowd that will vote for Rajiv Gandhi," he claims. The Prime Minister's bureaucratic aides concur. "Will V.P. Singh or Devi Lal ever get this kind of reception in Tamil Nadu?" asked one of the Prime Minister's key aides. Possibly not, but much of Rajiv Gandhi's appeal has to do with the fact that his mother and grandfather have ruled the country. Mrs Indira Gandhi, in particular, is still held in great reverence in rural Tamil Nadu. And best of all, Rajiv Gandhi is only too aware of this.

When asked what his reading of the crowds was, Rajiv Gandhi, without a moment's hesitation, replied: "Most of the people have come to see me because of my mother..." He did not think that the crowds would have any significant impact on his party organisation as a whole, or that one could read more to it. The Prime Minister's realism stems from experience. In West Bengal, he had seen similar crowds thronging his meetings and all his aides had predicted a landslide victory for the Congress(I). As it turned out, the Congress(I) received a drubbing at the hands of the Left Front—worse, the Congress(I)'s tally of seats in that Assembly election actually declined.





Images of the PM's Tamil Nadu trip: a warm welcome

When asked what his reading of the crowd was, Rajiv Gandhi replied: "Most of the people have come to see me because of my mother." His realism stems from experience. In West Bengal, similar crowds had thronged to his meetings, but the Congress received a drubbing at the hands of the Left Front

Besides, in Tamil Nadu itself gawkers have proved notoriously fickle. Veteran Tamil leaders like Kamaraj and M. Karunanidhi, too, had been deceived by crowds in the past. PCC(I) general secretary Ramamurthy, however, insists that the crowds at the Prime Minister's meetings did not merely indicate curiosity. Unlike the meetings of Kamaraj and Karunanidhi, Ramamurthy explains, the response to Rajiv Gandhi was spontaneous and not organised. Another PCC(I) general secretary K. Thangabalu says: "We are confident that even if 60 per cent of the crowds that came to see Rajiv, vote for the Congress(I), our party will be able to win at least 140 seats (out of a total of 234) in the Assembly."

From the point of view of Tamil Congressmen, the present situation offers a historical opportunity for the Congress(I) to reassert itself in the state. Also, Congressmen fear that by clinging on to the apron-strings of a regional party like the AIADMK, they would be ensuring self-extinction. On the other hand, by going it alone the Congress(I) would be building credibility





and strengthening its organisational set-up, while simultaneously crippling the chances of at least one of the major regional political groups. Moopanar goes a step further and argues that even if the Congress(I) does not secure a decisive victory in the next Assembly elections scheduled to be held early next year—it would still be better off as a major Opposition party in the state. "We have been out of power here for 20 years, so what is the hurry in getting back to power," says Moopanar. "We have time, we have years to get back to power in Tamil Nadu, but we have to decide whether we want to get back in the running or remain a spectator."

Such perceptions have created a dilemma for Rajiv Gandhi. For, at stake is not merely the future of the Congress(I) in Tamil Nadu. More important is the likely impact of the Tamil Nadu Assembly poll results on national politics. With the next Lok Sabha elections just about a year away, the Congress(I) national leadership simply cannot afford to take chances. A defeat for the Congress(I) in Tamil Nadu and the victory of Karunanidhi's DMK would be a psychological blow to the Congress(I) and would provide just the shot in the arm the national Opposition alliance needs.

Faced with this dilemma, Rajiv Gandhi is being extra careful in evaluating the options. He has constituted a five-member committee, comprising Cabinet ministers Buta Singh, P.V. Narasimha Rao, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, Jagdish Tytler and Ajit Kumar Panja, to examine the party's poll prospects in the state. Senior MPs from the north—especially veteran politicians who have no biases on Tamil Nadu politics—are being included in the Prime Minister's entourage to independently assess the crowds. For the moment, Rajiv Gandhi is keeping an open mind on the issue and before making a final decision - which he says he will at the time of announcing the date of the elections—all senior state party leaders will be invited to Delhi for formal talks on a poll strategy.

The softest course for the Congress(I) would be to stick to the tentative agreement forged with the Jayalalitha faction of the AIADMK. In this event, as in the past, the AIADMK (Jayalalitha) faction would be given the majority of Assembly seats and the right to form the government. But this time, the Congress(I) could demand a few ministerial portfolios. In return, the AIADMK would leave the Congress(I) the majority (about two-thirds) of the Lok Sabha seats in the state. The faint hearted in Rajiv Gandhi's camp advocate this course.

The next Assembly poll in Tamil Nadu will, moreover, be a bitter battle for survival. The DMK, for instance, has been out of power for over a decade and its vote has been constantly shrinking; another defeat could bury it permanently. For the two major AIADMK factions—led by Jayalalitha and MGR's widow Janaki—the next state election will be equally crucial, for, both the factions claim to be the true AIADMK and the voters will decide which, in fact, is the true inheritor of MGR's legacy.

In between is the Congress(I) and the apotheosis of Rajiv Gandhi. And the question in Tamil Nadu now is whether or not this god will respond to the challenge of his dedication. Last week as he sped, along with wife Sonia, down the dusty roads of Tamil Nadu, Rajiv Gandhi had reason to feel like an *avatar* before the adulating crowds. But he was only awed. And once he got back into the special Air Force Boeing 737 and soared towards Delhi, he was just a weary Prime Minister faced with yet another mortal decision.

Indranil Banerjie in the PM's entourage with Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

Photographs Gautam Patole

Continuity in Change

Excerpts from the speech of Shri J.N. Sapru, Chairman, I.T.C. Limited, at the 77th Annual General Meeting held on 14.10.1988.



Shri J. N. Sapru

INTRODUCTION

On the economic front, the year 1987/88 has been a difficult one for the country. Inflation, which inevitably rears its head in these adverse circumstances, will need to be closely monitored through carefully designed monetary and fiscal policies, and a severe check on non-plan expenditure exercised to avoid a repetition of the near double digit inflation of last year. The overall favourable monsoon this year has buoyed the economy, and though foodgrains production—estimated at around 170 million tonnes this year—will be an all-time record, we would be well advised to be less euphoric about it as the beneficial impact will take time to permeate. In the interim, the steps taken to accelerate the growth in the service and industrial sectors need to be further augmented through the process of measures now termed as 'liberalisation', and through specific incentives to boost the exports and foreign exchange earnings.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Total income crossed Rs 1200 crores and, after payment of over Rs 819 crores by way of customs and excise duties, net income at Rs 381 crores registered an 18% increase over last year. From the profit after tax of Rs 24.79 crores, your Directors are pleased to recommend a dividend of 35% after retaining Rs 13.18 crores for future growth and expansion.

1. Foreign Exchange

For some years, India's tobacco exports have been declining for several reasons. What has been forgotten is that India is the third largest producer of tobacco in the world, and this important agricultural cash crop could play an important part in the drive for more export earnings, provided it was given the encouragement and incentives to improve its quality and competitiveness in the international market.

Your Company has for some years been taking steps to increase its non-traditional exports and foreign exchange earnings. **Several new areas of foreign exchange earnings are being simultaneously worked upon and I am pleased to highlight that today over two-thirds of your Company's foreign exchange earnings of about Rs 55 crores are from non-traditional items and, further, they represent nearly 15% of your Company's net turnover.**

2. Agri-businesses Division

Last year, I had given you an indication about your Company's proposed entry into edible and non-edible oils. The Agri-businesses Division became a reality from May this year and its objectives are: to assist the country in achieving self-reliance in edible oils and thereby conserving valuable foreign exchange; earning foreign exchange through the export of by-products and other agricultural produce; through research and development, improve farm economics and quality of life in the agrarian sector.

ITC has made arrangements with leading international organisations with proven track records of research in oilseeds for rendering technical assistance and scientific advice for the development of sunflower hybrid seeds. ITC shall spare no efforts to contribute significantly in improving yields and increasing production of oilseeds in the country.

3. Family Planning

We have stepped up our family planning activities in a big way, and are working closely with Government not only for effective distribution of contraceptives, but also through a variety of means to increase awareness among vast sections of the population of this very essential national priority. For the year ended March 1988, your Company achieved a sales turnover of 128 million pieces of condoms, which is the highest ever recorded by any company.

EXCISE

As you are aware the Director, Anti-Evasion, had issued a Show Cause Notice to your Company in March 1987, proposing to levy differential excise duty of Rs 800-odd crores on the allegation that your Company has misdeclared the maximum retail sale price printed on cigarette packets (which formed the basis of payment of excise duty from March 1983 to February 1987) to the extent that the actual prices charged by retailers were higher and that such prices were fixed by the Company for purposes of retail sale in the market. The Show Cause Notice was challenged before the Calcutta High Court but the Trial Court dismissed the Writ Petition on the ground that the allegations could properly be adjudicated upon by an Adjudicating Authority and not by the High Court in its writ jurisdiction.

An appeal was preferred against this judgement and the Appeal Court by its judgement dated 12th October 1988 has now agreed with the trial judge. However, the Appeal Court has clarified that the burden of proving all allegations made in the Show Cause Notice lies with Excise Authorities and your Company would be entitled to submit all evidence in support of its contention as may be considered necessary by your Company. The Adjudicator will decided the matter after considering such evidence.

We have not yet received copies of the Judgement. Further course of action, including appeals to Supreme Court, will be considered and decided after a detailed study of the Appeal Court Judgement is carried out. Meanwhile, your Company will continue to participate in the adjudication proceedings which had commenced in May this year.

I would like to reiterate your Company has not, ever, evaded excise duties nor knowingly trangressed the law.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

The trading results of the first quarter indicate a healthy outlook for the year ahead with all Divisions continuing to record satisfactory progress. Your Company will spare no effort to continue to augment foreign exchange earnings.

The next year will see further consolidation of the Agri-businesses Division. This important activity yields gradual results and its growth will be apparent over a period of three to four years. It is your Board's plan to engage in a phased, modular expansion into downstream products in the future.

These results would not have been possible without the dedicated endeavour of all our employees at every level of your Company's operations. Thank you also for your continued and unwavering support.

PREAMBLE: THE REASSESSMENT

I would like to briefly dwell on the expected responsibilities of large houses and reassess and reaffirm your Company's sense of purpose and direction.

Public debate would seem to imply that as a nation we have only weaknesses and no strengths. We seem to be taking delight in publicly berating ourselves and highlighting what is wrong and not what is right. Let us build from our strengths rather than focus always on our weaknesses.

We forget the sheer enormity of our country, and the magnitude of our achievement in increasing the National Income 28 times since the first decade of planning. Of creating an infrastructure which is the envy of even the developed world.

India is not short of resources. Economic surpluses are not God given nor created automatically. They are the result of what the human resource does with the physical or material resources. The solution to our economic advance is very much in our hands and in our ability to mobilise the creative productivity of our vast human resources.

Your Company as a corporate citizen has also been in the vanguard. **From the mid-'50s to the mid-'80s, your Company's sales turnover increased 31 times, contributions to the exchequer as excise tax 58 times, and the net fixed asset base expanded 21 times. Foreign exchange earnings in recent years crossed the Rs 50 crore mark, and profit before tax has grown more than ten-fold.** What 77 years ago started as a cigarette company, is now a multi-product, multi-market, and multi-technology organisation of businesses, symbolising 'Continuity in Change', and marching ahead in the overall interests of our stakeholders, and the development of our nation.

To establish the rationale of our practice, and obtain our direction, let us assess the market circumstance.

Around 540 million people live above the poverty line in India, and if we take 50% of this, we are already talking about a market-size of around 270 million people, which is growing in numbers and affluence, and which can be compared to any country.

Emanating from the first, the second reality about our market is its vast demand potential. India is a rich country with many poor people. If we can harness and channel our demand potential, with appropriate products and services, we can not only augment commercial surpluses but, in doing so, bring about an unparalleled socio-economic transformation

THE REAFFIRMATION

To make all this happen, we must reaffirm a sense of direction.

In the past, when ITC was a single-product company, it was possible to get our bearings by answering the question "What business are we in?" Today, with a multiplicity of businesses, we must answer the question "What do we stand for?"

First, ITC is an Indian 'professio ial' commercial organisation, where control is earned and exercised through performance, and existence is allowed by public sanction.

But though we are professionals, we are not mercenaries. We have our aspirations, our values and a code of conduct that enables a congruence of theory and practice.

ITC is a professional organisation in yet another sense. In ITC there is a continuous revitalising of the human resource to prevent obsolesence, and a continuing focus on accountability and contributions with commensurate rewards.

Perhaps the single most important dimension of professionalism in ITC is the separation of ownership from control. In a large professional concern, where decision-making is decentralised, it is intrinsically required that there be a common understanding of the purpose and mission as the corporation or institution extends beyond and outlives the man or leader.

Secondly, ITC manages commercial enterprise for commercial results.

No society can shed the shackles of poverty until its investments create surpluses. It is the responsibility of business to create surpluses through the effective management of all resources held by it in trust for society for the overall benefit of all stakeholders.

In India we have some soul-searching to do. For reasons rooted in historical experience, the creation of profit has been equated with exploitation. But these attitudes have no relevance to our day and age which will not tolerate profiteering; if we do not impose the most desirable compulsion to make a fair return on investment, we would be falling seriously short of our duties as professional managers of commercial enterprise, and responsible citizens of modern India.

Thirdly, ITC makes sustained contributions to the quality of life.

We realise that the quality of profit, though essential, is not a substitute for the quality of life that our enterprise contributes to for all its stakeholders. Considering our history and commercial profile, our *shareholders* expect security, a growth in the value of their investment, and a meaningful return.

Our *suppliers* and *business associates*, many of them in the small-scale and ancillary sectors, expect organisations like ours to provide them steady long-term markets.

Our *employees* are not only seeking employment but growth opportunities.

Our *customers*, the reason for our business existence, are seeking enduring value; this is reflected in the quality of products and services we provide.

Government expects us to be partners in progress. We must make and take opportunity by providing impetus through research, innovation, investment, and managment to contribute to the uniform development of our nation.

Society expects responsible and responsive behaviour from corporations and not charity. Enlightened self interest demands businesses to make qualitative contributions for the betterment of the environment around us It requires the enmeshing of business objectives with social needs so that our rich and varied national heritage is encouraged and preserved.

The competing demands on your organisation's varied contributions are harmonised and balanced by an irrevocable commitment to excellence. It is a dynamic concept which makes us reach forever forward. This is a concept which helps direction setting for the professional manager, who is a leader but not a master

Fourthly ITC values knowledge and derives its strength from the collective knowledge of its people.

When organisations like your Company operate in the Indian market, they do so in a very specific context In developing countries, alongside the branded differentiated market there is a vast market of unbranded and undifferentiated substitutes. Witness the co-existence of these two types in the product fields of cigarettes and 'bidis', loose and packaged oil, loose and packaged tea, etc. The logics of success in these two markets are different. One has a windfall and speculative short term approach to the market. The other is based on making investments in value addition Your Corporation belongs to this second type



To be successful in this context, ITC's strategies must be based on research and superior knowledge of the product and the consumer. Your Company's success depends not on short term expediency, but in creating surpluses by adding value, based on research and superior knowledge of the product, processes and the consumer.

Finally, ITC stands for the ability to harness and allocate resources, both human and financial which are befitting its size and strengths.

One of the main inhibitions to the realisation of the potential of the Indian market is the inability to mobilise adequate resources. In our country there is a belief that big and small are antagonistic to each other In reality, there should be no competition. Both have their distinctive roles to play and the sooner we realise their complementarity, the sooner will both thrive to mutual benefit and the larger interests of the country. Similarly, there is a belief that wealth creation and distributive justice are mutually exclusive issues You cannot distribute poverty Distribution must follow the creation of wealth as night follows day.

The general hypothesis is that to be able to maintain the requisite standards of competitiveness and quality, organisations like your Company have to make substantial investments, which are of a 'sunk' nature These investments are in areas like R&D, capacities and people. The only way to make these investments economic is to defray them over a large market, which is an intrinsic advantage for enterprise in India

In this context, ITC as an enterprise must always think big and will adopt strategies that are commensurate to its size and scale. ITC will endeavour to mobilise resources to make investments and absorb gestations which emphasise the strengths of your Company and are in the interests of the country.

In conclusion, let us recapitulate. Your Company is motivated by the five fundamental factors of professionalism, commercial results, quality of life, knowledge and resource ability. The sum of these constitute your Company's reputation and goodwill built over eight decades of consist nt dedication to the pursuit of excellence. We value our goodwill and will carry it forward to the future as our most cherished resource.

Integrating these six factors we can state what ITC stands for :

ITC stands for the professional management of commercial enterprise and its planned growth through the effective use of knowledge and resources at its command to create sustained surpluses and contribute to the quality of life as a valued corporate citizen.

This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the 77th Annual General Meeting.

Professional Management of Planned Growth

INDIA TOBACCO DIVISION · INDIAN LEAF TOBACCO DEVELOPMENT DIVISION · PACKAGING AND PRINTING DIVISION · WELCOMGROUP – HOTELS DIVISION
EXPORTS DIVISION · AGRI-BUSINESSES DIVISION · BHADRACHALAM PAPERBOARDS LIMITED – AN ITC-PROMOTED ENTERPRISE

Contract ITC 156 88



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

Of suffrage at 18 years

V. P. Singh's proposal—which the Janata Dal adopted, and which the Congress(I) Working Committee later picked up- to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18 years is worth pursuing. As many as 72 countries in the world are already holding elections on this basis. Among them are the USA, the USSR, the UK, France, Canada, Australia, Italy and West Germany.

The Election Commission has recommended this step to the government twice in the last few years. Reducing the voting age to 18 would, according to the commission's estimates, increase the number of voters by 4.48 crores, nearly 11 per cent of a total electorate of a little over 44.8 crores.

The government has for long been opposed to reducing the voting age. Even when the Janata Party was in power, it did not adopt the proposal which it had supported before coming to power. Indeed, Jayaprakash Narayan had promised it to the youth.

In fact, the Janata Party did not press even its pet proposal for a multi-member commission. Article 324 of the Constitution says that "the Election Commission shall consist of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of the election commissioners..." R.K. Hegde had accused successive Chief Election Commissioners of "partisanship" and had recommended a multi-member commission with the Chief Election Commissioner as the chairman. But the Janata did not implement the suggestion, although the Chief Election Commissioner retired in 1977 after the party came to power. For some reason, the Congress(I) has now adopted the proposal.

Probably what held back the Janata Party from reducing the voting age was that a constitutional amendment would have been necessary; Article 326 prescribes "not less than 21 years of age" for the right to franchise. An amendment requires a two-thirds majority in each of the two Houses. The Janata government had a majority in the Lok Sabha but not the two-thirds required; and it did not have even a simple majority in the Rajya Sabha.

But I do not recall the Janata government even taking up the proposal with the Congress(I). If the latter could agree at that time to the withdrawal of most amendments passed during the Emergency, it would have accepted 18 years as the voting age, particularly when it was a popular measure. However, the change in the Congress(I) stand is welcome. It seems to have got over the suspicion that the proposal was meant to inveigle the youth of the country into supporting the Opposition party in the next general elections.

The very idea of decentralisation of power which even Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has come to like—as his meetings with district collectors suggest—represents a widening of the base. An addition of nearly 11 crore voters will partially serve that purpose.

The first mistake, which took the country away from this objective, was committed in 1946. The drafting committee of the Constitution never discussed the question of voting age seriously; it was so satisfied with the extension of suffrage to every adult citizen that the age did not matter to it. The limited franchise during the British period was for those who were 21 years; the drafting committee accepted it and the Constituent Assembly put its seal of approval.



True, by reducing the age to 18, lakhs of voters would come into the fold of politics. This is a plus point, not minus. Making a greater number of youths participate in the elections would be the best way of choosing representatives

Even this was a revolutionary change--adult suffrage—and men like Dr Rajendra Prasad, chairman of the Constituent Assembly, and H.N. Kunzru, a leading light of the Opposition, were unhappy. A "sudden rise in the suffrage right" looked too drastic to them. It is reasonable to deduce that they would not have supported the idea of 18 years as the age for voting right.

Under the Act of 1935, Kunzru said, only about 18 per cent of the people were enfranchised in British India and there were hardly any local bodies in the Indian states. Now, under the Constitution, "to go at one bound from a greatly restricted to universal franchise is not part of wisdom".

Speaking in the same vein, Dr Rajendra Prasad characterised the decision of the Constitution framers as "an experiment" which, if not exercised properly, was fraught with grave dangers. It would mean, he said, putting the educated and the ignorant, the honest and the dishonest on the same footing.

The Constituent Assembly accepted, by a majority vote, the principle of universal adult suffrage and it was incorporated in the Constitution. It was, no doubt, "a very big step" which involved tremendous risks. The faith that was thus bestowed upon the "common man" may be said to have been not wholly misplaced as shown by the past general elections.

True, by reducing the age to 18, lakhs of voters would come into the fold of politics. This is a plus point, not minus. In fact, making a greater number of youths participate in the elections would be the best way of choosing representatives. I wish Rajiv Gandhi would take the lead in this. He is young and such steps are—or at least once were—expected of him.

What made him reluctant might have been the fear that the young, who are apt to be idealistic, may be more upset over the corruption charges against his government than the old. But now that his own party's working committee has come out in its favour, he will do well to accept the proposal, though it carries the V.P. Singh tag, which must be abhorrent to him. ◻

You can't stop a man on a Hero Honda.

From talking.



When we launched the Hero Honda CD 100 in 1985, we knew it was a good thing. A fact confirmed by the owners.

Some are moved by the economy (80 km/litre*). Some by the easy maintenance. Others by the name of Honda. And all exult in the riding pleasure of India's only 4-stroke 100 cc bike. Honda engineering—Hero's choice.

In all, 200,000 happy owners, each with his own reason for feeling good. To all of you, we can say one thing. You've got a good thing going

All said and done...

You've got a Good thing Going!

HERO HONDA

A glorious chapter in history recalls Allahabad, the nerve centre of India's freedom struggle, that gave a new hope to a nation.



It is never right to submit to evil and national humiliation, and every attempt to impose these must be resisted, whatever the consequences.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad the city of the Congress and Nehru was a proud participant in the country s awakening to a new mass struggle for freedom In enthusing the people to rise against colonial oppression and cast away the foreign yoke

The chronicles record that at Allahabad the mighty king, Harshvardhana used to hold an Assembly of Moksha every five years and distribute all his wealth among the poor Allahabad is the scene of the Kumbh fair at the sacred confluence of the Ganges the Yamuna and the invisible Saraswati In a serene silence, the Bharadwaj Ashram lies as a spiritual retreat

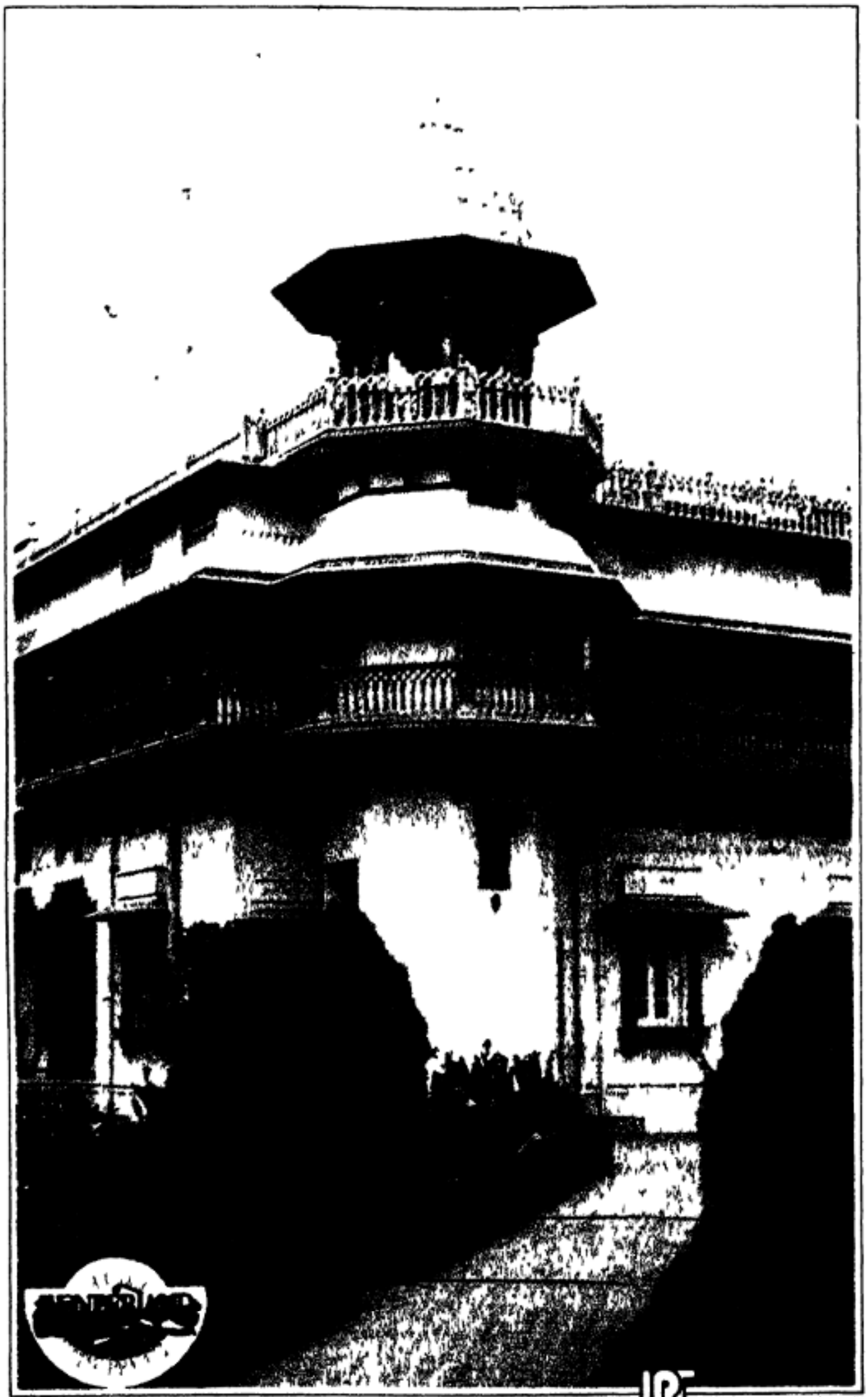
Uttar Pradesh evokes the memories of some of the most glorious moments in India s struggle for independence

Jhansi poignant with the reminiscences of Rani Lakshmibai who, in her defiance to the British might, came to a tragic end but refused to yield Bithoor, a mute testimony to the valour of Peshwa Nana Saheb and Tatya Tope, remembering their triumphs and tragedies Lucknow, where the Residency was sieged for forty-five days by the soldiers of the war of independence Meerut, where Mangal Pandey rose up in arms against an alien oppressor

Many a time Uttar Pradesh has emerged from the mist of history and shone with a scintillating brilliance Its cities and monuments are a witness Agra, the city of the Mughal splendour Fatehpur Sikri Emperor Akbar s deserted capital Mahoba, the fabled land of the legendary warriors, Alha and Udal

Accessibility : Lucknow, Agra, Varanasi and Kanpur have direct air connections with the major cities of India. All the places in Uttar Pradesh are linked with a network of rail and road Inter state buses and luxury coaches ply between important cities of Uttar Pradesh and other states

Accommodation : All the destinations offer wide ranging accommodation facilities—from luxury hotels to youth hostels, dharamshalas and pilgrim sheds. In addition, UP Tourism provides 129 well-appointed stay-points at various tourist centres

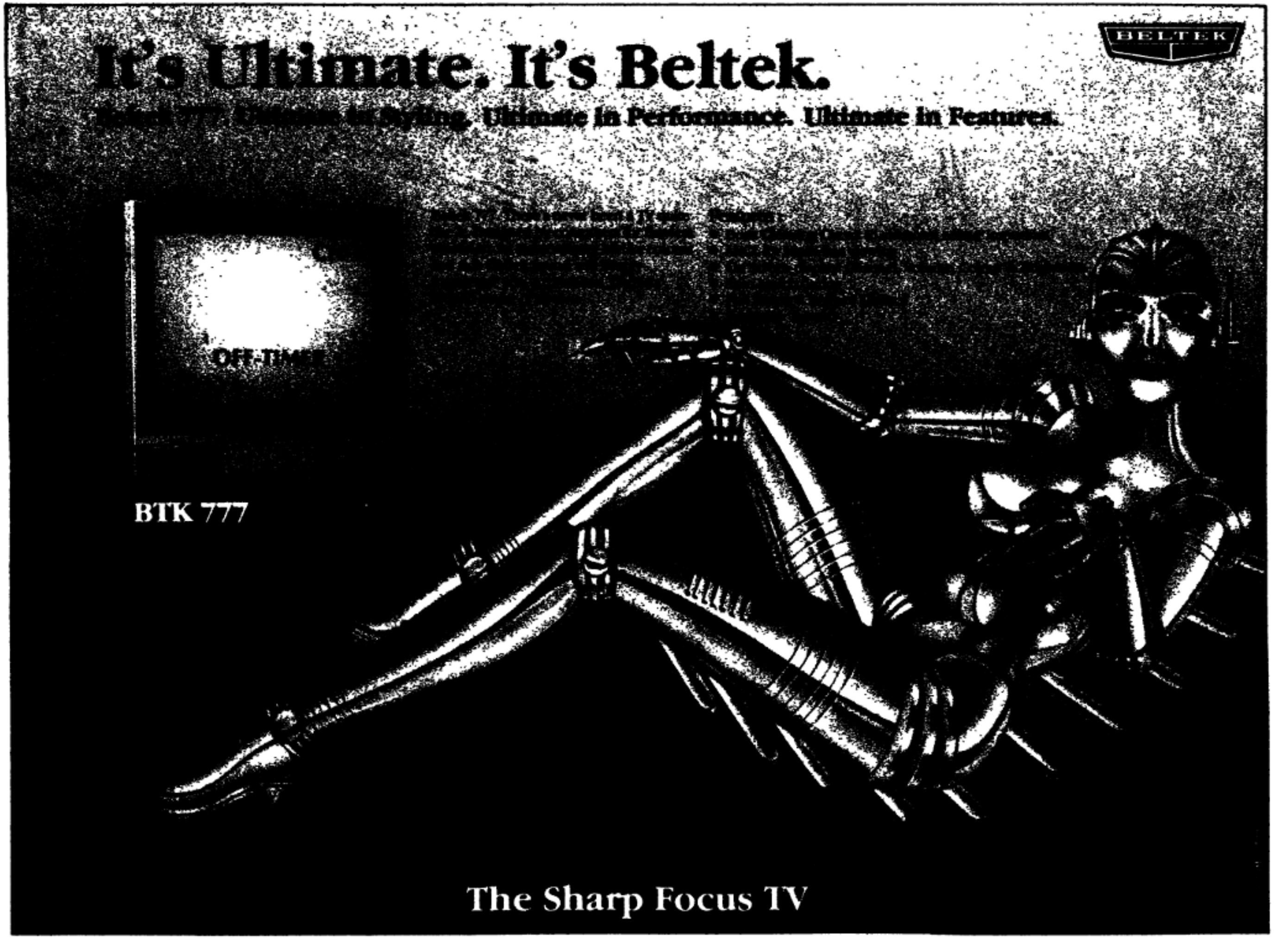


Anand Bhawan where the architect of modern India, Jawaharlal Nehru spent his early days.

Uttar Pradesh. The spirit lives on.

U.P. Tourism

Chitrahar , 3 Naval Kishore Road, Lucknow 226 001


It's Ultimate. It's Beltek.
Ultimate in Performance. Ultimate in Features.
BELTEK
BTK 777
The Sharp Focus TV



Anticipation

The ability to sense changing trends and introduce pioneering products Like centrifugals for batch and continuous processes, to recently, the 1000 kg per charge centrifugal, the latest bagasse dryers and four roller milling plants Making Buckau Wolf virtually the benchmark by which competition is assessed And helping us execute many successful turnkey and expansion projects in India and abroad Anticipation coupled with consistent quality and the backing of Krupp, West Germany A few small reasons for our reputed capabilities



BUCKAU WOLF
More than engineers People with a sense of values

KRUPP
Buckau Wolf with Krupp technology

Buckau Wolf India Ltd., Pimpri, Pune 411 018. Tel: 66461. Telex: 146-267.

Aramusk



Discover it in Aramusk after shave.
It's a profusion of leather, creamy and rich.
Uniquely contoured to suit a man's grip.
Aramusk.
An indulgence reserved for
the achieving male.

EXTRAVAGANTLY MALE

Aramusk is brought to you by Shaw Wallace

The loneliness of H.N.Bahuguna

Shunned by the Opposition , uncertainty dogs the future of the Lok Dal leader

Flamboyant, intelligent, egotistic—H.N. Bahuguna in the 1970s was the politician of not only the present but of the future too. But little over a decade later, a big question mark hangs over his political career as he finds himself isolated from the recognised political forces. The adjectives are still relevant, his secularism is like a breath of fresh air in a surcharged communal environment, and yet Bahuguna is finding it an uphill task to carve a recognisable niche for himself in the nation's politics. He carries on regardless, fighting to retain control over an essentially caste-based political party—the Lok Dal—even though at heart he has never been able to reconcile himself to its limited ideology.

The flamboyance is undiminished, the ego is still intact. When asked to speak about his chief ministership, Bahuguna declares, "no politician can claim he has acted like a missionary," adding quietly that he has come nearest to it in dealing with the Muslims of Uttar Pradesh in the mid-70s when he was the chief minister. He likes to speak about the past, being far more reluctant to talk about the not-so-glorious present.

His political fortune can be demarcated into two clear phases. After a consistent rise which lasted till the mid-70s, it has been a steady fall. Regardless of the positions he might have held since then, he has never really found his feet either in the Congress party or in the Opposition where his colleagues describe him as a "fish out of water". Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna was definitely a bright political prospect with ambition, foresight and shrewdness. He was close to the Nehru family from the very beginning, being part and parcel of the Anand Bhawan set-up in Allahabad. From a trade unionist, he joined the party organisation looking after its affairs in UP. He became a confidant of Indira Gandhi, particularly during the 1969 split when he handled the UP Congress for her and ensured that she retained power in the all-important state. Mrs Gandhi later brought him to the Centre as the communications minister and after Kamlapati Tripathi quit as the UP chief minister following the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) revolt, Bahuguna was sent in his place.

And it was in this large state that Bahuguna made his mark as a leader ahead of his contemporaries. Even today he is remembered by the people and his colleagues alike as the most successful chief minister of the state. He also enjoys the distinction of being the last strong, independent functionary to have



H.N. Bahuguna: uncertain future

led Uttar Pradesh albeit for a brief while. Bahuguna's flamboyance was always his weakness and it was this trait that was used by his detractors to eventually turn Indira Gandhi against him.

There was no doubt that Mrs Gandhi was in deep trouble when she sent for Bahuguna to literally save her. And there is again no doubt that he delivered the goods by ensuring that the Congress survived a shaky foundation and romped home in the elections, although with a small margin. But it was still victory when a defeat was very much expected, and most political observers concede that Bahuguna was largely responsible for turning the vote in favour of the Congress.

However, this popularity went against him - as did his increasing confidence. After the elections he issued a circular stating that the chief minister of UP should be accorded the same protocol as the Prime Minister of India, much to Indira Gandhi's chagrin. A little earlier, he had got into trouble when he did not follow the Prime Minister's instructions to quietly work for K.K. Birla's election to the Rajya Sabha. Yashpal Kapoor was sent from Delhi to mobilise votes, but he was humiliated by Bahuguna, who, in fact worked to see that Birla was defeated.

So began Bahuguna's decline. He became the victim of a leadership which would not tolerate a threat, even at the state level. Sanjay Gandhi had emerged as a major political force and begun taking a direct interest in UP. Bahuguna was summarily dismissed and Narain Dutt Tiwari installed in his place. And it is from here that Bahuguna's wheel of fortune began to turn for the worse.

When elections were announced after the Emergency was lifted, he left the Congress along with Jagjivan Ram and Nandini Satpathy to form the Congress for Democracy. This new group subsequently joined the Janata Party but were not given many seats as they had taken their decision a bit late in the day. Bahuguna became the petroleum and chemicals minister in the new government but, again, according to those who knew him, they never felt comfortable over the dual membership of the RSS. He went along with Charan Singh and became the finance minister for a while, only to leave and rejoin the Congress.

The story has it that Indira Gandhi went to his residence along with Sanjay and asked the latter to touch Bahuguna's feet. Bahuguna yielded and returned happily to the Congress(I) fold, more so as he had never felt comfortable in the Opposition having been a prototype Congressman all his life. Indira Gandhi made him the secretary-general of the party, a new post which found for him a place in her room in the AICC(I) headquarters, but gave him no work. She promised him a ministership. The elections came and went and Bahuguna was left hanging. He was supposed to go to Kerala to campaign for the party but was reluctant because he was upset with the Congress and would anyway have liked the Left to retain control of the state. He followed the advice of some friends and got admitted to hospital.

Eventually, unable to tolerate the humiliation meted out to him by Sanjay Gandhi, Bahuguna made the second major miscalculation of his career—he quit the Congress. As events turned out, Sanjay was killed in an air crash soon after. But Bahuguna did not just resign from the Congress; living up to his principles he resigned his Lok Sabha seat as well.

An insecure regime postponed the Garhwal election for months on one pretext or the other. Finally, even Indira Gandhi had no option but to bow before the law and the election was held with Bahuguna contesting as an independent with the supposed support of the entire Opposition. As he said recently when asked why he had gone to campaign for V.P. Singh at Allahabad for only one day, "Is he a child that he needs the help of the entire Opposition? I say you are doing him an injustice by suggesting that he cannot win Allahabad on his own. After all, which Opposition leader came to Garhwal to campaign for me. I was entirely on my own." Interestingly, V.P. Singh was the chief minister of UP at that time and he obeyed Mrs Gandhi's instructions to make the going as tough as possible for Bahuguna. The latter was injured in an organised attack on him and

Bahuguna's political career can be demarcated into two phases. After a consistent rise which lasted till the mid-70s, it has been a steady fall





he has, according to those close to him, never really been able to forgive V.P. Singh for playing foul. More so, because Singh was his protege, having secured the Lok Sabha ticket from Allahabad in 1971 entirely at Bahuguna's intervention. Bahuguna at the time wanted to neutralise V.P. Singh's step-brother, Sant Bux Singh, who was in the Congress but was an active rightwinger. To counter him, Bahuguna brought V.P. Singh into the party but the latter took little time in ditching him for Sanjay Gandhi. Interestingly, at the time, owing to Bahuguna's long involvement with the trade unions of Allahabad and his grassroot contacts there, his hold over this prestigious constituency was total. V.P. Singh was a relative non-entity. It has taken only a decade for the tables to be turned.

After winning the election, Bahuguna did not really know what to do and responded eagerly to Charan Singh's offer to join the Lok Dal as vice-president. Charan Singh thought that



Bahuguna (centre) with (from left) N.T. Rama Rao, Ajit Singh and V.P. Singh: Isolated

through this move he would expand his base. And the path since then has been littered with hurdles, threatening to drive Bahuguna into oblivion with the Lok Dal split. While V.P. Singh has emerged as a consensus leader, Bahuguna has found it unable to accept the man he had groomed up as a leader, and preferred to stay out of the Opposition unity negotiations initially. Today, his faction has split even further. The last of the loyal lieutenants, Sharad Yadav, has deserted the ship and has joined hands with Devi Lal. Conventions are being called, press conferences held and whatever be the final result—whether Bahuguna hangs on to a fragmented party or is thrown out as Yadav and the others have been threatening to do—there can be no two opinions that his future in the Lok Dal is bleak.

Bahuguna might have been changing parties in a desperate effort to find a foothold but he has remained consistent in certain beliefs. For instance, nothing had made him compromise his secular principles and today he belongs to that small breed of politicians who do not hesitate to speak out loud and clear on communal issues. He took some bold decisions regarding the Muslims in UP to the extent of declaring a disputed mosque open for worship and recruiting a record number of Muslims in the state's police force. He insists, "The average Hindu speaks of being slaves under Muslims rule. My thesis is different; it was only under British rule that we all became slaves and never before." Muslims, he goes on to add, have been neglected a great deal after Partition and hence, as the chief minister of UP, he felt it his duty to alleviate their lot.

Bahuguna has also always remained close to the Left, to the extent of being described by some circles as a KGB agent. He rejects the latter charge as ridiculous and his few friends in the Opposition do not hesitate to point out that nothing could be further from the truth. There is no doubt, however, that Bahuguna has always had a soft corner for the Left and has never changed his stand.

It is a different matter that today he is hoping that his good relations with the Left will help him to re-establish himself in politics. It is more than clear that Bahuguna has decided that there is no place for him in the emerging Opposition order under V.P. Singh and the Janata Dal. Although his old friends like Nandini Satpathy have returned to the Congress, he realises that it is too late for him to negotiate any deal with the ruling party. And, perhaps, he would not like to appear an opportunist at this stage of his life.

Bahuguna's hopes of political survival thus lie in the emergence of a third, Left-dominated front with him and Chandra Shekhar joining their forces. The Left parties have not ruled this out but at the same time they would rather go along with V.P. Singh if he breaks his contacts with the BJP once and for all. If it comes to a choice between Singh and Bahuguna, the Communist parties will definitely go along with the former. The only thorn at the moment is the BJP issue, but lately, V.P. Singh appears to have been moving away from the BJP fold, in that he has committed his party to giving a statutory status for the Minorities Commission and has not hesitated to visit the communally-tense areas in Uttar Pradesh.

Bahuguna's hopes of political survival lie in the emergence of a third, Left-dominated front with him and Chandra Shekhar joining in... He has always remained close to the Left

So, once again, whether Bahuguna likes it or not, his fortunes in a sense are linked with his former proteges. If V.P. Singh takes a determined stand against the right-wing forces, the Left will come out openly to support him and his combine. What will then happen to Bahuguna is anyone's guess, and a question to which he himself probably does not have the answer. If V.P. Singh, on the other hand, follows his colleagues' advice and decides to pitch in with the right, then a third front is more than possible. If nothing else, it will give Bahuguna a new lease of life until the next elections. A sad commentary on a brilliant past.

Seema Mustafa /New Delhi

Fragmentation of 1 lakh acre of land



Chief Minister Sri Bhagwat Jha Azad distributing land at Hazaribagh

It has been decided to distribute 1 lakh acre of land among the Harijans, tribals and the economically backward people of Bihar by 31st March, 1989. A grant of Rs 10 crores has been specially earmarked to be distributed among them for developing the land. The landless will be assured of their rights to the land backed by documents.

The government is ever alert to implement land reforms, protect Harijans and Adivasis from eviction and concrete steps have been taken in this direction.

The hon'ble Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, while on tour to Chotonagpur, had instructed that the Adivasi Welfare Scheme be implemented along with the Panchayat Raj system. The government of Bihar considers its duty to follow the Prime Minister's directives in letter and spirit and will leave no stones unturned. In Santhal Pargana and in Chotonagpur 43,000 cases of land disputes have been solved on a war footing and 47,000 acres of land has been returned to the Adivasis.

We have resolved to settle the remaining disputes by 31st March, 1989. The concerned authorities have been instructed to dispense of new cases filed in the meantime.

PRD 300/5 9141

The search for causes

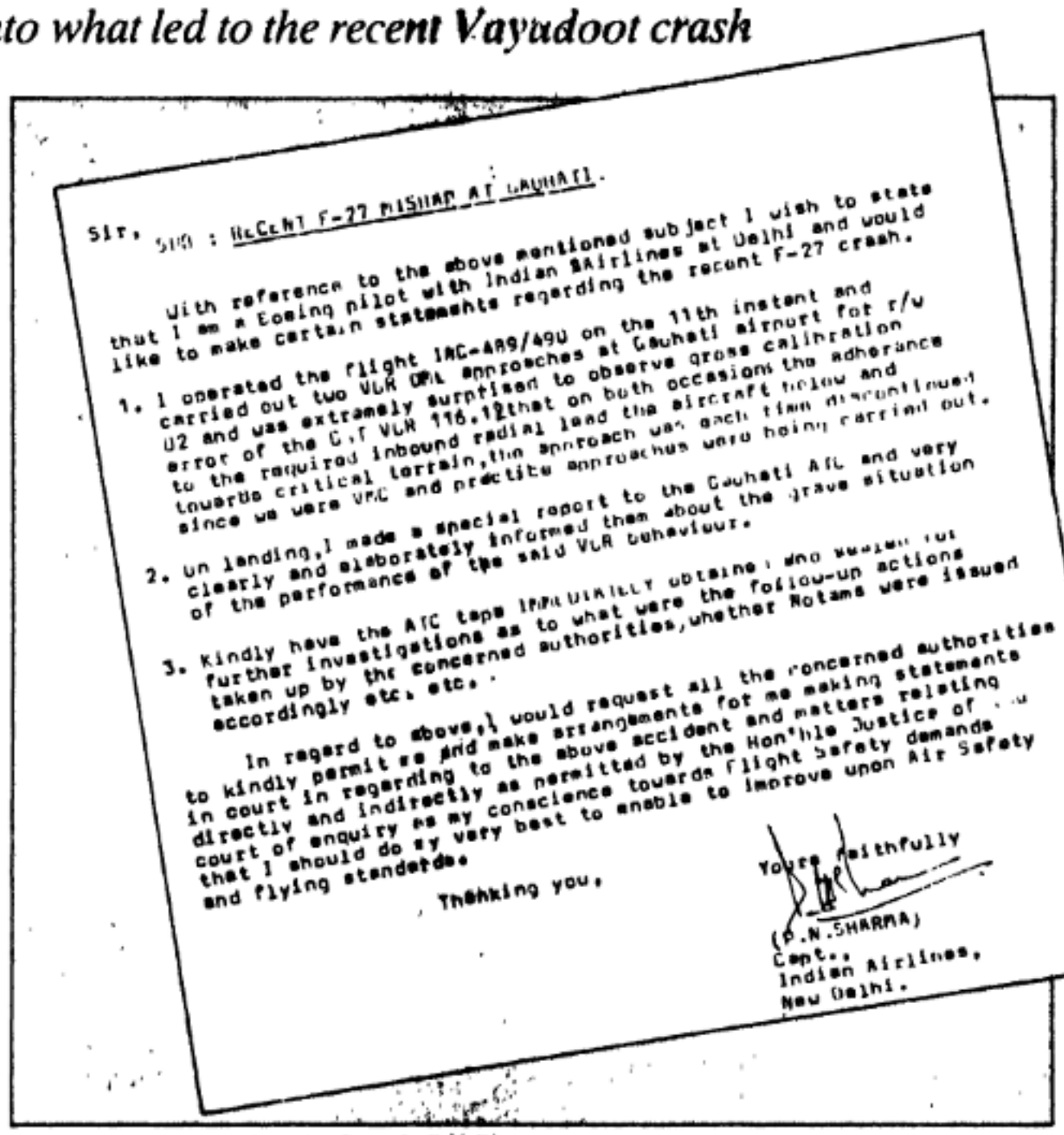
New leads into what led to the recent Vayudoot crash

After the shock and horror, the introspection. What caused the twin air disasters on 19 October in which 164 people were killed? As for the Indian Airlines crash at Ahmedabad, the management appears to take the view that it was solely on account of pilot error. Much as the Vayudoot management would like to, it is becoming increasingly difficult to advance the same reason for the crash of its Fokker Friendship near Guwahati airport.

That instrument failure was behind the Vayudoot crash is a view that has gained considerable credence. Admits a senior official of the National Airports Authority: "Flight safety personnel and Vayudoot pilots had complained at least six times in the course of last year that the instrument landing system (ILS) at Guwahati was defective." ILS malfunction is, however, not the only possible reason for the crash. A new lead has now been thrown up by a letter written by an Indian Airlines pilot to the ministry of civil aviation and other agencies, stating that he had observed a "gross calibration error" in the very high frequency omni range (VOR) instrument at the Guwahati airport.

The pilot, Captain P.N. Sharma states (*see photocopy*) that on two occasions in October he abandoned practice approaches of his Boeing due to VOR fluctuations. Following this, he informed Guwahati air traffic control (ATC) of the "grave situation". He is now prepared to make a statement before the court of inquiry headed by Justice Umesh Banerjee in order to create consciousness about air safety standards.

For any aircraft landing, there are the following options available to the pilot. The first, weather conditions permitting, is to make a visual or manual landing. On the morning of 19 October, the visibility over Guwahati was poor and there was no chance of the pilot, Captain B.S. Bhogal, making a manual landing. This led him to switch on the VOR and ILS instruments for landing support. The 26-year-old Fokker Friendship is one of the few aircraft without the VOR distance measuring equipment (DME). The VOR, therefore, could only give Captain Bhogal direction for landing. The ILS, which becomes operational before the aircraft reaches touchdown point, has a localiser, which indicates the central point of the runway and the outer marker, which gives the width of the runway. This was unserviceable on the day of the crash.



Sir, SUB : Re Capt F-27 MISHAP AT GAUHATI.

With reference to the above mentioned subject I wish to state that I am a Boeing pilot with Indian Airlines at Delhi and would like to make certain statements regarding the recent F-27 crash.

1. I operated the flight IAC-489/490 on the 11th instant and carried out two VOR DME approaches at Gauhati airport for r/w 02 and was extremely surprised to observe gross calibration error of the G.P VOR 116.1 that on both occasions the adherance to the required inbound radial lead the aircraft below and towards critical terrain, the approach was each time discontinued since we were VMC and practise approaches were being carried out.

2. On landing, I made a special report to the Gauhati AFC and very clearly and elaborately informed them about the grave situation of the performance of the said VOR behaviour.

3. Kindly have the ATC tape INDUBITABLY obtained and sealed for further investigations as to what were the follow-up actions taken up by the concerned authorities, whether Notams were issued accordingly etc. etc.

In regard to above, I would request all the concerned authorities to kindly permit me and make arrangements for me making statements in court in regarding to the above accident and matters relating directly and indirectly as permitted by the Hon'ble Justice of court of enquiry as my conscience towards flight Safety demands that I should do my very best to enable to improve upon Air Safety and flying standards.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully

(P.N.SHARMA)
Capt.,
Indian Airlines,
New Delhi.

Photocopy of letter written by Captain P.N. Sharma: raises fresh questions

The ill-fated VT-EAH took off from Silchar and made contact with Guwahati on the VOR. Subsequently, at 08.51 hours, it completed the procedure turn for an ILS approach on the Guwahati 02 runway. Three seconds later, the pilot reported completion of the procedure turn and informed the control tower that it was not getting the glide slope. This was the last message to the control tower. The plane crashed into the 1,300 feet high Rani Hills, killing all 34 on board.

The cause of the crash then could be either one of the following. If the VOR was fluctuating, it might have directed the pilot away from the runway, leading the aircraft to crash in the hills. The second possibility is that the localiser was faulty and diverted the aircraft wrongly on the procedure turn and descent. Either way, the fact that the plane was 34 degrees off course from the runway hints strongly at some kind of instrument failure.

The final verdict on the cause of the crash, of course, will be known only after the recordings in the flight digit recorder (FDR) have been decoded. If the direction and speed show a constant deviation towards the hills, it would indicate a fault in the localiser. Till the FDR is decoded, both Indian Airlines and Vayudoot are reassessing their flight safety regulations and collating all the instrument fluctuation and failure observations made in pilot log books. If the results are as revealing as expected, then, civil aviation pilots might soon be demanding a reply as to why instruments in the aircraft they are flying are not maintained properly.

Nilu Sarin/New Delhi

Male machismo

India intervenes to put down a coup attempt in the Maldives

Take a lovely cluster of about 1,200 islands. Fringe them with coconut palms and beaches of sparkling white coral. Surround them with reefs within which a gentle clear sea plays host to a spectacular variety of exotic fish—a natural aquarium. Leave about a thousand of the islands uninhabited. Populate the rest with a mere two lakh people.

What do you get? Paradise?

Apparently not.

Last fortnight, the tiny island republic of Maldives was threatened by what must rank as one of the most bizarre coup attempts. A few hundred armed men, who had sailed all the way from Sri Lanka to the capital Male, ventured to take control of the nation. Their object: to overthrow the government of President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. As the world watched with bated breath, it appeared for a few fleeting hours that the bid, at once daring and farcical, would succeed. Then the Indian intervention came—swift and decisive. But what transpired in between could keep a thriller writer in business for a few years.

The drama began in the early hours of 3 November when about 200 armed men—mercenaries from Sri Lanka—in two ships lowered themselves stealthily into boats and headed for Male. Joined by another 200 men, who had infiltrated into the island before, the groups set about attacking three targets: the headquarters of the National Security Service (NSS), which houses whatever little Maldives boasts by way of armed might; the radio, television and telecommunication centres; and the presidential palace.

The first target was the President's palace, known as Mulee Aage. Armed with RPG-7 rocket launchers and AK-47s, they sneaked into Male, shooting down a few early morning joggers as they approached the palace. By the time they entered the palace, Gayoom had already fled; the NSS men having whisked him away to another part of Male. In the battle, both the palace and the NSS headquarters were riddled with bullets. Twenty people were killed and about 100 injured in the fighting. Says Fatima Latif, a clerk in Male's telephone department: "We heard the gunfire and first thought it was thunder. My husband felt it was part of the preparations for the 11 November national day celebrations. When we came out of our house at 7 am, we saw three guerrillas running and shooting in the streets. After that we were too frightened to come out until the Indian army landed."

The invaders made two costly mistakes. They failed to take over the telecommunication centre immediately and by the time they did, Gayoom had already appealed to friendly countries for help. Moreover, they inexplicably failed to take over the airport at Hulule, an island about a mile from Male. This made the task of the Indian armed forces much easier.

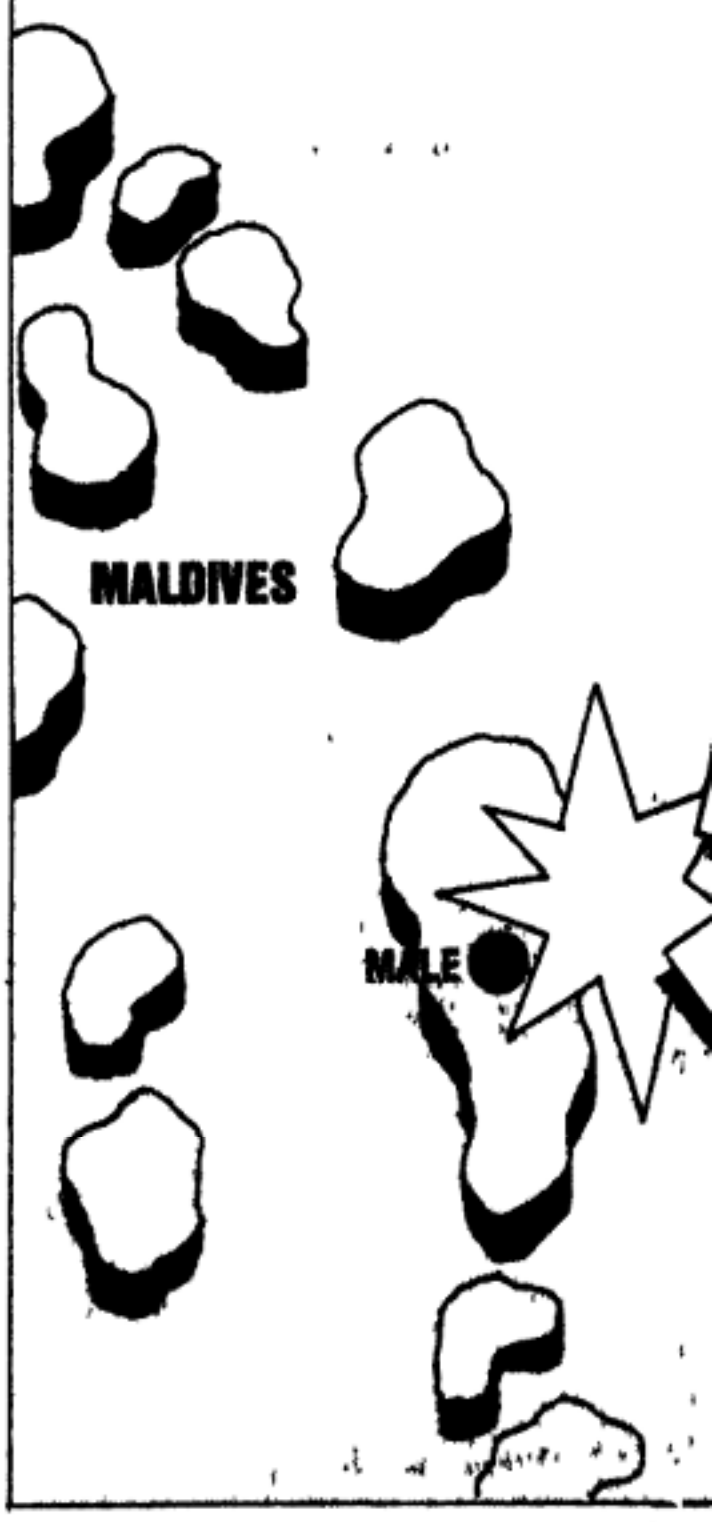
While Delhi patted itself on the back for having crushed the bid, what went forgotten was the total failure of Indian intelligence. Given that Sri Lanka is swarming with Indian operatives under cover of the IPKF, it is odd that they did not know of the attempt beforehand

As the battle raged, Gayoom instructed his two ambassadors—the Maldives has only two embassies, in Colombo and in New York—to request military intervention. Four countries were asked—India, USA, Britain and Pakistan. To lend weight to the appeal, Gayoom personally contacted high officials in these countries. In New Delhi, he had the ear of Rajiv Gandhi himself.

Within hours of the assault taking place, news agencies had begun flashing the coup attempt around the world. The reports suggested that the coup was engineered by former Maldives President Amir Ibrahim Nasir, who ruled the country between 1968 and 1979 and now lives in exile in Singapore. Nasir has been charged with masterminding two earlier coup attempts—the last in 1983, when British mercenaries were employed to overthrow Gayoom. Suspicion that he was behind this attempt too rested on the fact that the ships the mercenaries used were chartered in Singapore. Nasir was believed to have used Abdullah Lutufi, a Maldives-based businessman and a close associate, to recruit the mercenaries. Western news agencies claimed that the mercenaries were Eelam militants and one even quoted senior Sri Lankan officials to make out that the men were Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) members contracted for a fee of two million American dollars plus a base in one of the nation's uninhabited islands.

By 9 am Rajiv Gandhi had informed Congress Working Committee members of Gayoom's request and, soon after, set up a special task force to

THE COUP AND HOW IT WAS FOILED

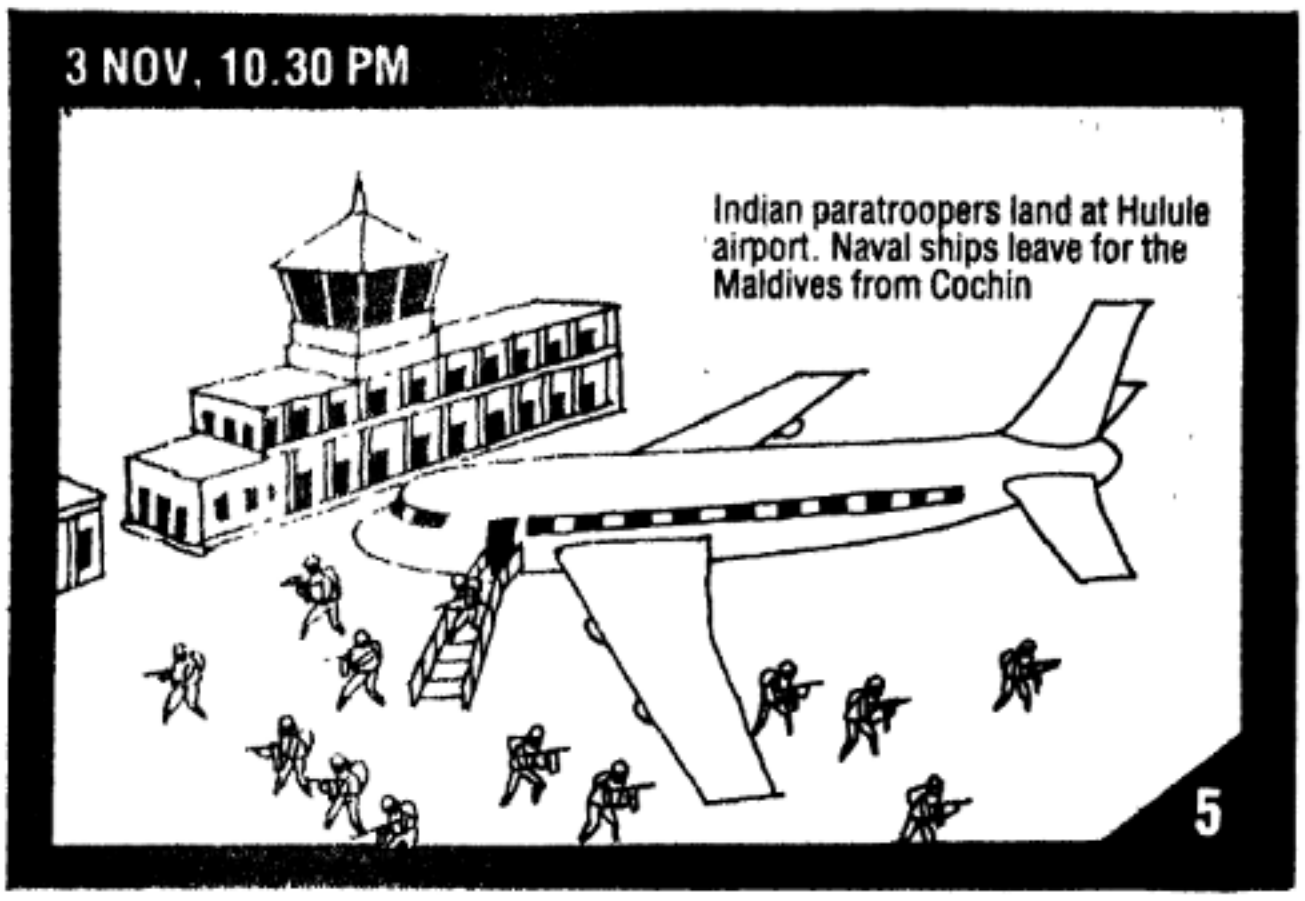


deal with the situation. It comprised foreign minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, defence minister K.C. Pant, information and broadcasting minister H.K.L. Bhagat, defence secretary Seshan, foreign secretary Menon, joint secretary in the PMO Ronen Sen and Rajiv himself. Finally, it was the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA), which met in the afternoon, that took the decision to intervene—apparently one that took a few hours to reach.

Once taken, the next step was to inform the SAARC nations as well as USA and USSR through their ambassadors. As it turned out, neither superpower objected to the Indian decision. The Americans—also requested to help—told the government that it would take anything between 42 and 72 hours for their nearest warship to reach the Maldives. The Russians said the decision was purely India's as the Maldives lies in her "backyard". Only Pakistan was unhappy over the Indian decision. Foreign office sources say that the Pakistanis repeatedly emphasised that they were also asked to intervene and that by a country which is comprised almost wholly of Sunni Muslims. Pakistan suggested a joint military mission, which was rejected by the government.

As for the other SAARC countries, only Nepal spoke openly in support of India. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were silent, though the latter, faced with the embarrassment that the mercenaries were citizens, stepped up patrolling her western shores to prevent them from slipping back to the country.

From then on it was a question of strategy. Exact reports on the situation in the island were still not available. Sources in the defence ministry say that the army's top brass felt that the best option would be to bomb the mercenary occupied strongholds before sending the troops in—a recommendation based on the belief that the invaders had total





control of virtually all strategic locations in Male. In retrospect, it was fortunate that this proposal was vetoed as the mercenaries fled without a real fight. Moreover, reducing the presidential palace to rubble couldn't have endeared India to the Maldivians.

Soon, about 300 paratroopers from Agra, Pune and a base in Haryana were flown to Trivandrum and then on to the Maldives in two AN-32s. The IAF aircraft touched down at Hulule airport at 10.30 pm. At about the same time, three navy warships of the Southern Naval Command set sail from Cochin to the islands. The following morning (4 November), more troops were flown in, bringing the total to 1,150 according to government estimates. However, one senior IAF officer in the Maldives told Sunday that the total defence personnel deployed could well be over 6,000.) The additional deployment, as Rajiv Gandhi stated in Parliament later, was only a contingency measure. For by 2.30 am that morning, it was virtually over, with the Indians in complete control of the island state and the mercenaries having taken to their boats and fled.

There was never any question that the battle would be an unequal one but the mercenaries made the armed forces' task much easier by not capturing Hulule airport. This (oversight?) allowed the paratroopers to land at Hulule and rendered the earlier, more difficult and dangerous, plan of airdropping them over Male unnecessary.

However, the airport was closed. But just as the AN-32s were about to touch down, Indian intelligence had arranged for the runway lights to be switched on. The traffic tower was guarded by NSS men and the IAF pilots were given the codewords to communicate with them. "We had our informers among them and we knew we were landing in a friendly country," said a pilot.

With the mercenaries in no mood to take on the troops, the tiny island capital (population: 50,000) was secured within a couple of hours. At 5 am, Gayoom called Rajiv to thank him for the Indian intervention. It took a little longer before the President could announce to the nation that he was in control. At 8.30 am, soon after the radio station destroyed by the mercenaries was restored to working order, a grateful Gayoom thanked India "for responding so well and in time" to his SOS. Speaking in Dhivehi, the Maldivian national language, he announced an enquiry "to identify the ruthless mercenaries" behind the coup attempt.

The coup may have been foiled but, in a sense, the task of the armed forces had only just begun. The mercenaries, who had fled in their two ships, had taken 25 hostages—including the Maldivian transport minister, Ahamed Mujathaba, and a member of the Majlis (the Maldives Parliament), Ismail Nasser. Mortar and rocket fire accounted for one of the ships and four mercenaries were captured. But many of them as well as the hostages were on the other, which, although slightly damaged in the firing, managed to slip away.

Indian naval ships and IAF aircraft were deployed for the chase. And it was only late that evening (4 November) that the fugitive vessel was spotted. That night, two warships—the INS Godavari and the INS Betwa—were able to surround the ship, which was by then fast approaching Sri Lankan territorial waters. Apparently, the mercenaries held out for a day and it was only the following evening (5 November) that they were rounded up and the hostages freed. A visibly relieved Gayoom announced that those aboard the ship—the Progress Light—had succumbed to "psychological pressure".

The Indian warships had fired warning shots in the air and helicopters were hovering over the vessel. It seems that this proved more than the mercenaries could take. They offered no resistance when naval commandos finally stormed the vessel. The mercenaries killed four



President Gayoom: paradise regained

If nothing else, the coup attempt may convince Gayoom that it takes more than abundant supplies of fish, coconut and coral to keep a people happy. That it takes some doing—even to ensure peace and stability in paradise.





hostages and injured seven others but the transport minister and his wife escaped unharmed. Only 47 mercenaries were found aboard the vessel and it is believed that the rest escaped to other islands in boats.

Even before the hostage drama had played itself out, the Prime Minister drew attention to the "highly successful" operation. While making a suo moto statement in Parliament on 4 November, Rajiv praised the armed forces: "The operations have been carried out in an extremely tight time-frame without a single casualty till now." He announced that the troops would start pulling out the same night, but that, in response to a request from Gayoom, some would remain for combing and mopping up operations in the other islands.

At the time of going to press, there has been no high-level official reaction about who masterminded the coup. Neither Gayoom (who has been silent) nor Rajiv Gandhi (who attributed it to "disgruntled Maldivian expatriates") has been willing to speculate. However, all suspicion is now directed at former President Ibrahim Nasir.

Nasir's alleged involvement in two earlier coup attempts makes him a prime suspect. That the ships used by mercenaries were chartered in Singapore is viewed both in New Delhi and Male as unlikely to be a coincidence. Moreover, the former President, who left the Maldives for Singapore in 1979 with an estimated eight million dollars, has considerable financial assets in Sri Lanka—where the mercenaries were hired. Nasir, of course, has denied the charge that he had a hand in trying to overthrow the government. A statement released through his attorney in Singapore claims that he no longer has any interest in the Maldives.

Lutufi's own involvement in the bid is beyond doubt. The President confirmed that the Colombo-based businessman and close associate of Nasir's was spotted by local fishermen shouting instructions to AK-47-toting mercenaries. There were rumours that he actually occupied Gayoom's chair in the palace, but the President parried a question about this: "Even if they entered the palace, there was no one taking orders from them."

Lutufi's movements before the bid attracted notice in some quarters. A senior South Block official told SUNDAY that he arrived secretly in Male on 30 October—four days before the attempt. He added that Gayoom had cancelled his scheduled visit to New Delhi on 1 November because he had got wind of Lutufi's arrival. Gayoom had pleaded indisposition but the official maintained that his illness was "diplomatic" and not "real"

There is also the question of the identity of the mercenaries. Initial reports put out by AIR and Doordarshan suggested that they comprised both Sinhalese and Tamils from Sri Lanka. The western press, however, made out that they were all Eelam militants. However, representatives of the major militant groups that SUNDAY spoke to in Madras denied involvement in the attempt. Said leader of the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), A. Amrithalingam: "I talked to Tamil militant groups in Colombo and they had no knowledge. This must have been the work of boys who were drop-outs."

Nevertheless, strong rumours in Colombo had it that the mercenaries belong to the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamileelam (PLOTE). This Tamil group has close links with the JVP, an organisation of Sinhala extremists. Since some reports stated that the mercenaries spoke both Tamil and Sinhala, it is believed that it could have been a joint operation. The rumours have now received support with the Maldives foreign minister, Pathulla Jameel, claiming that the mercenaries, in fact, did belong to PLOTE. However, the minister did not either categorically affirm or deny Nasir's involvement. Apart from Lutufi, two other Sri Lanka-based Maldivian businessmen have been linked to the coup - Sagar Nasir and Reeko Ibrahim Malik. The three were also implicated in the two earlier coups.

While Delhi patted itself on the back for having crushed the bid and basked in the role of having played regional gendarme, what went forgotten was the total failure of Indian intelligence both in the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Given that Sri Lanka is swarming with Indian operatives acting under cover of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), it is odd, to say the least, that they did not know of the attempt beforehand. Moreover, the mercenaries couldn't have been hired overnight (one report stated that it happened over a eight-month period) and so there can be no excuse of being caught off guard by a sudden development. Then, it is unlikely that Nasir, or whoever else masterminded the bid, did so without promise of a fair degree of internal support. Indian intelligence was, clearly, also in the dark over this. Maldives may be a tiny country but is vested with geopolitical importance. It is in India's interest that Gayoom remains in power. he has been in the forefront of the campaign to demilitarise the Indian Ocean and, a few years ago, shut down a British naval base in one of the nation's many islands.

As for Gayoom, the coup attempt may make him look closer and harder at some of his domestic policies. His government faces charges of being oppressive (freedom of speech is not tolerated), of gross nepotism (two of Gayoom's brothers-in-law are ministers and a host of relatives are important officials) and rigging elections (he was elected with a 95 per cent majority recently). There has also been considerable disaffection over his moves to Islamicise the republic. If nothing else, the coup attempt, the third in his ten-year reign, may bring home that it takes more than abundant supplies of fish, coconut and coral to keep a people happy. That it takes some doing—even to ensure peace and stability in paradise.

Ritu Sarin/*Male* and Patralekha Chatterjee/*New Delhi* and Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

Illustrations: Debashis Deb

A volley from the ramparts

The Congress(I) rally at Red Fort in memory of Mrs Gandhi is marked by pre-poll rhetoric

DELHI

"Will the people vote for those leaders who could not stay united for even 100 hours?" thundered Rajiv Gandhi from the ramparts of the Red Fort The date: 31 October, the occasion: the fourth death anniversary of Mrs Indira Gandhi, ostensibly being commemorated as the "national integration day". But the grandiose arrangements left no one in doubt of the Congressmen's real intention. The battle for the ballot had begun in right earnest.

Preparations for the "celebrations" had begun weeks in advance. That the Congress(I) bosses were unwilling to take any chances was apparent. To turn the event into a 'glorious success', MPs and MLAs even municpal corporators - were asked to mobilise crowds. Even shopkeepers in the capital's congested business areas were roped in to meet the challenging targets. Tikait and his men who had parked themselves at the Boat Club—the capital's equivalent of Hyde Park in London and the original venue for the Congress(I) rally were in no mood to shift, despite the provocation of a midnight blast of raucous pop music at official behest and a violent clash in which two farmers died. Ultimately, the Congress(I) relented and shifted its venue to Red Fort. While the Prime Minister's admirers insisted that the party had done the 'graceful thing', there were many who saw it as a 'slap on the face of the Prime Minister by the rustic Tikait'.

At the rally, the message was clear The Prime Minister trumpeted the 100-year-old history of the Congress and mocked the Opposition parties "who could not remain together for 100 days", adding sarcastically that the newspapers, of late, had been reporting that they "could not stay together even for 100 hours". "The Opposition *manch* was like a platform of many planks put together without nails to hold them," the PM continued. The Congress(I) strategy, obviously, is to woo the electorate by reminding the people of the Congress' glorious history. Addressing a four lakh odd crowd, which had gathered on the occasion, the Prime Minister held forth on the Congress' contributions to the country in the pre- and post-Independence period; the way the Congress had under Nehru and Indira Gandhi, shaped the country's policies and programmes.

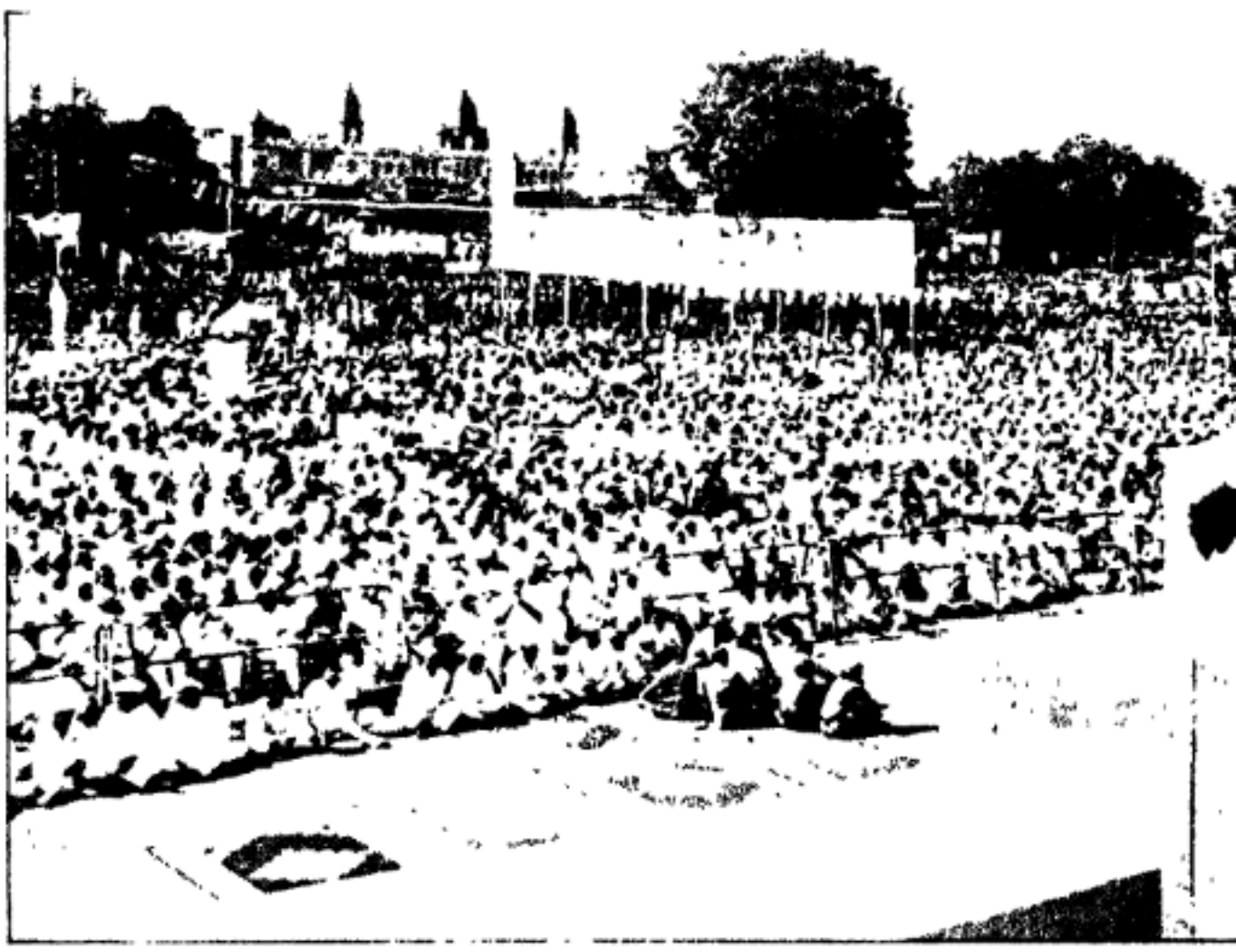
An in tune with the Congress' theme song, giant cut-outs of Indira Gandhi were to be seen everywhere—*en route* to Red Fort and at the venue itself. The Prime Minister's speech evoked memories of the famous Boat Club rally on 19 November, 1985, when he had likened Mrs Gandhi's death to the fall of a banyan tree and indirectly hinted that the gruesome carnage of November 1984 was like the tremors that inevitably followed such a fall. "Anyone would be sad if his mother died. But she was a mother to the entire country, and in the nation's grief, I found support for mine," said the PM at the Red Fort rally, evoking memories of a not-too-distant past.

When Mrs Gandhi died and he took on the reins, the country was being torn apart in Punjab, Darjeeling, Assam, the north-east and the south and it was his government that had doused the raging fires and brought peace to the land, the PM continued. He taunted the Opposition for talking big but failing to deliver when it came to doing something constructive. "The Opposition parties are not enemies of the Congress, but of the country...," he thundered though he did not say anything on the specific demands of Mahinder Singh Tikait of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU).

However, Rajiv Gandhi was all concern and sympathy for the farmers. He said the Green Revolution, initiated by his mother, had helped improve the lot of the farmers substantially and he promised there would be a second revolution in rural India which would generate employment and prosperity, thanks to the new emphasis on food processing units.

The Green Revolution had benefited farmers in Punjab, Haryana and western UP and now the revolution would recur in eastern UP, Bihar and West Bengal—hitherto neglected regions. Many interpreted this as a clever bid to divide the farmers and snatch the thunder from Tikait, whose followers consist largely of the relatively affluent farmers who had indeed benefited from the Green Revolution.

Reminiscent of his famous words in Bombay about 'powerbrokers', the PM

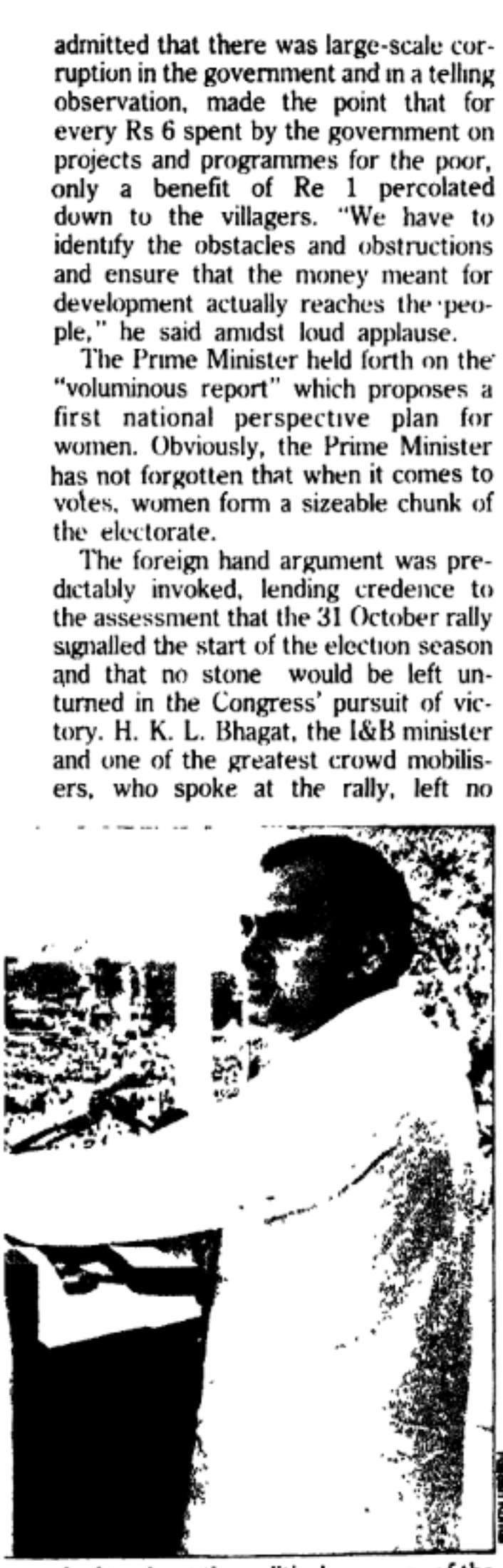


Rajiv Gandhi addressing crowds at the Congress rally: trumpeting the party's 100-year history

admitted that there was large-scale corruption in the government and in a telling observation, made the point that for every Rs 6 spent by the government on projects and programmes for the poor, only a benefit of Re 1 percolated down to the villagers. "We have to identify the obstacles and obstructions and ensure that the money meant for development actually reaches the people," he said amidst loud applause.

The Prime Minister held forth on the "voluminous report" which proposes a first national perspective plan for women. Obviously, the Prime Minister has not forgotten that when it comes to votes, women form a sizeable chunk of the electorate.

The foreign hand argument was predictably invoked, lending credence to the assessment that the 31 October rally signalled the start of the election season and that no stone would be left unturned in the Congress' pursuit of victory. H. K. L. Bhagat, the I&B minister and one of the greatest crowd mobilisers, who spoke at the rally, left no



Rajesh Kumar

doubts about the political message of the gathering. Talk of 'revolutions' marked the speeches of almost all the major party dignitaries who addressed the crowd. Bhagat was all praise for the revolution that Mrs Gandhi had ushered in and for her son's achievements. The doubting Thomases who write off the Congress(I) will be in for a rude shock, he asserted. But will the party's reliance on its two trumpcards—Indira Gandhi and the foreign hand issue—help Rajiv Gandhi a second time?

Patralekha Chatterjee / *New Delhi*

Dilip Banerjee



Jatin Chakraborty: succumbing to pressure

When friends turn foes

Jatin Chakraborty resigns but the dispute between the RSP and the CPI(M) is not yet resolved

WEST BENGAL

After fighting a spirited battle for over a month against the mighty CPI(M), Jatin Chakraborty, the diminutive, cigar-puffing minister in charge of the public works department in the West Bengal Cabinet, finally gave in. On 29 October, in a short but tersely-worded letter to chief minister Jyoti Basu, Chakraborty resigned from the ministry, apparently ending a 40-day bitter war between the constituents of the ruling Left Front government in West Bengal. Political observers, however, feel that the war is far from over and Chakraborty's resignation only marks a temporary truce in the on-going tussle.

Jatin Chakraborty's resignation comes in the wake of bitter, and often, acrimonious exchanges between Chakraborty and the Marxist chief minister Jyoti Basu for over a month. Chakraborty, who has held the PWD portfolio for 11 years and was till recently a close confidant of the chief minister, has been at the centre of a raging controversy that surfaced in mid-September when a local Bengali daily published the photocopy of a confidential memo to the chief minister.

In the memo dated 26 August, Chakraborty suggested that the chief minister had verbally instructed him to favour a Calcutta-based lamp manufacturer, Bengal Lamp, while making government purchases. What is more, the note hinted that the chief minister may be favouring Bengal Lamp since Jyoti Basu's son Chandan Basu, was once associated with the firm. However, it is a fact that ever since Chandan Basu joined Bengal Lamp in the late Seventies as an executive, and even after he quit a year later, the firm has been bagging a lion's share of the government's purchase orders of bulbs and tubelights.

The CPI(M) leadership considered the memo as a calculated slur on the personal integrity of the chief minister. Led by the veteran Marxist and Left Front chairman, Saroj Mukherjee, the state committee bagan mounting pressure on the RSP to withdraw Jatin Chakraborty from the Cabinet and nominate another minister. But the state RSP leadership stood by Chakraborty. The Forward Bloc, another major constituent of the nine-party ruling Front, too openly sided with the RSP in the dispute.

But the CPI(M) successfully wooed the other seven constituents. Together, they orchestrated a campaign against the RSP and Chakraborty, in particular, demanding his removal and the withdrawal of the controversial note from the official file. What is more, the enquiry report on the Bengal Lamp issue submitted by the state finance minister Ashim Dasgupta—who belongs to the CPI(M)—clearly indicted Jatin Chakra-



A Left Front meeting held to resolve the dispute temporary truce

borty of playing foul while giving the chief minister a clean chit

Finding the going extremely tough, the state committee of the RSP, after a two day soul searching session, advised Jatin Chakraborty to tender his resignation In his resignation letter Chakraborty said that he was resigning because of an orchestrated tirade against him by the CPI(M) and the chief ministers expression of no confidence in him in public And in a bid to keep the controversy alive Jatin Chakraborty said the day after he resigned 'It is a victory for me I did not compromise with corruption The RSP leadership too made it clear that it was withdrawing Jatin Chakraborty not because he was guilty but as it wanted to prevent a split in the Left Front

It is not yet clear if the RSP will pull out of the government as they had threatened to do earlier But even if it does, it will not bring down the government the CPI(M) alone commands an absolute majority in the House The party has also not spelt out whether two other party members in the Cabinet will resign Said Makhan Pal, state secretary of the RSP 'We have not decided on our future course of action But one thing is sure we will continue to support the Left Front government "

Despite Chakraborty's resignation, the controversy has not been laid to rest as the CPI(M)'s other major demand has yet to be met withdrawal of the controversial memo by Jatin Chakraborty, The RSP stubbornly refuses to comply with the CPI(M)'s request Said Sourin Bhattacharya "There is no question of withdrawing the note now as Jatin Chakraborty is no longer a minister." The CPI(M) too is determined to bring the RSP to its knees And so the battle continues

Rajiv Bagchi/*Calcutta*

Jayewardene's olive branch

The President offers to step down if the JVP gives up violence

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka continues to burn For nearly a decade the Tamil dominated areas in the North and Eastern Provinces were transformed into a battlefield as several hundreds lost their lives Now, the situation in the south is fast degenerating, thanks to the Sinhala extremist group, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) which has launched a fierce anti government movement in the Southern Province. Schools and colleges have remained closed for weeks and every day lives are being snuffed out by trigger-happy extremists in the streets of Colombo The government has admitted that the JVP killed at least 500 members of the ruling United National Party (UNP) since the Indo Sri Lankan accord was signed in July 1987

The government's desperation to stop the mindless killings became apparent when President Junius Jayewardene announced that he was willing to dissolve Parliament and conduct the general elections under an interim caretaker government The UNP government even called for a ceasefire with the JVP, beginning from 20 October, and hoped that the JVP would reciprocate the government's efforts by participating in the democratic process

"What we are trying to show is that in a complicated situation, the goverment is doing its best to hold the elections and save the lives of innocent people We want to make it free and fair," said national security minister Lalith Athulathmudali, explaining the reasons for the government's action of extending an olive branch towards the JVP But the Peramuna reacted with expected belligerence and insisted that Jayewardene should first resign before demanding that the JVP give up violence

Moreover, the JVP is already a part of the eight-party Opposition front, led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), which seeks to defeat the UNP in the presidential elections scheduled for 19 December. The Opposition front is not too enthusiastic about the President's offer and has demanded that Jayewardene should step down and hand over the administration to an interim set-up comprising all recognised parties And now that the Buddhist clergy too has lent its voice to the Opposition's demand for Jayewardene's ouster, the President has had no choice but to seek a compromise

But his offer is not without a catch Though he is willing to oblige the holy men and sacrifice his government for peace, he said this would come about only if there is an appropriate reciprocal gesture from the JVP And there lies the hitch Said Chanka Amaratunga, the leader of Liberal Party, an ally of the (SLFP) 'The President should first dissolve the Parliament and announce elections Then there will be a chance of our influencing the JVP to give up their campaign (of violence) ' While the debate goes on, the JVP continues to hunt down UNP members.



Meanwhile, in the north, the Indian troops are still waging their miserable war against a well-entrenched LTTE even as another Tamil militant group, the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) is getting ready to form its ministry after 'winning' a majority of the 36 seats in the polls for the Northern Province The elections for the Eastern Province are scheduled for 19 November but it remains to be seen whether elections do take place given the present volatile atmosphere

Also, there is a possibility that the polls may be nullified by the Lankan Supreme Court if it is pointed out that UNP candidates were thrown out by the returning officer in Trincomalee, apparently because they had given in their nominations 20 minutes after the deadline However, it was the returning officer who landed in Colombo, on 12 October in an IPKF aircraft, after the deadline had expired at 12 noon.

From the UNP's point of view, declaring the 19 November elections null and void—assuming that they are conducted in the first place—would only help the ruling party because the merger of the Tamil provinces in the north and the east would then not take place. The SLFP leader, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, would be unable to accuse Jayewardene of giving away 'Eelam' in the guise of a united Tamil north-eastern province.

As it is, the LTTE has questioned the legality of the polls held in the north pointing out the EPRLF, ENDLF and the TELO had put up candidates in an manner which would ensure that all of them got elected, practically unopposed.

The LTTE release also alleged that large-scale Sinhala colonisation was still going on in the Eastern Province with the support of the Indian government. As for the Indian involvement, the SLFP and UNP candidates have promised that



Candidates filing nominations for the provincial polls: will peace return?

if voted to power, they will order the IPKF out of the island. But Rajiv Gandhi appears to be confident that "the IPKF will stay in Sri Lanka as long as it is necessary". And his statement that "we are talking to Mr Jayewardene only" seems to indicate that the Prime Minister has not taken into account the fact that Jayewardene's term is coming to an end. Or perhaps, the PM hopes that the growing turbulence in the island will lead to a declaration of Emergency by Jayewardene, which will ensure his stay in office without having to hold the polls.

So, no matter which way one looks at the Sri Lankan kaleidoscope, the picture is dismal and bloody. Despite what official releases claim, reports of ever-increasing casualties in the Indian camp, in its war against the LTTE, hardly augurs well for the return of peace.

R. Bhagwan Singh/Madras

Breaking up the party

The friction between Pawar's associates and loyalist Congressmen comes into the open

MAHARASHTRA

There is a deceptive lull in the political scene in Maharashtra and in a superficial way it would seem that the chief minister, Sharad Pawar, who has been in the saddle for five months now, has neutralised his opponents. Even the Opposition, which never fails to bait the chief minister, has not posed too many problems for him. As for Pawar's stormy relationship with Shiv Sena supremo, Bal Thackeray, observers feel that it is all an act. It is said that Pawar has already held three secret meetings with Thackeray at the residence of the latter's trusted lieutenant, Manohar Joshi, and sorted out their differences. Then there is Prakash Ambedkar of the Bharatiya Republican Party, who, many feel, would cooperate with Pawar if it came to the crunch. And the only other force is the Shetkari Sanghatana. The chief minister has repeatedly announced his willingness to hold discussions with Sharad Joshi on the issue of the farmers' debts which is Joshi's current major concern.

Ironically, the Congress(I) itself is at the root of Pawar's problems. The confrontation between Sharad Pawar's lieutenant, Ishaq Jamkhanawala, and A.R. Antulay, whose re-entry into the Congress(I) has caused a lot of resentment in certain circles, only shows that all is not well in the state Congress(I) unit. The incident occurred at Ahmed Zakaria's residence (he was celebrating his silver wedding anniversary). Among those invited were arch-rivals BJP's Ramdas Nayak and Antulay. It was Nayak who had filed the case against Antulay under the Prevention of Corruption Act and was responsible for banishing the former chief minister from the political arena for nearly eight years.

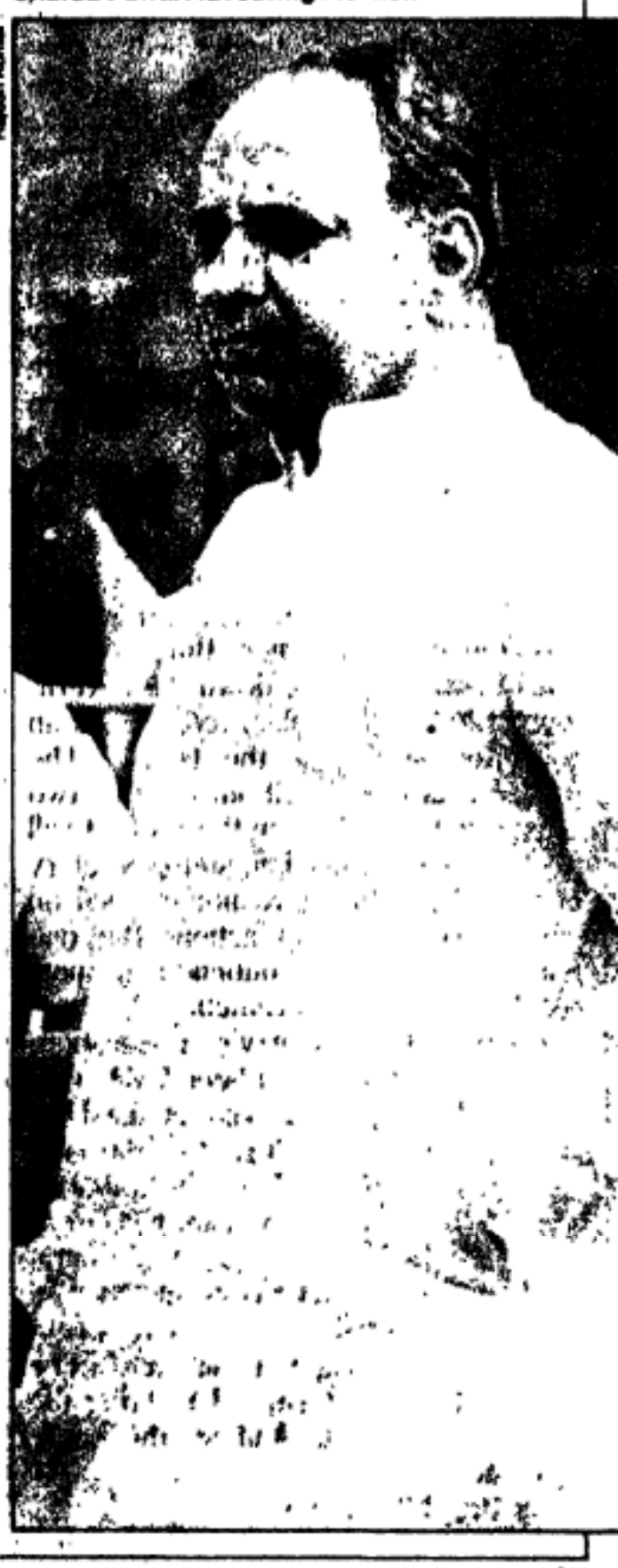
Zakaria introduced Nayak to Antulay and the initial bonhomie soon gave way to sarcasm when Antulay said that he appreciated people like Nayak who make no bones about their hostility (*mukhalif* was the word he used) unlike others who are 'hidden enemies' (*munafiq*). According to some who were present there, Antulay gestured towards Jamkhanawala when talking about his enemies. However, Antulay and some others deny this.

Jamkhanawala, who is the urban development minister in Pawar's Cabinet, went into a huddle with a couple of others but it was only after Ziauddin Bhukari's arrival that things started to happen. Jamkhanawala, obviously reassured by Bhukari's presence—also a Pawar supporter—hurled abuses at Antulay. He challenged him to take action against him and making a dig at Antulay's habit of swearing by the high command said that after the Congress defeat at Allahabad, the high command had become the 'low command'.

This incident only brings to the fore

Sharad Pawar: favouring his men

Rajesh Kumar



the tremendous resentment that Pawar's supporters and Antulay's men harbour against each other. Ever since Pawar became the chief minister, the Congressmen have been complaining that the plum posts - be it in the ministry or corporations have been cornered by Pawar's associates from his Congress(S) days. They had been fervently hoping that the high command would appoint a Pradesh Congress Committee chief who would not toe the Pawar line. But the announcement that Pratibha Patil will be the new MPCC(I) chief has once again dashed their hopes.

The Youth Congress members too share the feelings of their colleagues. They point out that some of them have had to organise their own programmes. For instance, the secretary of the state Youth Congress, Suresh Bhatewara of Nasik, went on a *padayatra* from 27 September to 16 October in a bid to meet the threat posed by the Shetkari Sanghatana in the district. And in spite of his efforts, Bhatewara was overlooked for the vice-presidency. Instead, the position went to Pawar's former Congress(S) associate, Dilip Patil.

Many of the Congressmen who feel that the state unit is being overrun by the Congress(S) had hoped that Antulay's return would help them voice their discontent. But Pawar has deliberately kept him in the cold storage. In fact, Antulay was ignored while Ishaq Jamkhanawala, Ziauddin Bhukari and film actor Dilip Kumar were appointed conveners of the All Maharashtra Muslim Convention that is to be held in January. Large-sized advertisements have been appearing regularly in *Urdu Times* and *Inquilab* asking all Muslims to approach Bhukari for their problems. Bhukari, a prominent builder, is a Muslim Leaguer who revolted against Banatwala and formed a rebel Muslim League. Besides, he was recently in the centre of a major controversy when it was alleged that he had duped people by selling 700 flats of a building complex at Versova to 2,100 people.

The induction of Bhukari and Dilip Kumar is a clever move on the part of Sharad Pawar who is obviously trying to build his base among the various political forces in the state, including the minorities, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the Marathas. His enemies view this as Pawar's desire to charter a course independent of Delhi. Whatever be the truth, his actions are only likely to make his enemies angrier while factionalism within the state unit of the party rages on.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

Colleges of corruption

A Legislative Council committee on education finds former minister L.N. Jha "guilty of malpractices"

BIHAR

Education, in Bihar, is just another industry. And it is the politicians who have turned colleges into thriving centres of business. Though this is common knowledge in the state's political circles, a special committee of the Bihar Legislative Council has made some startling revelations in its report on the state of education in Bihar. Among the prominent politicians whom it has indicted, is the former education minister L.N. Mishra who, the report says, is "guilty of serious malpractices and abuse of his position". Jha allegedly "sold" teaching and non-teaching positions in different colleges. The report claims that as many as 121 posts were sanctioned by him in Sarbnaram Singh College, Saharsa, on "extraneous considerations".

The House committee's report has thus blown the lid off a racket which has been flourishing for years in the state. More important, it exposes the involvement of politicians, particularly Jha, who overruled the objections of the director of higher education, education secretary and commissioner to sanction the posts.

But this is not the first time that politicians have been indicted by a commission enquiring into the affairs of such non-aided, affiliated colleges. The ad-interim report of the University Enquiry Commission, Bihar (1983), headed by Dr V.S. Jha, which had given an insight into the sordid affairs, had stated that "an entrepreneur, often a political leader, decides to start a college to be run in his name or that of his father, mother, wife, son, son-in-law or whoever he may like". But successive governments have effectively suppressed the commission report.

And they had reason to suppress the report's findings too. For not only do the sponsors of such colleges extract huge sums of money as capitation fees from students, but also, most of the teachers and non-teaching employees have to pay donations ranging from Rs 10,000-60,000 to get "jobs". Besides L.N. Jha,



K M Kishan

L.N. Jha: indicted by the committee's report

who has been named in the recent Legislative Council's committee report, there are many others who have colleges in their names. The most prominent among them is Congress leader Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav who has 57 colleges in his name. The others include MPs S.N. Sinha and his wife Kishori Sinha, the Governor of Assam, Bhisham Narain Singh, former chief ministers Bindeswari Dubey, and Jagannath Mishra, former Union minister B.R. Bhagat, etc.

Though the Jha Commission report failed to have any impact on the thriving business, it now seems as if the Bihar Legislative Council's committee report may result in some changes. Chief minister Bhagwat Jha Azad has already ordered a ban on the setting up of new colleges. But such a move is hardly likely to win Azad any friends. Although for the present, at least, he has effectively stymied L.N. Jha who has been feverishly campaigning against the CM at the Centre.

Faizan Ahmad/*Patna*

Bhagwat Jha Azad: earning a reprieve



K M Kishan



NCB officials with the money recovered from (inset) Trideep Banerjee

On the heroin trail

The arrest of a Delhi-based drug-runner leads to startling revelations

NARCOTICS

Few could have faulted the strategy. A four-year old boy waiting in the lobby of the Ashok Palace Hotel with his father would go unnoticed and not even the most hard-boiled cop could have suspected their intention: to make contact with a drug courier. Trideep Banerjee always took his son along to enable his contacts to identify him. But on 13 October when he was supposed to meet the Dutch lady, Sumter Margo Nita, he could never have suspected that the rendezvous was a trap laid for him by a team of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) officers.

The cops were put on Banerjee's trail following the detention of Margo Nita at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi on 9 October. A routine surveillance exercise mounted for Amsterdam-bound planes had revealed that Margo Nita had nearly 3 kg of heroin with her. Of course, these had been neatly concealed in 14 packets stitched inside denim skirts.

The NCB officers went to work and before long she confessed that the contraband had been supplied to her by one James Clark. It turned out to be a false lead but by this time Margo Nita had lost her nerve and blurted out the truth: that a resident of Jawahar Park, Trideep Banerjee, was the culprit.

A plan was hatched to nab Banerjee and on 13 October, Margo Nita made a telephone call—which was monitored by the NCB team—to Banerjee requesting him for an additional 400 gms of heroin. At the appointed hour—1 pm—the drug-runner walked in with his son and the trap was sprung; Banerjee was caught red-handed and NCB officials made the biggest seizure of heroin and unaccounted money in the capital.

The NCB officials raided his house in Jawahar Park where they were confronted by an astonishing sight: the floors of the toilets were carpeted with currency notes; money had been crammed inside liquor cabinets and every crevice and cupboard in the house was spilling over with notes. It totalled a staggering sum of Rs 80.17 lakhs. Besides, the officials found 11.5 kg of heroin. The drug-runner had procured heroin from Gazipur for Rs 75,000 per kg and received a staggering $10,000 for it from his foreign contacts.

His sensational arrest has, obviously, caused a major flutter in the bureau but it has also proved to officials that what they have seen is just the tip of the narcotics iceberg. As a senior NCB official commented: "There has been information that large drug syndicates exist. But the fact that a single smuggler has been sending drugs worth more than Rs 200 crores a year is shocking."

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*

Tit for tat

An English club cancels its contract with Raju Kulkarni following the visa row

CRICKET

Raju Kulkarni may succeed where the West Indies have failed. He may trigger a split in the cricketing world, with the whites and non-whites arraigned on opposite sides. The Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) may not have decreed any sanctions yet, but its minions have certainly taken the cancellation of England's tour of India to heart. India's refusal to grant visas to eight English cricketers selected to tour India this winter, because of their continuing sporting links with South Africa, has been met with what observers see as a retaliatory measure by the English Clubs' Board.

The axe has fallen first on Raju Kulkarni, the Bombay-based Test cricketer. Kulkarni had been invited by Durham League Club, Annfield Plain, to assist them from April next for a fee of £500. On 21 October, Kulkarni received a telex from his agent based in Birmingham, Derek Parker, which read: "Deeply regret Annfield Plain cancels contract after two-and a half hour meeting because of your government's refusal to give visas to English players."

While some feel this may be the joke of the century, others suggest that not only Indians, but players all over the cricketing world should take strong exception to this churlish attitude. Such anti-Indian campaigns by cricketing offi-

Raju Kulkarni (centre) at a training camp: victim of a churlish attitude





Kulkarni (left) with Vengsarkar: a contentious issue

cials have to be taken seriously, they maintain.

If Kulkarni's is an isolated case, the issue will probably result in a few angry protests. But there are more than two dozen Indian cricketers playing summer cricket in the Lancashire and Minor Counties leagues. More important, Indian skipper Dilip Vengsarkar is being considered for a contract by one of the leading counties. And if all Indians are barred from professional cricket in England, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will have to take up the cudgels on their behalf. In fact, such a ban on Indians will become one of the principal weapons with which England, New Zealand and, perhaps, Australia, could be confronted in a showdown on the apartheid issue that is to be discussed at the International Cricket Conference (ICC) meeting slated for January next.

The West Indies board had placed the issue of banning all cricketers who maintained professional cricketing links with South Africa. The TCCB had skilfully averted a showdown at the last ICC meeting, but in January, a final decision in this regard will have to be taken.

If England and its "allies" refuse to accept the West Indies' proposal, the cricketing world could be split into white and non-white groups. The obvious sufferers will be England and company, because people in those countries will obviously tire of three-nation games. West Indies, on the other hand, have India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and even Zimbabwe, on their side. And with more spectators for the sport on this side of the colour border, these countries will definitely stand to gain.

Arijit Sen with bureau reports

The soldiers of Kumaon

The Kumaon Regimental Centre completes 200 years

DEFENCE

Sporadic bursts of gunfire reverberated throughout the picturesque Kumaon hills. Troops in olive-green fatigues yelled as they dived for cover among the dense foliage. At another end, some soldiers were trammelling the Burma bridge to take up vantage positions. This was no real skirmish but a simulated battle scenario: part of the training regimen for recruits at Ranikhet's Kumaon Regimental Centre, which celebrated its bicentennial on 26-27 October this year.

In 1813, Sir Henry Russell, the then Resident of Hyderabad, raised two battalions, the first battlion was the 3rd battalion – the Parachute Regiment; the second battalion is now known as the Kumaon Regimental Centre. The Kumaon Regiment has been called by various names: the Nizam's Contingent, Hyderabad Contingent, the Hyderabad Regiment, etc. Today it has 21 battalions, each of which consists of 700 men.

On 22 October 1947, 5,000 tribals backed by the Pakistani army set out to seize Srinagar along the Murree-Srinagar Road. The raiders reached Baramulla on 26 October—Srinagar was barely 35 miles away. It was at this juncture that India sent in its troops following a plea by Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir. Among the first battalions to land were 1 Para Kumaon and 4 Kumaon. The 4 Kumaon battalion was led by Major Somnath Sharma. In this battle, though they were heavily outnumbered, Major Sharma's men managed, to a considerable extent, to repulse the enemy attacks. He himself succumbed to enemy fire. He was awarded posthumously the Param Vir Chakra, India's first highest gallantry award

This is one of the many battles fought by the Kumaon Regiment. Other important battles were those in the Siachen glacier, Sri Lanka (Operation Pawan) and Operation Bluestar. In Siachen, 4 Kumaon was the first regular battalion to take up positions on the Soltoro ridge. It successfully held Pakistani troops at bay. The regiment also played a crucial role in the 1971 Bangladesh liberation war.

The regiment boasts of at least three chiefs of army staff: Sriganesh, K. S. Thimmayya, and T.N. Raina. During the Second World War, some Malaysian cadets were trained at the Indian Military Academy. Two of them were commissioned into the Kumaon Regiment: Hussain Onn, who later went on to become Malaysia's Prime Minister and Gen Ibrahim bin Ismail, who became its defence chief.

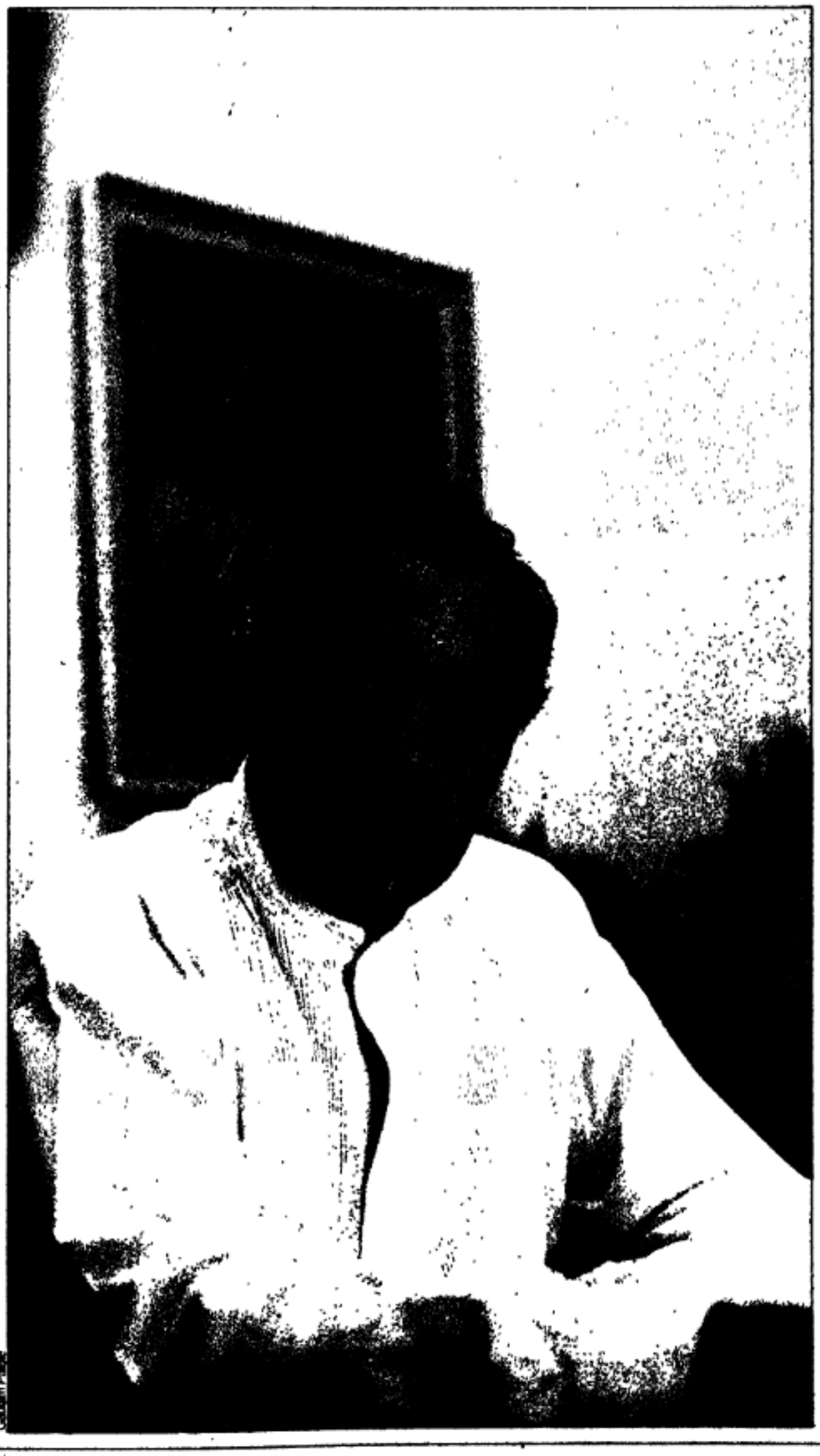
Incidentally, the units of the regiment were sent abroad too. 4 Kumaon was sent to quell the Boxer rebellion in China in 1900; they were even sent to Palestine, Persia, the Suez Canal and even South Africa.

Henry Jacob/*Ranikhet*



Recruits undergo training at the Kumaon Regimental Centre: impressive martial record

PLAIN SPEAKING



Gautam Patel

Rajiv Gandhi on Bofors, the two Aruns, Satish Sharma and Amitabh Bachchan, the Gang of Four and much more

In the first year of his prime ministership, Rajiv Gandhi was easily accessible to the press and gave candid, free-wheeling interviews. By the second year the candour was beginning to wear thin. And by the time the scandals surrounding his friends and the regime surfaced, he had retreated into his shell.

In recent months, Rajiv has shut himself away from the media and the one major interview he has given to an English language publication consisted largely of written answers prepared by the concerned ministries.

Therefore, it was something of a surprise to find him relaxed and eager to talk during this interview. The first session took place on the evening of 28 October in his wood-panelled office in New Delhi's South Block. Formally dressed in a blue bundhgalla *jacket (he was to receive the Hungarian deputy Prime Minister later that evening), Rajiv sat behind a large, wooden desk and fielded questions about the two Aruns and the Gang of Four for twenty-five minutes.*

The next morning, when he spoke for another hour and ten minutes—despite a scheduled duration of 20 minutes—at the airy conference room in the Prime Minister's house complex, he was less rushed and far more relaxed. Dressed in a smart collarless, ribbed, white shirt, he jousted verbally with his interviewers, getting so engrossed in the sparring that he kept Sheila Dixit and Buta Singh waiting for over an hour.



Salman Rushdie

SUNDAY: Prime Minister, you came to power with a mandate for change, for an open government in which all sorts of ideas would bloom. But just a few days back, your government banned an important book by an important subcontinental writer. How do you justify this action?

Rajiv Gandhi: There are certain things which cause problems in a developing country. The sentiments, the feelings of every section of society are important. If the government feels that the sentiments of a section of our society are going to be hurt by a particular writing, then we have to take appropriate action to see that it doesn't cause a law and order problem.

This is not the first time this happened. It was in Kerala, I think. It was when somebody had written something...a newspaper or something.

***It was in Bangalore. There was a short story in the* Deccan Herald.**

That's right, so this is not the first time that we have stepped in. This is part of our process of building a much more cohesive society. I agree, and I said so this morning at *The Times of India* function, that it is much better to let things come out and be said than to stop them from being said. But there is a process to arrive at that situation. And I think we are part of the way through. We are not entirely there yet.

Is your objection that it offends people or that it was likely to incite violence? They are quite different justifications.

Offend, and that would incite violence.

But if there was no threat of violence, would you have banned it?

I doubt it.

But you haven't read the book yourself.

No. I didn't even know about the ban till I opened the newspaper and read about it.

The home ministry banned it without consulting you?

Absolutely. I was on tour somewhere. I read something in the paper on tour.

But we do have telephones. They could have phoned you on tour.

But we also have delegation of duty.

Do we really?

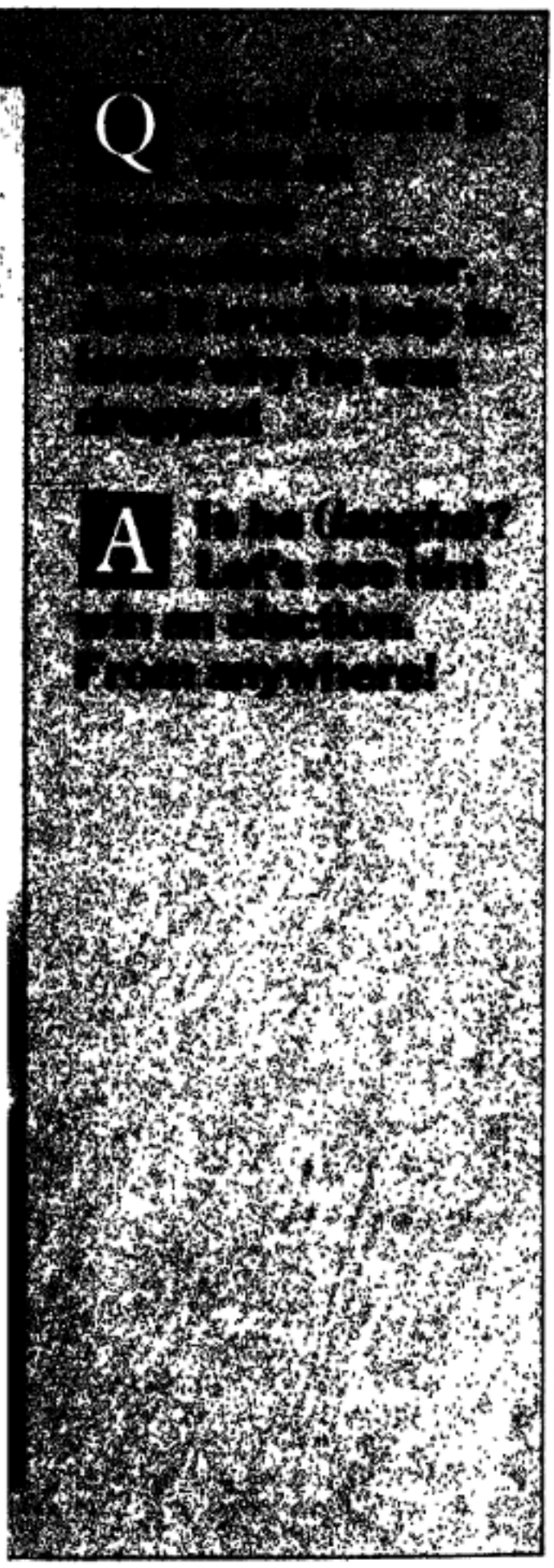
Well, this is an example.

The Prime Minister's Office

One of the charges most frequently levelled against you is that there is too much centralisation.

I think that's totally fictitious. I think we have delegated more than ever before. Absolutely. In fact, files come to





me and I say that this is not my business, the minister should take his own decision, and send them back.

But the PMO has actually gained in size if not in importance.

There are two parts of the PMO. One is the public side where we deal with letters, complaints, etc. That has become much bigger. In that we have increased our correspondence to a very great degree: almost a hundred times. We are dealing with 4,000 letters a week, and following up a substantial number. And that has also grown bigger because people write to us because they get an answer from us. And there is a new trap that we've got ourselves into that we are now trying to get out of. People write saying, "We wrote to *falana* chief minister. He has not replied. Will you chase my letter with him?" We are trying to get out of this and say: "Look, it's not our problem." But it is a bit of a tricky thing to get out of.

On the government decisions side, I think we are handling much less than we were handling before. Even in 1985 terms.

Do you accept the* primus inter pares *(first-among-equals) role of the Prime Minister?

Let's look at the way the government functions. Except for very serious issues which I bring either to Cabinet or to Cabinet sub-committees related to the subject or, if it's not that serious, I let the ministers deal with it entirely on their own. Very seldom do they call me and ask me if I have an opinion. Almost never have I interfered.

Sometimes I have said, "Yes, there is a problem. There will be complications. Bring it to the Cabinet." Sometimes it comes formally to the Cabinet. Sometimes it comes informally, meaning not as a paper but just discussions. And I don't interfere at all about what's happening.

But whenever you talk to any minister about a project, you are told, "Well, it's gone to the PMO for clearance."

Must be routine clearance.

Yes, but should there be 'routine' clearance from your office to begin with?

On certain things, it has to go through a system.

Fine, but should the PMO be such an integral part of this system?

No, projects don't come to us.

What about the Haldia petrochemical complex?

No! Haldia is not with us. Not to my knowledge. What does come to us is if a project (might) foul up (the) environment. Or if it has got caught somewhere. And somebody says to us, "Look can you sort it out?" But, otherwise, nothing comes to us. I don't think Haldia is with us.

To change subjects, when I said you came to power with a mandate for change, I was referring to the hope that there would be a new India preparing for the next century. It's been years since we last heard you talk about the 21st century.

What does 'preparing' mean? And what is the 'next century'? Normally, when you talk to people, their view is very myopic, to say the least. They are looking only at limited economic development in certain sectors. I don't think that's adequate.

That is necessary and must be part of it, but we have to do much more than that. We have to start with global things because we live in the real world. we are part of that world and we can't isolate ourselves. But the only way we can maintain our independence and our internal development programme is if we calculate what's going to happen internationally and we fit ourselves correctly into that picture. Stretching ourselves too much will get us into trouble. Not being aggressive enough is going to be equally trouble-making. The global situation is changing very rapidly. It's not what it used to be. The bi-polar equations are already shifting towards four—presumably in the next decade or so, they will go towards five—and we should decide where India is going to be in that. If we decide India is going to be out and it's not going to be six, then we have one strategy.

I believe it would be wrong to keep India out of a major global rearrangement and India must be part of it, certainly in the long run—ten years, twenty years from now. In that case, we can't be as inefficient as we are being now in working our resources. It's not going to work. All the padding and luxury that we've built in—I'm not talking of TV sets and all—I mean luxury in the sense of not working as hard as other countries are working, becoming a soft country.

That has to be curbed. We've got to be more aggressive. We've got to work much harder. We've got to produce much more for the resources we are putting in.

Can this India be built with people like Shiv Shankar and Veer Bahadur Singh?

This India has got to be built by the people who the people elect. And there's a very wide gap today between the perceptions of, especially, the media and through the media, the intelligentsia, about what a good guy is and what a bad guy is.

I will give you an example. Hegde is presented as one of the best chief ministers there has ever been. I think he's the one chief minister who has had

more corruption charges confirmed by courts, confirmed by commissions, than any other chief minister. But that's the image that the media produces. Is it relevant?

The Gang of Four

We will return to corruption later, but Shiv Shankar, for instance, was not elected by the people. You nominated him to the Rajya Sabha.

Yes, that's right, yes.

But you said that...

Well, I gave you an example. I can give you hundreds of such examples. But I won't go into the details. One has to get people who will do...who have a mind that works...who will do certain tasks and get things done. And Shiv Shankar is effective.

At drafting undemocratic laws...

I don't agree with that. We wanted a discussion with you. You chaps chickened out, didn't want to talk about it. You are still chickening out (*laughs*). You said, "Okay, pull it out. We will talk about it." But even now, you don't want to talk about it.

But there are reports that he leads a faction in your government that has been dubbed the 'Gang of Four'.

No. Not at all. By your paper (*laughs loudly*). No, not at all.

Prime Minister, coming to...

In fact that particular article has got all its substantial facts all wrong. And I know how I've tasked out the works.

And the four are not important...

No...the reality is not reflected in your article.

In what sense? You mean they are not important?

I don't remember the details. But what you have suggested they do is not what they do. I am not saying that it was absolutely hundred per cent all out but...(*pauses*).

These people are given too much importance?

Yeah.

Your saying that they are not important is far more damaging to them than anything we could say.

(*Laughs.*) It is not a question of ministers being important or not important. I use some ministers as a sounding board on a particular thing. I use others as a sounding board for another thing. I use some for drafting. I use some for legal aspects. We use others for law and order. You know, I have got my own little groups and each is equally important in that...

In his own field?

In his own field. It is difficult to say who is more who is less. What you can say, for example, is that home is a crucial ministry. So, obviously home gets a much heavier load than water resources, for example. Or urban development. But that does not mean that I don't consult the minister on issues that he or she may be...

Conversant with?

No. Well, may give me more input on, which may relate to the ministry or may not relate to the ministry.

What you are saying is that you have no key advisers that you turn to on everything.

No. I don't. Not like that.

Is this a change of style from your mother?

It very definitely is. And this is causing a lot of problems because people are so used to a group of advisers that they are not able to function without a group of advisers. And that includes the ministries, because the ministries are so used to saying...You know telephoning somebody and saying, "How should this file be processed?" Now they don't get an answer because they don't know who to phone because there isn't somebody. So that is one of the problems that we have gone through. But I think we have got to get the system back to what it is.

The Two Aruns

What about the concept of parliamentary secretaries and the role of Arun Singh? There was a suggestion then that you were trying the same sort of thing—having key advisers—when you first became Prime Minister.

I did, yes. I had a group of advisers and then slowly we started unwinding that.

Why?

Because I thought it was wrong to have advisers like that. Then you will say, why did I have them to start with? Because, I was thrown into a situation where it was not possible for me to get things under control and get things going unless I had a group of advisers which functioned. The system had been functioning like that and under that sort of situation—I am talking now about November '84, you know, the early months—to try and change that would have been too much. The system couldn't have taken it.

A slightly critical view is that when you came in you were not confident about handling the government. The moment you became confident you dismantled that system. Would that be accurate?

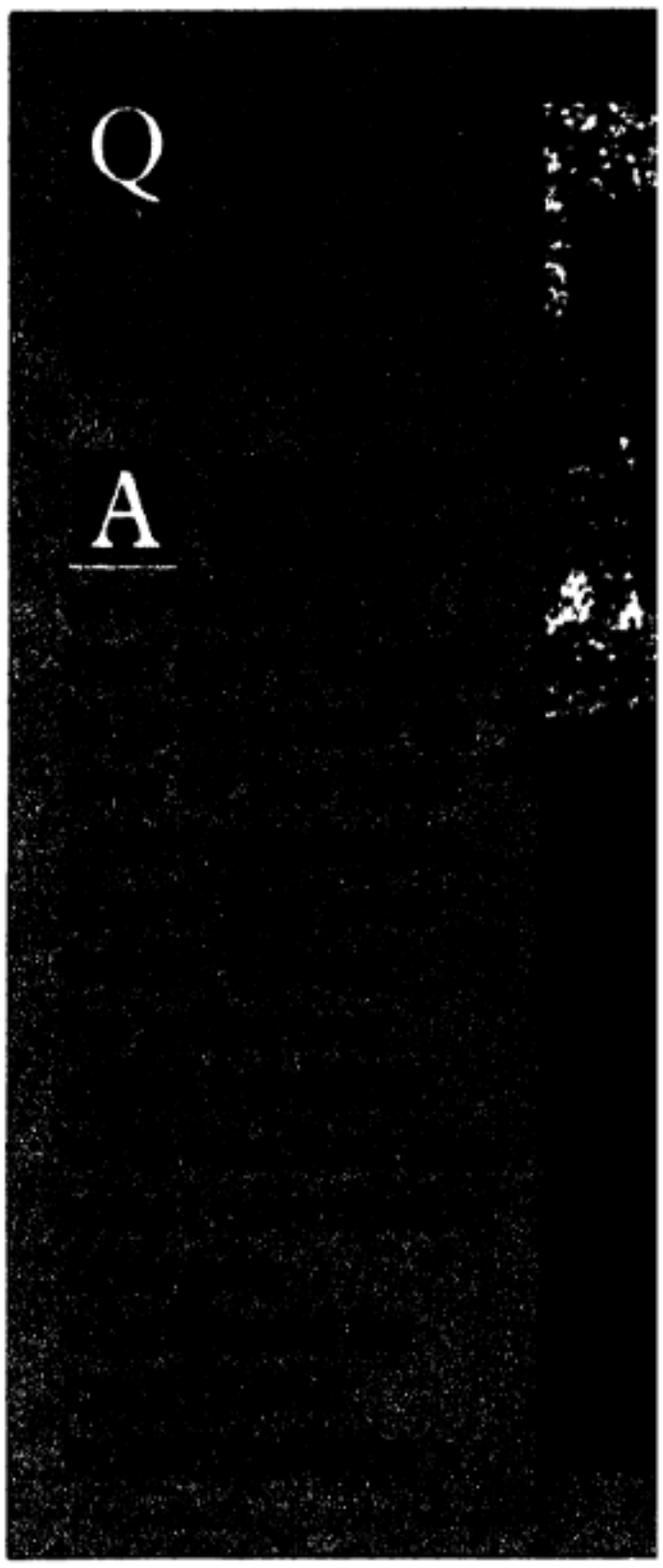
Er...(*pauses*). It is not a question of confidence. I think confidence has been there right through, at least my personal feeling of confidence. What I think you can say is that having...coming to politics late...well, for a very short period before coming in here, I didn't know people as well as I should have known people as Prime Minister, which meant that you had to rely on people that you knew better while getting to know other people.

Did you know those people that you thought you knew very well?

Well, yes and no. The thing is that authority does all sorts of things. And...

People change?

Yes they do.





THE RAJIV GANDHI INTERVIEW



Have you?

I hope not. I believe not.

Is that the only reason why Arun Singh, all the Aruns...

Well...(*pauses*).

Let's take somebody like Arun Nehru who, we were given to understand, was one of your advisers in the period before you became Prime Minister and then, was much more than minister for power suggests. One day he was dropped unceremoniously from the government. You never really explained why. He keeps giving interviews saying he doesn't know.

Well, he does know. I spoke to him and I told him...

Why?

It's not right that I tell you. These things should remain confidential.

There was a belief then, widely suggested in the press, that he was in a sense conspiring against you.

Well...(*pauses*), I didn't believe it at that time, but later events...I don't know whether it was true or not.

Was that why you dropped him?

No. It wasn't why I dropped him.

Was he involved with the Zail Singh conspiracy?

I don't know honestly. He tried to be involved, that I know. Whether he was, I don't know.

What happened to Arun Singh?

That I don't know. He wanted to resign. I said okay.

But he was a friend of yours of many years standing.

A very good friend.

He must have told you why?

He didn't really give any reason.

That resignation possibly did you more damage than anything else in that period.

(*Nods*).

As a friend, you must surely have asked him for an explanation?

Well, he just said that things are not going as he imagined and things should have changed like this. I said, "You tell me what." And there was not anything really substantial that we could go on bargaining over. I don't really know.

Hasn't there been something...

What really motivated him? You know when you say something, but I get the feeling that's not the...

Right answer?

Haan (Yes). Not the complete answer.

Hadn't there, in a sense, in the time that he moved out of the PMO and went to the defence ministry, already been a diminution of the job that he was originally appointed to do?

Well I...I did get the feeling that he felt so. But I did not think that there was a diminution in the role. In fact, I thought that there was an elevation in the role. Because, in fact, he was handling the defence ministry almost *in toto*.

You were the minister.

I was the minister. And for all practical purposes he was acting as the minister in charge of defence, which is normally the number one, number two or number three post in the government. And it was very seldom that I intervened in anything. If there was something that I was interested in, in terms of technology or, you know, direction, then I would get a briefing on it. But he ran the ministry all on his own. So, in fact, it was a promotion.

Do you think it was the breakdown of your personal relationship that led to the resignation?

I don't see why.

Well, given that he entered politics as your friend, perhaps he saw no point in staying once you ceased to be close friends.

You know, I just have not understood that, really. The truth is that.

You said, in the last interview you gave* Ravivar *that "everybody I tried to help in politics ended up being those who hurt me the most" Was that a reference to this kind of thing?

To Arun?

To both the Aruns?

Well, in a sense, yes. Not only them but others also.

Nusli Wadia?

(Laughs)

Arun Singh's friends say that before his resignation, he sought an appointment with you. He had to cool his heels for 21 days or so before you could see him.

No, I don't think so He could just pick up the phone and speak to me He was even connected through our PABX

The RAX?

No The PMO s PABX He had an extension in his office in the defence ministry Not just the RAX

It is suggested that before the resignation he wanted to talk to you, but you didn't give him the time.

No, he *did* talk to me We had a long talk, for over an hour

Then why do you say you don't know why he resigned?

Because I thought that there was something more which was not coming out You know sometimes when you talk to somebody and you feel that the whole thing is not coming out You know, I still really don't know what it was

Why are you more willing to talk about Arun Singh's departure than you are about Arun Nehru's?

Well, I haven't told you what I talked to Arun Singh about for that hour (*smiles*)

No, but you've said that you found the reasons he offered for resigning unconvincing. In the case of Arun Nehru, you won't say anything about the reasons.

Well, Arun (Nehru) I just dropped Arun Singh resigned from the ministry They are two different things

Yes, but Arun Nehru says he tried to resign on three different occasions. Each time you stopped him. And then, one fine morning you dropped him.

No, he never wanted to resign

Well, he's said that in an interview to SUNDAY.

I can't swear by it but I don t remember him ever wanting to resign

And you won't say why you dropped him?

You know, some things must remain within

I think that if you tell the country that he is one of your key advisers and then you suddenly drop him, you ought to tell the people why. Arun Nehru is now an important Opposition leader and it would help to know the reasons for his ouster.

Is he? I don't know Let's see him win an election From anywhere (*laughs*)'



The Gandhi Family

Yesterday, we broke off talking about Arun Nehru. It is rumoured that your sister-in-law is interested in contesting against your cousin from your mother's old constituency.

Menaka?

Yes. Menaka.

She's not even in the party

She could join.

That's a long way off There's been no such talk or proposal

One gathers that N.D. Tiwari is having talks with Akbar Ahmed.

I don't think they had any serious talks in that sense I think they did sort of cross each other Nothing like this has come up

Do you ever get to talk with her?

No I haven't spoken with her for a long time

With your nephew?

Well, we used to ask him to come over She used to send him over. But that seems to have stopped now. Not



Q Do you ever speak to Monaka or your nephew?

A No. I haven't spoken with her for a long time. She used to send him (Feroz) over. But that seems to have stopped. Not from our side. From their side. On his birthday, on festival days, we still send Rahul and Priyanka over with *mithai* or presents for him

from our side. From their side.

We still...on his birthday, on the festival days... send the kids over—Rahul and Priyanka—with *mithai* or presents or something for him.

In what way would you say your style differs from your late brother's?

I don't think one can compare really. Because...firstly because everyone is himself. I mean your personality is reflected in how you function or what your style is. But even more important, you can't compare because...well because he wasn't Prime Minister. He was really in the party. And the situations are so different that you cannot compare.

You questioned Arun Nehru's chances of winning an election. Are you thinking of going to the country?

You mean...

Before an election is due.

No, no... (*pauses*). We are thinking of the election, yes, but at the right time (*laughs*). It is getting close.

Chief Ministers

Yesterday you spoke about Hegde as the one chief minister who has had the most corrruption charges...

I forgot the biggest one he had: the tapping scandal—the phone tapping.

When it comes to corruption, how do the Congress chief ministers compare with the non-Congress chief ministers?

Well we have tried to be very tough with our chief ministers on corruption. I have changed chief ministers very rapidly whenever there has been any such charge. Well, a charge that is substantiated in any way. Not only chief ministers. Governors also. If you remember, we pulled out a Governor because we made him resign. Asked him to resign. Because his son... I think it was...was involved in some admission problem.

Kona Prabhakar Rao.

Yes. We asked one chief minister to resign when his daughter was involved in some marks problem. It was the Congress that did it...Nilangekar. Then it was the Congress that asked Antulay to resign and all that happened.

Not quite. There was a High Court judgement that left you no choice.

But as soon as we got a positive judgement, we got him to resign. We could have said "no" continually and battled it out and gone on appeal.

But you have decided to bring him back now.

In the party. Not as chief minister. We didn't throw him out of the party because of that. He left the party for other reasons.

But the fact that when you chose to formally readmit...

Well let me finish that first. We will come to the readmission later. Now, that's how we've really dealt with our chief ministers.

Then there is the other side where people get an image of corruption. But you can't actually spot something or spot something in a concrete enough manner to take action. There it is very difficult to take action. Perhaps I don't think you should even take action, because then it gets very easy for detractors to destabilise the government. They don't like a particular CM, so they start building a rumour without any basis and it is not good for government to react to such things. If anything substantive happens, then we do react.

Now contrast that with the non-Congress governments. You are from Bengal. You got this light bulb problem going on there. What's happened? Karnataka, I talked about yesterday. Andhra? The sons, the sons-in-law: alteration of the rules, the sales tax rules and all sorts of...er...taxation rules to benefit particular people. The courts have given rulings. So I am not saying that Congress is a pure white stallion with knights in shining armour on it...There *are* problems with the Congress. But at least we try to react and do something. I don't see that happening in the Opposition.

Look at Haryana and what is happening in Haryana. So almost every non-Congress government has a serious corruption problem.

Even in Haryana? You think there is a corruption problem?

Oh yes.

Against Devi Lal?

Well, look at the allegations against his sons.

About Bengal Lamps, should Basu have ordered at least a parliamentary enquiry?

Well, at least a legislative enquiry.

I meant that.

Yes, a legislative enquiry. Even NTR set up a judge. Hegde set up a judge when that murder case was going on ...Which one was that?

Rashid. And he did it for the Moily tapes, too.

Yes. And there was the Moily tape case. Right. So there are precedents. And different ways it could have been handled. It could have been given to agencies.

Do you think Basu is corrupt?

That he makes money himself? I don't think so.

His son?

I can't say. I don't know him at all. I've never met him.

Does he (Jyoti Basu) take money for the party?

(*Smiles.*) Parties have to run. In any democratic system, parties have to run. And parties run on donations They run on donations from individuals and they run on donations from companies That is the democratic system as it functions in every part of the world

You spoke about Devi Lal, about people close to Devi Lal being accused of corruption. People close to you have also been accused of corruption.

I try and take action whenever something concrete comes up. If you see the background the changes in the ministries, the people I have dropped... Wherever I have had some concrete feedback, I have taken action. I have not relented at all.

Have you dropped friends also?

Friends also.

Does it mean...

If I find that anybody close to me has actually done something, I will take action I have said that publicly. I have said it in the House.

The Aruns?

Including the Aruns. But there must be some concrete evidence that they have done something. Not just hearsay.

Likewise, the allegations against Devi Lal could also be hearsay?

It could be. We haven't done anything. So the people of Haryana can decide.

Bofors

Prime Minister, can we talk about Bofors?

(*Nods.*)

I don't want to get bogged down in technicalities but there was a commission of 64 crores. Somebody must have taken that money.

(*Nods.*)

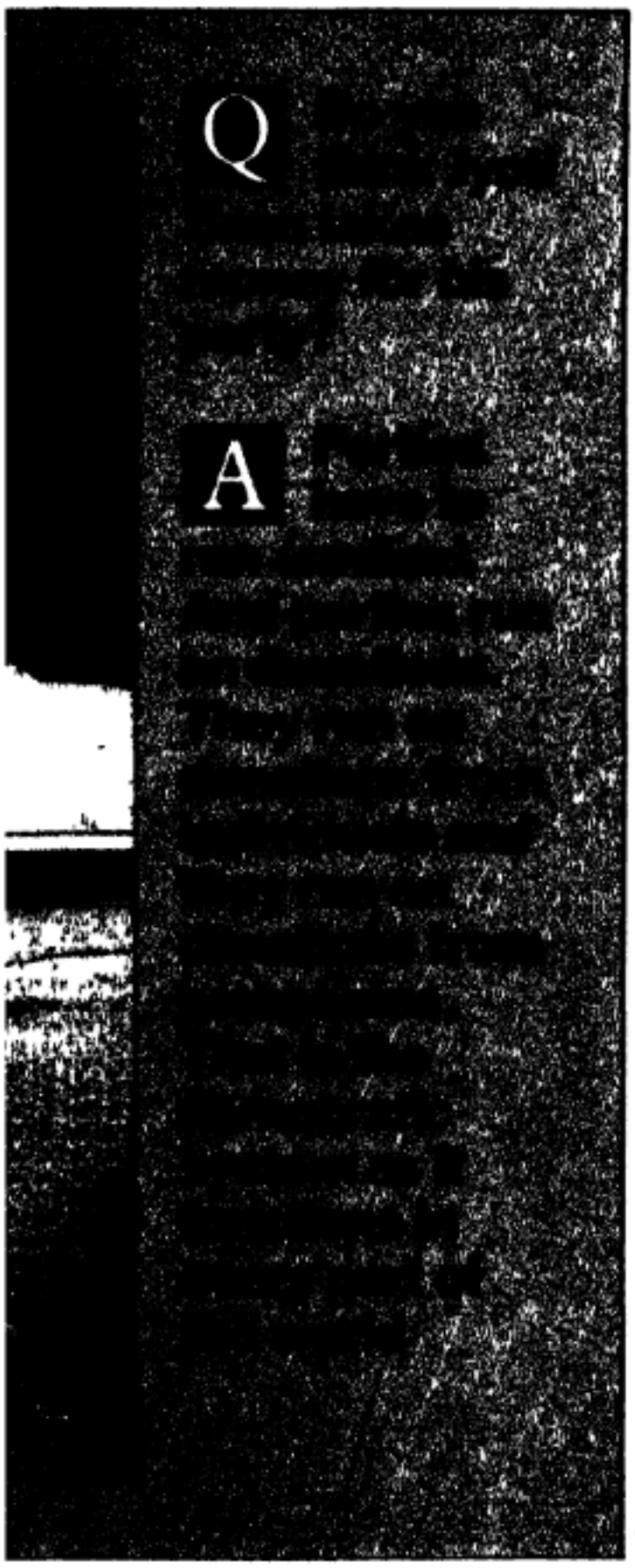
What has the government done apart from issuing denials and giving excuses about the Swiss secrecy laws?

Well, I wouldn't say that. There are a number of things in any purchase. In a military purchase which is strategically important, there are other factors also. The question of security comes in. First, about the weapon. We were told by the army and we were told at that time that it is the best weapon which is available for various reasons. They had short-listed two weapons but when it came to the question of mobility--and mobility became important a little later in the day because of the radar and what not that Pakistan had got in the meantime--and that had to be fed into the evaluation process.

These are not easy decisions when you are choosing between two items that are very close to each other. But sometimes certain factors come in which tilt the balance. I will give you an example. We had a long debate when I was the defence minister on the air-force-aircraft composition. Whether it should be MiG-29, MiG-27, MiG-23, Mirage, some other Western aircraft, our own aircraft, our LCA (Light Combat Aircraft) and what the mix should be. We had two or three long discussions on it. And eventually we fed the whole thing into a computer. Feeding all sorts of aspects. And the computer produced a balance with a cost factor for the first time. Upto then nobody asked the question: should we buy one, let us say, two Mirages, or four MiG-29s, or three Jaguars and what is the effectiveness in terms of target acquisitions and actual delivery of weapons on target for every rupee spent on procurement as opposed to, on procurement and on servicing—running maintenance of the machine.

So we fed the whole thing into the computer. Now, you could work out all sorts of balances, but some things become black and white. Take, for instance, the time we started evaluating an aircraft which could compete on equal terms with the F-16s as an air-superiority aircraft. It was no use saying that we could get three or four of these for the cost of one because none of them







THE RAJIV GANDHI INTERVIEW

are upto that standard. And no matter what, you have got to get something which matches—whether it is expensive, whether it is difficult. In this particular case, it was the cheaper option—it was the MiG-29 which was costing less. But it came out superior to the others because it was the only one which came in that category.

Bofors, in a way, became like that once this fire-finder radar...

The shoot and scoot capacity?

Yes, the shoot and scoot capacity to counter the fire-finder radar became a major consideration. If you wanted a cheaper gun, there were guns which were much cheaper. But they didn't meet the performance standard—the ones that were rejected earlier. So, it's not just a question of costs, performance is very important.

We believe we got the best gun. You asked whether we should cancel the contract or why it wasn't cancelled or something to that effect?

We are not questioning the selection of the equipment. The question is whether or not money was taken. Even for an ideal choice, say a Mercedes Benz car, there could be considerations. The question is whether a commission...

..was paid. Obviously, how many million kroner—319 was the original number—I think it ended up in 60 something crores, 66 crores.

64 crores.

Whatever it was. Anyway, that much money was paid to somebody. That is clear. Nobody doubts that. Nobody argues about that. We don't question that.

But to whom? Who got the money?

The question is to whom and for what? If it was paid for some genuine work that was done for Bofors, then we cannot question it.

Oh yes you can. Your deal with Bofors made it quite clear that there would be no middlemen. So there could be no 'genuine work', they were paid for.

No, not genuine work in terms of middlemen. Genuine work gathering information against the French weapon, for example. That is industrial espionage. You can't grudge them that. You can't...

But 64 crores? For industrial espionage?

There are three or four payments. Could be...I am not saying it is...The whole thing may not be...hypothetically I am saying the whole amount could have been paid for genuine work. Then we can't question it. If the money has been paid for...as a commission and it has not come to any Indian and no Indian is involved and it has gone back to...I don't know who on the other side.

Then again, we can be upset that we have paid 66 crores extra. We could demand the money back perhaps. But there is nothing else that you can do. Our first assessment must be: did we get a good price for the guns? Could we have haggled and bargained and got a lower price? If our assessment is that we got a good price, then we really need to chase only the fact whether any Indian has made money or whether money has been used to influence decision-making—which would be the two very serious things.

To the best of my knowledge, money has not been used to influence the decision-making process. So far, we have not been able to establish whether money has come to any Indian.

But did you try hard enough?

We have tried very hard. We have not finished trying. CBI is looking into it. We have sent him to Sweden. He met the Prosecutor General and others who could help us in getting at the truth, including the Swedish Bank.

When was all this?

This was during the last few months after the last session.

When you say "he", you mean Katre? (Mohan Katre, CBI director.)

Yes, Katre. Well, I don't know whether Katre personally or...

One of his men.

Haan (Yes). Now the investigation is still continuing. The questions...we approached the Swiss also. The CBI approached the Swiss. We got two things going with the Swiss. We started talking to them on a treaty. I believe only one other country has such a treaty with them—that's United States. And they agreed to have a treaty with us. The preliminary work is done. Now we are working on the treaty. The treaty is going to take a little while. The last time I asked, they said it will take about a year. But that was about four or five months ago. So, perhaps by the beginning of next year, by the spring of next year, we should be in a position to sign a treaty with the Swiss on the same lines that the Americans have. But there is a basic problem with the Swiss: they don't tell you anything unless there is an infringement of their laws. And...

And tax evasion isn't a crime there?

No, it's very complicated. I wouldn't like to say a simple thing when the position is not. They say yes, when there is an income-tax violation. It is an offence but if this is the case it is not, if that is the case it is not...if that's the...you know there are so many provisos and loopholes that it is difficult just to quantify and say anything.

But we have taken it up with the Swiss. And we will continue to take it up with the Swiss. We are really following it up now with the documents that were printed in *The Hindu*. In case something does come out...

BPL · SANYO

Move to the beat
of today's technology.

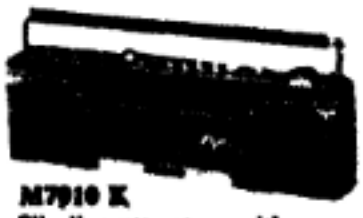


BPL-SANYO music makers.
At last! A world class choice.

Mono or stereo, cassette recorder or 2-in-1, BPL-Sanyo calls the tune Stylish. Packed with features And surprisingly affordable Take your pick. today!



M7740 K
Ultra-sleek 6-speaker 'Boom Box' Feature-packed model with big sound that surrounds you The only one of its kind.



M7910 K
Slimline attraction with 4-band radio 10-watt stereo sensation at a sensational price



MW200 K
Double cassette 'Mini Studio' with high-speed dubbing and 4-band radio Compact model with high-impact sound. Affordably priced.



C1 K
Mini compo system with detachable speakers for true stereo effect 4-band radio with FM. Excellent bargain.

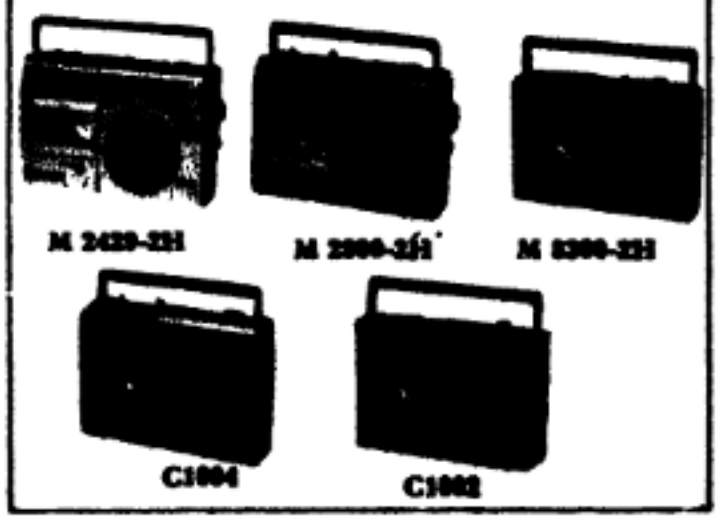


M2003-2H
2-way, 4-speaker marvel. Surprisingly affordable. Makes more sense than a mono in its price range



M1700 H
Mini and slim international favourite Small on size, big on sound. Unique styling. Ideal all-time companion.

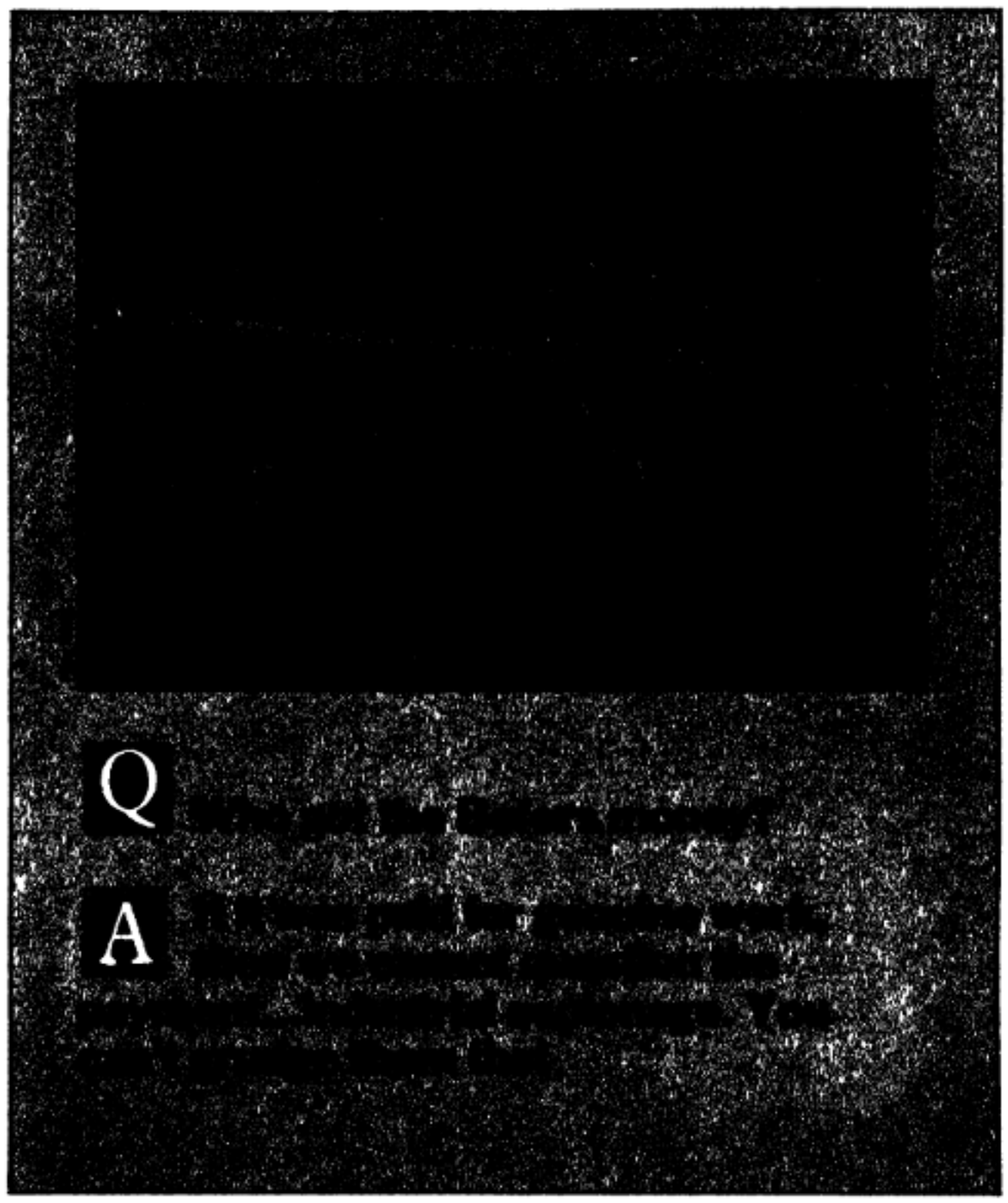
More to choose from



BPL-AUDIO
Always the best!

R K SWAMY/BPL/3616





If the media can recover vital clues, why can't the government sleuths?

Well, governments cannot operate underhand in another country We have to operate officially.

But you do. You have RAW and that sort of thing. That's what they are for?

No. Not really. And we have got to operate through the government machine And we operated through the Swedish government. We asked the banks to give us the information. But they have not given us anything adequate for us to go on.

It seems a little odd that a single girl reporter sitting in Sweden can get more than the Department of Revenue, the CBI and the JPC.

It is also odd that a single girl reporter gets much more than senior, more aggressive reporters who also went right up to Sweden, isn't it?

Let's leave the Express out of it. Isn't it humiliating for your investigators that a reporter was more successful than all of them put together?

It depends how you get a document. If you get it subversively? Well, governments don't act in that manner. And it's not correct. If we were found acting subversively in Sweden, it would be a major diplomatic problem with Sweden. When they are working with us, within the framework of their law, we can't ask them to break their laws. We would not like to do that specially as we would not like Sweden or any other country to be operating in that manner here. If we found out about it, we would be very tough.

Arun Singh said in the Rajya Sabha that if Bofors really breached faith, the government must take action: cancel the contract, deduct the 64 crores or blacklist them. What prevents you from doing any of these? Or all of them?

These questions had come up very long ago. In fact, this was one of the first things I asked. Can we do this? And the second question I asked with that was: what is the cost of doing it? The cost is first in terms of security. Do we reduce our security? Second, in terms of money. Do we actually lose money or gain (the 64 crores)? If we take some action which is going to cost us some 800 crores, it is hardly worth it.

That's only about cancelling the contract. What about the other options?

There's the option about asking for the money back. That's still open.

There is the option of not going ahead with the second part of the contract. The other question that I asked was: what happens to our defence procurement? Or to future defence equipment if we cancel a contract every time a noise is made? Supposing tomorrow we buy an aircraft and we have a similar situation. We find that no Indian is involved. At least there is no concrete evidence that Indians are involved but payments have been made. We cancel the contract. We go without an aircraft. We buy a ship. We find the same thing. We cancel the contract.

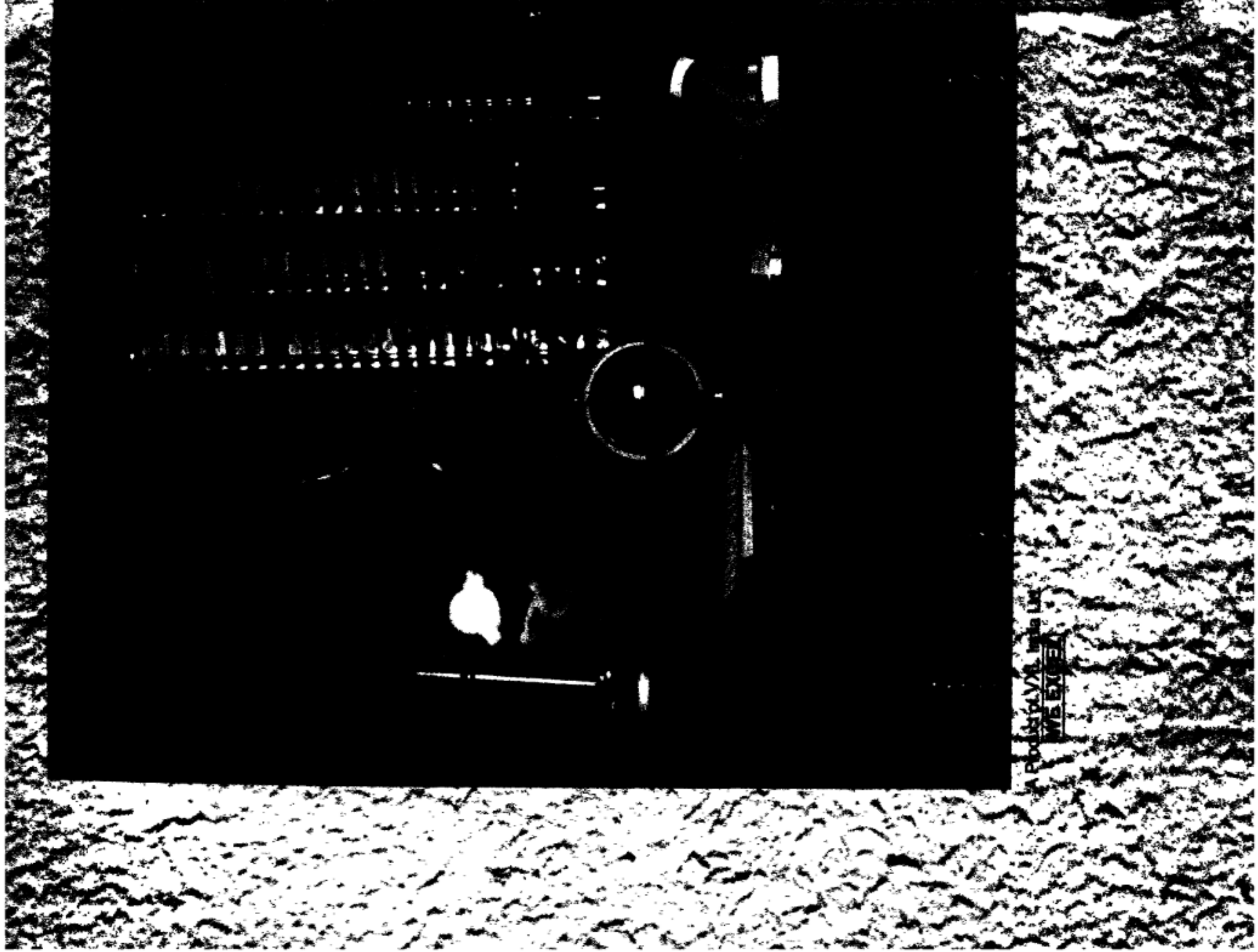
Now, it could become a weapon to use against us. So I asked the defence ministry to evaluate all this. On the security side they said an almost categorical no. At least, they said, we will lose over a year--I am now talking from memory, this was a long time ago. Approximately a year, maybe over a year in terms of preparedness and, under the present circumstances, it was not acceptable. And if you switch the tape off I will add a little more.

(The tape is now switched off.)

In fact...

Let me finish this. Then...the other question was;can we swap? Could we get the French gun in place of the Swedish gun. Time delay. They said you cannot have both guns because the spares, the inventory will be different. It will be very expensive. It uses different ammunition. So you will always have to have two sets of 155 ammunition. And it was really vetoed as an option. So, on the security side, the cost was very heavy.

Second, on the money side, there was a cost of what we had already paid them which we wouldn't get back. There was




DIGJAM

a cost of damages we would have had to pay and the assessment was that it would be a unilateral cancellation on our side without any breach of contract on their side. It would be a breach of faith or whatever you want to say but with no legal breach of contract on their part. According to current trends in Europe, we would have to pay a very heavy penalty. And the Bench that would look at it --our assessment was--not look at it sympathetically from our point of view.

Then there was the penalty, the money that we would have paid. And I forget there was one more part on the financial side. The evaluation was it would be hundreds of crores, perhaps closer to a thousand, that we would lose on a cancellation.

So obviously, trying to get 66 (crores) back...and this is what I said at the meeting where this was raised...I said what have we got. We've got Rajiv Gandhi's credibility on the one side which is, you know, that he is a great guy and cancelled the contract and in doing that, he has compromised the security of the nation. He has made the nation pay, I don't know, 800-1,000 crores extra. I said: "Look, it is better that I take a beating rather than the nation take a beating."

Have you taken a beating?

I have taken a beating.

Are you still reeling under it?

No. I am not reeling under it. I mean a beating, politically; personally, no. Because I know I have personally done no wrong. And we are clean on that. It doesn't affect me as an individual. Then there was one more thing...

You said earlier...

Hang on. Just one more part of the weapon was, yes, which was also very important, but we couldn't quantify it. Which was India's credibility in the international market when you are buying...specially defence equipment. And would manufacturers be reluctant to sell us weapons if they felt that a controversy would lead to a cancellation and heavy costs on their side? They would most likely build that cost into the price But this you know, we were never able to quantify in any way. So it wasn't...it was part of the argument but couldn't be quantified. So the net result of all that we felt was that it was not a real option to cancel the contract.

But this was just one of the options that Arun Singh suggested. What he said was that the Government of India was one of the biggest buyers in the market-place. It was the Government of India that kept Bofors going. Surely if you put a little pressure on them you could get them to tell you who they gave the money to, and not just give you the names of Swiss front companies. There was no suggestion that you ever did that.

No. We did. With due respect, I think the information that Arun had, at the time he said that, was not complete. What happened was that a gentleman from Bofors had come here who was not a top-level official. And he had said that he does not have the authority to say more than what he has said. This was long before they came and deposed before the JPC and gave us everything that they gave. And there was some impression that he might say something if he was allowed to meet at a political level, which meant either Arun or me. And we had to take a decision whether he would or would not say something. Because if he did meet and did not say anything then it could be interpreted to mean that we told him to shut up. So the danger of that was very high. So we took a decision that we would not deal with that level. When we really wanted the information, we put the pressure at the top-level. The man went back. We started doing that. And that is when we forced the Swedish lawyer and chairman or MD Ring...

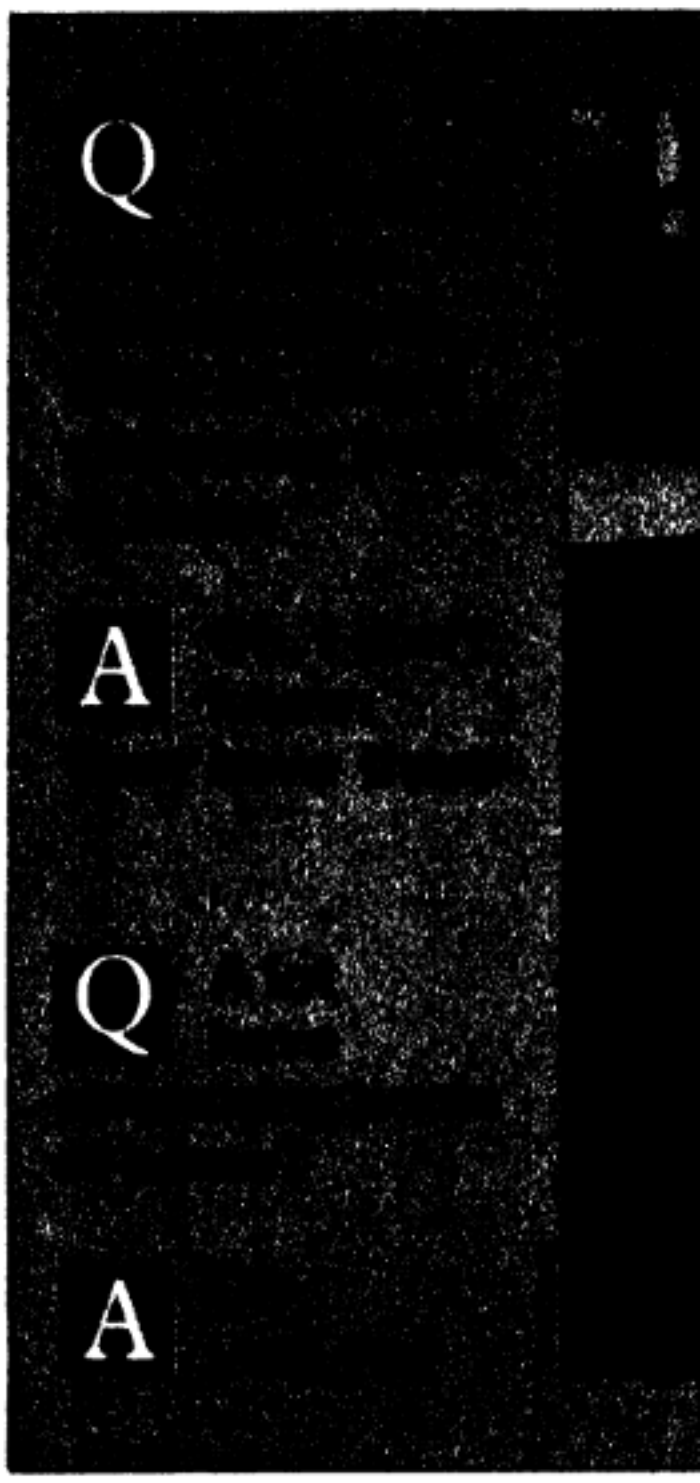
Ringberg?

That's right, Ringberg and Gothlin.

Morberg or Ringberg?

Not Ringberg. Ringberg's the PG (Prosecutor General). When the two of them came, we put a lot of pressure on them and got the two of them here. And if we hadn't put pressure on them, they would not have talked like that. And if you try and talk with the people who cross-examined then...they were given absolute...they were treated almost like in an uncivilised manner in that interrogation that government did. That means the defence secretary and the group under defence secretary. It was a very rigorous interrogation.

My view is that they would not have told us what they told us and not have committed to tell us more--which they did tell us later—without that tough interrogation the government did. I don't know if we could put more pressure on them. We put pressure on the (Swedish) government. We put pressure through diplomatic channels, through defence ministry channels, through everything. But like I said you see that there is a point where they also know that our security is compromised



if...they know what we know and we know what they know. So it is a bit of a balance argument. They know we can push them so far and then if we push them further, it will start costing us.

Well, I think we put a lot of pressure on them. Well, let's see what CBI uncovers. If we can start a case...One of the difficulties is that we have not got any...well, enough evidence to actually start a case.

Against whom?

Against well...Win Chadha, Anatronics. That's the only one that has really come up.

The Hindujas

Not quite. Because when the Bofors documents involving Win Chadha appeared in the newspapers, Mr Chadha was picked up and the CBI moved to have his passport impounded. When the documents involving the Hindujas appeared,





THE RAJIV GANDHI INTERVIEW

Corruption

You came to power with a mandate to clean the system. You were even called "Mr Clean". Now one of the charges against you is corruption. How do you react to that?

I found it is harder to clean up corruption than it is when you are on the other side, talking about it rather than having to do it. There are a number of ways how corruption happens. There is the high-level that we have just been talking about, Bofors—large chunks of money.

There is the next level where big industrialists, government, politicians, bureaucrats—all are involved. Then there is the nitty-gritty, day-to-day level...Putting the Bofors thing to a side, because that is perhaps the most difficult one to get to...we genuinely believed that we had beaten Bofors down to the price that they could not afford. In fact, we discovered that 66 (crores) has been paid. So we really don't know—we could have beaten them down another 30 crores. We don't even know whether the 66 (crores) is the only amount. How do we know? We'll never know. So in no contract will you really find out what's going on.

What we've got to do on the big side is that we have a very close check on our chaps. See their lifestyle, see what they are doing, where it could be going. And try and catch them on that. Keep a track on the way contracts are done because sometimes in the routes the files follow. What happens: the hurdles, the obstacles that come in the way. There are patterns where you can catch something. At least a hint of something. So we're looking at things at that way but it is a difficult area.

On the other hand, on the other side, on the other two, they happen because of controls—meaning somebody has the control. It may be a big control, it may be a little control—just a control of being able to sell a train ticket to you. So he can hold you at ransom because there is a shortage of train tickets. Massive licenses for huge industrial complexes—again he can hold you at ransom because he is holding the thing. We tried increasing penalties...it just didn't work. Wherever you increase penalties, corruption has not gone down at all...

the government bent over backwards to say they were forgeries.

No. Not at all. The *Hindu* documents did not relate to—you are talking about the first set of documents?—did not relate to Bofors.

Yes, they did.

No, they related to some other purchase. They were dated before Bofors.

There was a document that showed an agreement between Pitco and the Bofors company relating to the Indian contract. There was another document relating to an earlier contract which proved that Pitco was owned by the Hindujas. So, in effect, they did link the Hindujas to the Indian contract.

Oh! So what related was the current contract and Pitco?

Right. Once you learn from the earlier contract that Pitco is owned by the Hindujas, the connection is fairly clear.

Now, on the first one, we were not able to establish that Pitco was owned by Hinduja. If I remember correctly those documents are said by the Swedish Bank to have some defects in them.

What defects?

As printed in the paper. There are some doubts about their authenticity. The earlier set.

(The next part of the reply was made off-record by the Prime Minister.)

Do you know the Hindujas?

I met them once a long time ago.

What about Davos?

At Davos, I met a lot of people and didn't meet anybody...meaning it was a pubic meeting sort of thing and I didn't talk one-to-one with anybody except in a...you know...in the big meeting and they ask questions and we had a cup of tea like you have at these things...It was a dinner, I think.

So, are they friends of the regime as they claim?

Industrialists and business houses do have a role to play in the economic life of the country. There is, however, no question of any industrialist or businessman having a special relationship with me or the government.



We'll deliver. Wherever on earth. SKYPAK The worldwide couriers.
Skypak House, Off M Vasanji Road, Marol Naka, Andheri (E), Bombay 400 059

Avenues SC 449 BB



It can only go up.

It only goes up.

You cannot stop it by policing.

(Nods.) In a sense, a penalty is one more control, opens one more channel, one more point for corruption.

Why don't you take the controls off?

That's precisely what we are doing.

No, you are not.

Oh yes we are.

What if I can give example after example to show you are not.

Tell me and I will give you examples of how we are *(laughs loudly)*. We'll come back to that on the economic side. But on the corruption side, I am very clear that you...the only way is to remove controls. There is no other way. There are certain limitations on removing controls. For example, I mentioned train tickets, airline tickets. There is a shortage of certain items. There will be shortage of certain items in any developing economy. By definition that's what 'developing is. So that is a difficult area to cover. The only real way of doing (it) is by increasing the supply enough so that the shortages are removed. We've been trying to do that. We've removed controls in a number of areas, specially in licensing. The new package we are getting on transport—that's another area where there is lot of nitty-gritty stuff. The new Bill that has come and the rules that we will follow will relieve a part of that.

Satish Sharma

You spoke of monitoring the lifestyle of people to end corruption. One of your close friends is Satish Sharma. Let us take his lifestyle for instance: when he was an Indian Airlines pilot and the way he lives now. Does it not show a certain change in lifestyle?

I believe there isn't much change in his lifestyle from Indian Airlines to now. In what way?

I was told at the time that he got married, the whole family was cooped up in a very small flat with just one bathroom...

Don't count it from when he got married. That was when he just joined the airline. Count it from when he left the airline: when he was earning eight-nine thousand rupees a month in the airline.

Pre-tax?

Take-home.

Including allowances...

Because of allowances. You count his lifestyle from then to now. I don't see a substantial change in his lifestyle. In what way?

Would you say somebody who earns eight or nine thousand rupees a month take-home can afford Italian marble to begin with?

Well, I don't believe he has any Italian marble at all.

What about the tiles?

I have seen his place. There is no Italian marble.

What about the tiles that he imported?

He imported some tiles, yes. But he says he got into a problem because...

No. No problem. They were cleared...

No. His father-in-law sent them. In fact if you see those tiles, the tiles are



Q Do you regret bringing Amitabh Bachchan into politics?

A No. Absolutely not. I don't regret it at all. I might call him back again. I think he got used by all kinds of people...We are still very good friends. We talk about all kinds of things. No problems

ABSOLUTE DENTAL FACT

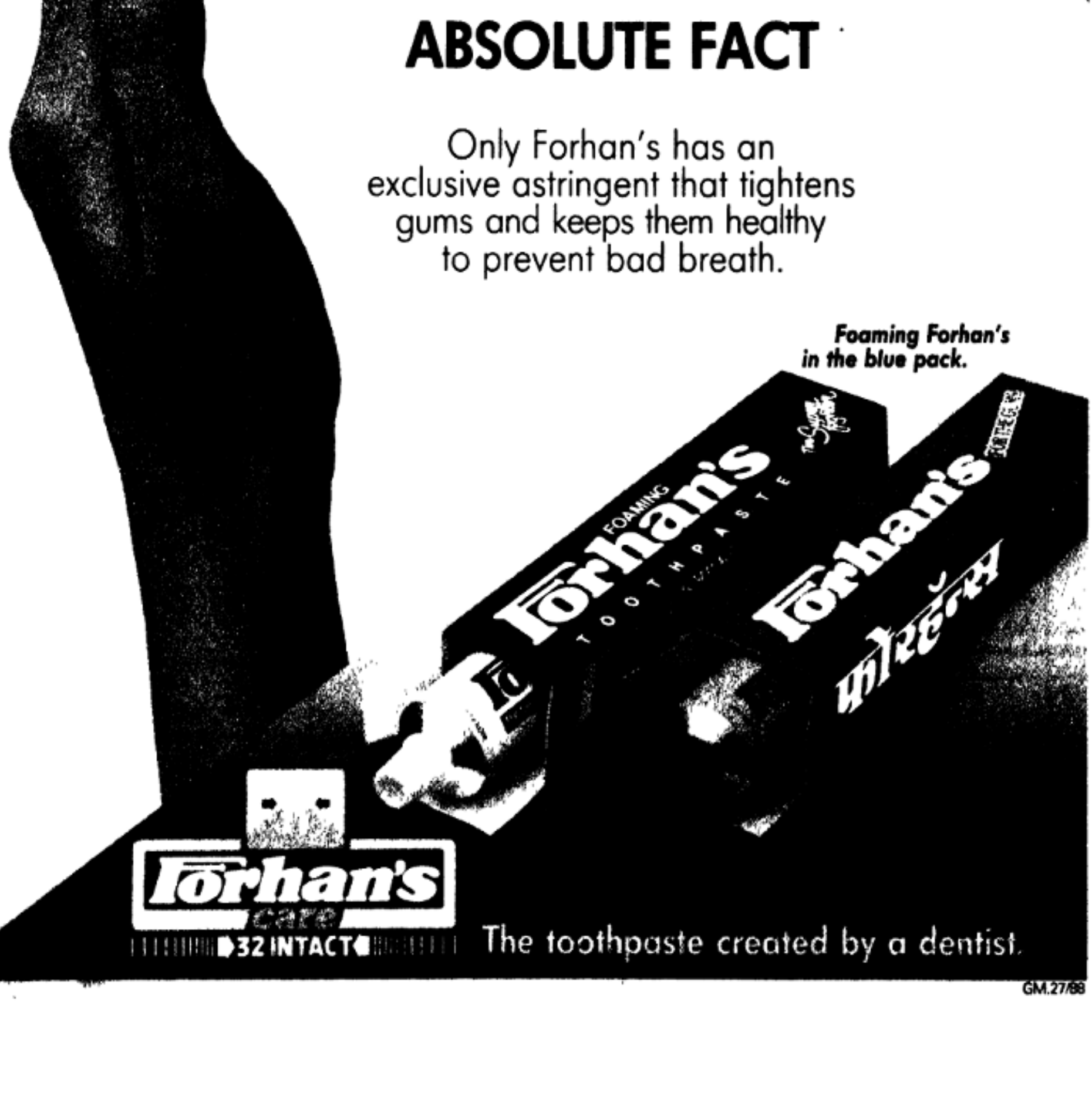
Bad breath has more to do with
the health of your gums than your teeth.



ABSOLUTE FACT

Only Forhan's has an
exclusive astringent that tightens
gums and keeps them healthy
to prevent bad breath.

Foaming Forhan's
in the blue pack.



The toothpaste created by a dentist.

GM.27/88



just like *desi* tiles. There is no difference.

I can't think of too many Indian Airlines pilots who have swimming pools at home, regardless where the tiles came from.

Oh, I don't know, they have them.

A lot of them have swimming pools at home?

Oh yes, yes.

You were a pilot. Could you afford a swimming pool after meeting your expenses, expenses of your family, the education of your children?

We very slowly built the house at Mehrauli. That has taken ten years to do.

But that is a farm way out of Delhi.

But that is where his pool is. It is beyond...right near the border, the Haryana border somewhere.

Acquiring a farm in Mehrauli is cheaper than in Delhi but it costs the same to build a pool wherever you build it.

Yeah. There's no cost difference in that. A pool itself is not that expensive. And...er...I don't think a pool ...Check his accounts. Ask (him). I've asked him and he has taken loans to do it...

From Lalit Suri?

No. From his relatives. He has got some relatives who are in the construction business. So they are doing fairly well. His wife is a designer and has an income.

Amitabh Bachchan

On the subject of friends, do you regret having asked Amitabh Bachchan to join politics?

No. Absolutely not. I don't regret it at all. I might call him back again.

Well, it hasn't worked out too well, has it?

Yes, well I think he got used by all kinds of people.

Do you think he regrets having joined politics? After all, he says, he only came to help you and he's ended up getting hurt.

Well, that's something only he can answer. I mean, how can I regret from his point of view?

No, but you're his friend. You may know how he feels.

We are still very good friends. We talk about all sorts of things. No problems (*smiles*).

Why didn't you put him up from Allahabad?

One, he wasn't well and he wasn't in India.

He could have flown back.

No, he wasn't keeping good health. And, I didn't know whether he would be able to take the physical strain of an election at that point because of his health. So that was one of the major factors.

Was he keen to stand?

I got the impression that he wasn't so keen because of health and all.



The Finance Ministry

Prime Minister, you spoke about controls as one of the fundamental causes of corruption. Corruption has tarred the reputations of most Indian politicians: you to begin with, Hegde and, now even Jyoti Basu. You spoke about loosening the controls. I believe that the fountain-head of controls are two institutions; the finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India. Compare the equivalent institutions in England or even in a developing country. You will find no precedent.

Even an individual ministry's budget after it has been approved by Parliament has to go back to the finance ministry.

Yeah, we've been fighting this for four years.

Why can't you change it?

One of the first instructions I gave to my first finance minister was to delegate authority from the finance ministry. To ask for a quarterly account from the ministries on what they've done and to let their man—they have a finance man in every ministry – let him run the thing. And if they had any doubts about it, they could put some limit and say: okay something beyond this limit and you come back, but below this limit you do it. But we've not been able to make any substantial headway on that I agree with you.

We have made some headway on the banks in just these recent months. It's taken us a long time to do it and we've had to bulldoze it very hard. We are...we would like the banks to be much more free in their operations. We would like to lay down the basic guidelines and then let them operate. This becomes even more important when we start decontrolling the licensing because so far, what happened, every time we issued a license, the industry made a killing and was okay. We gave a license; the bank financed.

Now, we've said that anything below 15 crores in backward areas– sorry, anything below 15 crores anywhere and anything below 50 crores in backward areas—can be set up without a license with the only proviso that there is some 30 per cent or some foreign exchange involvement in it.

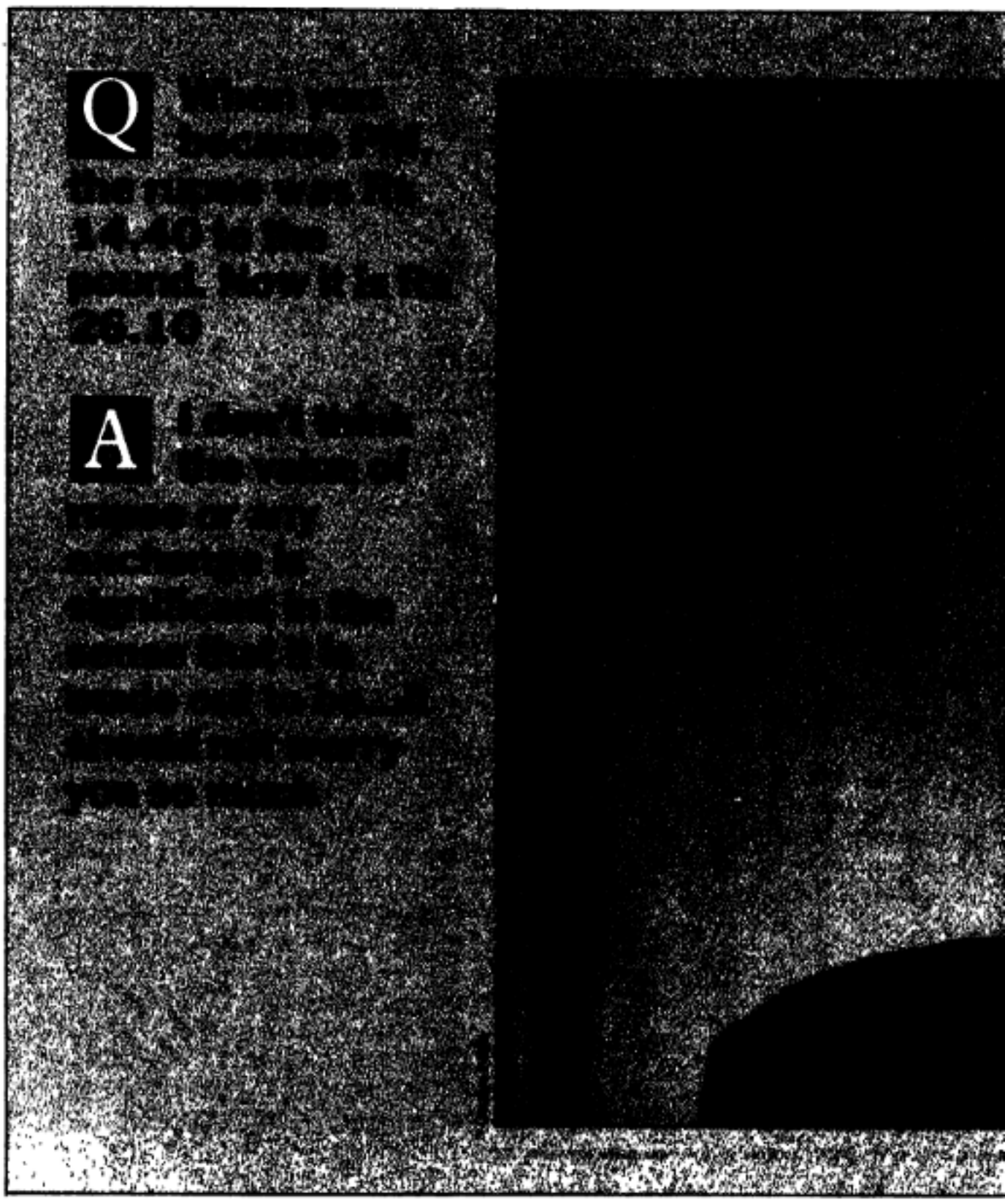
The banks are now going to have to start choosing who they are going to finance. They don't have the machinery to do it. So what we are really doing is to shift the burden of measuring a remunerative investment to the bank from the government. And we've more or less forced the Reserve Bank to do that. They've done it in recent months, I've forgotten the details of the package.

No, Prime Minister. I think, either you have been misinformed or they—by 'they' I mean the bureaucracy...

They got the small print in *(laughs)*.

Or rather, I would say, they are trying to house-tame you. You know, the 'Yes Minister' syndrome.

You know this is the problem that we had when we first started trying to decontrol. We did a lot of decontrol right in 1985. Somewhere in the middle of



1986 we discovered that although we had done everything, they had put in the little print at the bottom, so anything that happened far below joint secretary level was totally bogged down and nothing was happening. That's why we then came to this scheme of total deregulation. We said instead of trying to do it piecemeal and getting stuck, we just chop it completely. And then let's do it. So that's where we brought the backward areas in. Then we pinned certain things to areas of necessity: exports, foreign exchange earnings, and said we will decontrol in this area.

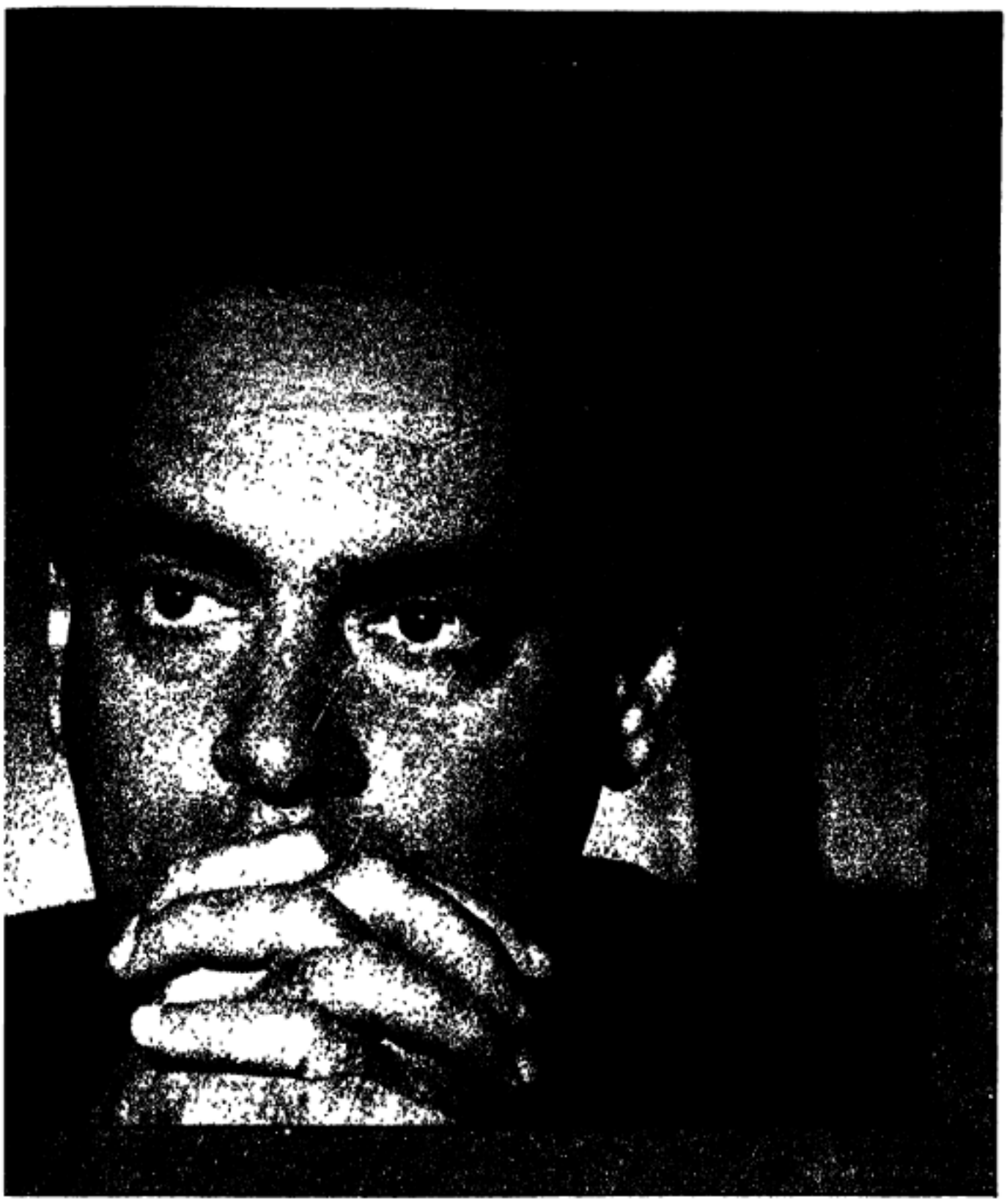
We've done a massive package for exports, including finance, banks, taxes, delicensing—all sorts of incentives. And then, we've included the tourism industry in that. All part of the decontrolling process. But it doesn't come under one sort of head. I feel we've done a substantial amount on decontrol. If you ask me if I am happy about what we've done, no I'm not, because I feel we should have done more. And it's necessary to do more.

Prime Minister, may I tell you why you should not be happy. Haven't you actually contributed to the confusion?

How?

The basic thing is that unless you are able to tame the finance ministry, you'll be nowhere. But you had said earlier...

No, there are some basic problems and I don't think just taming the finance ministry is a solution. The finance ministry does need taming, yes. But there is a much more serious problem, which is the way we spend money: the ministries, the state governments, the politicians, the bureaucrats—everybody—are only keen to spend on non-productive expenditure. They are not willing to pay back bills to each other—either this ministry to that ministry, the



state to the Centre, the Centre to the state.

The whole financial system—and if you include the internal borrowings and external borrowings; externals less, internals more—the whole financial system is not all that good and it needs a lot of correction. Now that correction has to be done in the next...I don't think it can be done rapidly, we've started the process but it will have to be done over a period of perhaps five years—let's say, the Eighth Plan period. If we do not do it, we will be in very deep trouble. I don't think the nation will forgive us for it or we will be able to get away with it.

Keeping all this in mind, the finance ministry has to have a certain grip at the top. Today we tell them to curb deficits or to hold deficits. They have promised 7,400 (crores)—I think it was in the last budget—and it's already sort of creeping up. I've told them: look, you can't allow it to creep up. Last year, we were able to hold it in spite of the drought, this year, you jolly well hold it in spite of everything because that adds to so many other problems.

But holding the deficit means increasing the efficiency of government functioning. There's no other real way of doing it. You can't cut power projects. You cannot cut irrigation projects. It is not on. You've got to make them more cost-effective.

Prime Minister, this is a tautology. You see...

It has to be seen in that picture. You can't sort of pull out a thing from it.

No. But once you have the annual budget, individual money is apportioned to a ministry and a deficit worked out. So that, let's say, the power ministry or the irrigation ministry has that much money to spend. So you give them the money at the beginning of the year.

Yes.

Now if they want to spend more money, they'll have to create it. Where can they get the money from?

That is exactly what happens, you see. They don't spend that money properly. Sometimes, during a year, like these last two years, we've had bad years, we've had drought. We had to cut expenditure. We told everybody to cut back: when we ask them to cut back, what do they cut back? They don't cut on wasteful expenditure. They cut on projects. So you cannot...they are not acting responsibly enough.

But, Prime Minister, isn't it your responsibility to make them act responsibly, not the finance ministry's?

Oh, we've been fighting with them!

But can you tame the tiger without taking the authority away?

I don't know if at this stage, with our financial situation as it is, we really want to take the authority of the finance ministry away.

The authority of the Prime Minister is there. The authority of Parliament is there. But why should the finance ministry have a veto over the ministry of industry? Or power? Or irrigation?

Because they have to work out the total balance in spending. Somewhere between planning and finance.

But they are working this out at beginning of the year.

But it doesn't work the same right through the year, because sometimes there's more available, sometimes there's less.

You can have quarterly accounts.

That's what we are trying to do. That's what I said at the beginning.

But they won't let you.

We are trying (*smiles*). These things don't happen instantly.

You have a man like S.B. Chavan. The first thing he says is "FERA should be strengthened". This sort of attitude contradicts all that you and your government stand for.

Well, yes and no. FERA should be rationalised and strengthened.

Why should it be strengthened? Why shouldn't it be abolished?

No, I don't think we are ready to abolish FERA.



THE RAJIV GANDHI INTERVIEW

You spoke about taking India to the 21st century and, in a larger context, about the four powers and five powers in the next century...

The question is are we economically strong enough to take

No, that's not the question.

To step into the wide world? I don't think we are

No, Prime Minister, that's not the point. If you look at Asia then it becomes obvious that this is where the real economic miracle of the last decade has taken place, not in the white man's world. It's countries like Japan and South Korea. These are the miracle areas. But they haven't done this through the finance ministry. Now, the finance ministry calls itself the engine of growth.

No Wait Let us look at Japan Let us look at Korea There the scenario is totally different In Japan you are dealing with a country which was a superpower in the Second World War It's not just a country which has developed They had a massive industrial base It's like Germany you can't compare Germany and Japan to India

I concede that. It's reconstruction rather than construction.

Korea you can perhaps compare But then you can't, because Korea has a very strong relationship with the United States It gives it markets It gives it

A ten billion dollar trade surplus.

It gives it surpluses (*smiles*) Internally, Korea works its industry in a totally undemocratic manner We couldn't do it here

Why not?

It wouldn't work here Our democracy is like that If you want to abolish the democracy, yes, then you can do it here

No, not democracy. You don't need restrictive laws.

Korea has very strong restrictive laws Japan has solid restrictive laws They've only developed because of their laws being so restrictive You talk to Germany or Britain or United States about Japanese laws or Korean laws!

No, those laws are only to prevent external competition.

What else are we doing?

No. Let's take FERA. Because of FERA, of the amount of foreign investment that has come to Asia in the past five years, only a very small portion has trickled into India. Now, we do not have enough capital to invest. Obviously, foreign investment would augment the total amount of money which can be spent. By framing needlessly restrictive laws like FERA...

No, you've got to look at a bigger perspective India has taken a particular role or line in what it believes is its independence Part of our independence is our foreign policy None of the other countries which have had rapid development have a foreign policy of their own or have the strength to have a foreign policy of their own, including some of the big countries that you mention

This is what the mandarins at the finance ministry would say.

No, this is something that we deliberately decided to do And this is the cost that is part of that package If we today say that this is not necessary—I personally feel it's very necessary

What is necessary? Independence as a concept or the law of FERA?

The independence The independence of foreign policy

Economic Policy

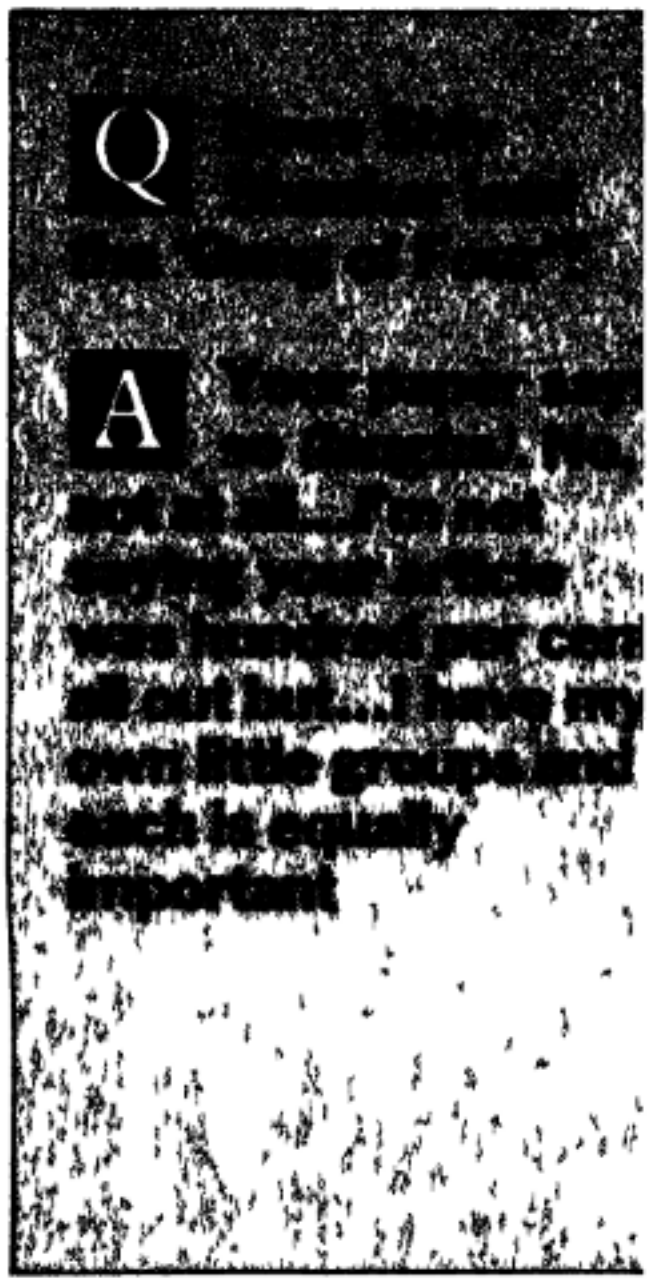
Prime Minister, I think I know what you are trying to get at, but your argument would break down if you analysed the flow of foreign investment after the enactment of FERA...

What you are going to say is

That surely we had an independent foreign policy from your grandfather's days.

I'll come to that If we want an independent foreign policy and the options for independent action, then it requires certain types of controls which other countries who do not strive for that don't have Take the whole of Europe What is the root of their foreign policy? They are all tied very closely to American foreign policy They may disagree here and there, but in substance, when it comes to the crunch, they toe the line

I have spoken to Heads of State and I have said, "Look, why have you done this It is absolutely ridiculous and how can you, in all honesty, say that what you are doing is correct?" And they've said, "Yes, we agree 100 per cent with you but what can we do?" Now, I'm not going to let India go into a position to say, "I can't say this and what can I do?"



Prime Minister, let's take China...

Now, once having said that, then you have to have you pay a price for that Now, whether FERA, in its current form is are we paying too much of a price for it is something we can ask But to say that FERA is not necessary or that some sort of anti trust laws are not necessary, I think is we are not ready for that, we are not strong enough for that yet

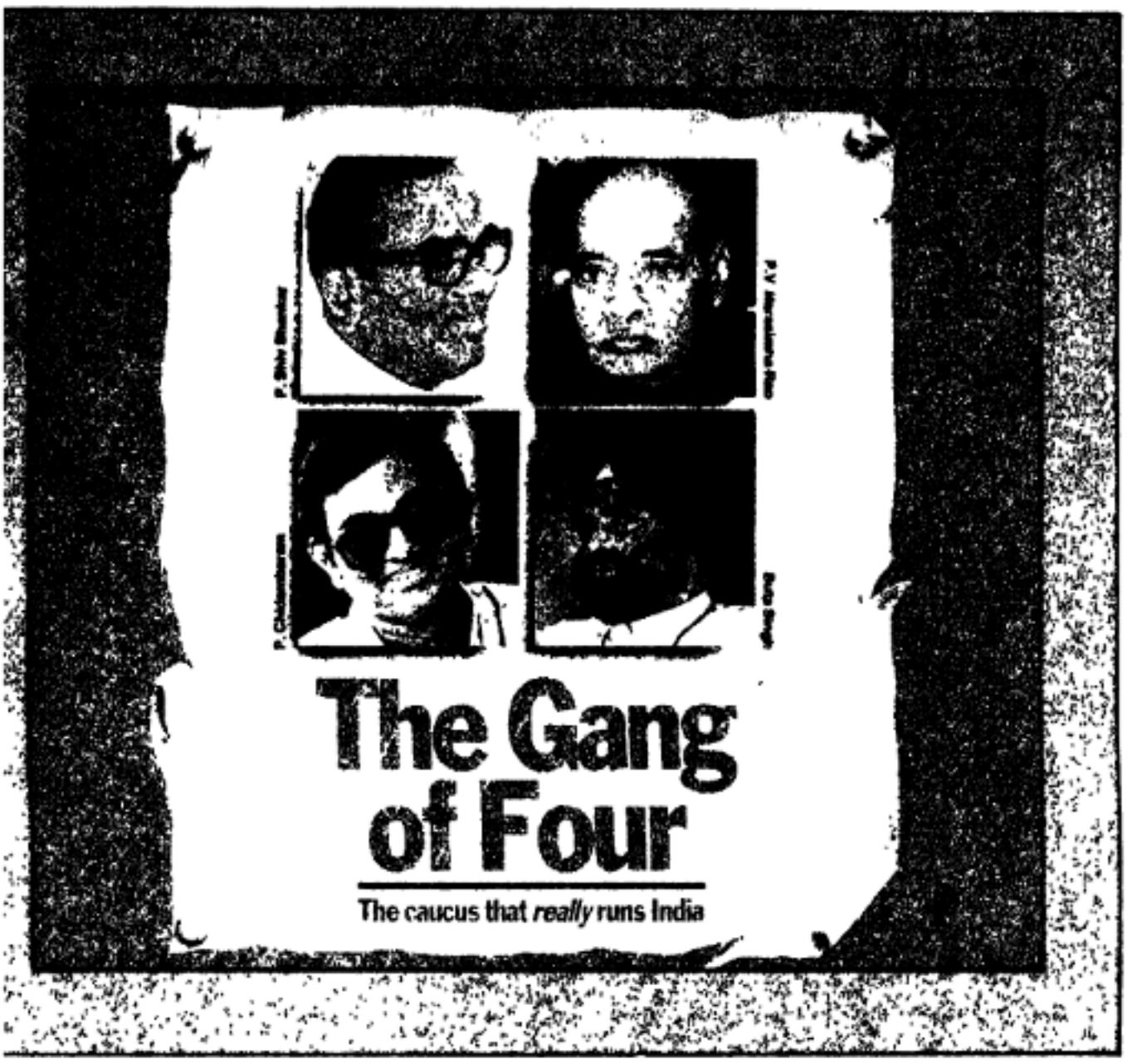
Our foreign investment laws are far more restrictive than even China's.

Yes, but China has a very strong base in many other things It has a very substantive oil export It has a good industrial base, much stronger than ours and, well, when we become that strong, I'm sure that we'll be able to remove these things

They (finance ministry) will find another excuse.

I doubt it (*smiles*) We've opened foreign investment in many areas. Food for a start.

In December 1984, when you became Prime Minister, the value of the rupee was Rs 14.40 to the pound (the middle rate). On 26 October, 1988, the Reserve Bank of India middle rate is Rs 26.10. Do you



think this drop in the rupee's value is a reflection of your economic policies?

I don't think the value of rupee or any exchange is significant in the sense that it is made out to be in India. One should see it as a tool in your economic development process—in your economic relations with other countries. And the significance of it going up or down should not worry you so much.

What should worry you is the cost of living and the standard of living at home. If that is moving in the right direction, if your exports are going in the right direction, you are earning more, you are doing better—then, these sorts of things are not relevant. But if this is causing such a problem that your system is collapsing, then it is significant.

I feel that what we have done over this period is to strengthen the economy and, today, our economy is stronger than ever before and I don't think that this is so relevant. It is more of an emotional factor than an actual factor.

The cost of the Bofors gun goes up.

The price of our exports comes down.

But the realisation from exports is lower. Which means that if I were to sell this khadi kurta, I'd get fewer dollars. So Indian exporters lose out.

But if you see in dollar terms, our exports have gone up very substantially.

But by selling more and more units of the same.

No, both. Quantity and quality.

That can't be because when the price of the rupee goes down, then we are selling more and more to maintain the same level. You know, like Alice, running faster and faster to stay at the same place.

Partly. The quantity has also gone up. The dollar value has also gone up.

If the rupee had been at a reasonable rate, then the dollar value would have gone up much more.

So, you wouldn't have been able to sell.

You recognise that Indian goods are uncompetitive?

Yes.

Overpriced?

Yes. Our cost of production is high.

Why?

Oh, because of too many things. Because of many of the controls we've got. Because of many of the taxes that we've got. Because of uncompetitiveness. Because of the low productivity of our labour. Because of bad management. It's right across the board. I don't think you can pin it down.

Doordarshan

A last, non-economic set of questions. Are we back to propaganda on Doordarshan?

No, no. We are continuing. Absolutely.

Then why did you shift Bhaskar Ghosh?

Different reasons: One, we were looking for somebody in culture. We couldn't find anybody.

That's a bit weak, isn't it?

No. It's, in fact, true. Because what was happening was that (the) culture secretary was always on tour (*laughs*). We couldn't get him in Delhi at all. And the best man that we could find was Bhaskar Ghosh.

Then, there were some problems on Doordarshan, like the President's...It happened once, it happened twice, it happened a third time. And it was getting a little difficult. It kept coming up in Cabinet. Ministers were really het up. On the President, they were really worked up. And even the very sober, cool ministers who would never say a word...

K.C. Pant?

I won't name them (*smiles*). But I think you know the sort of people I'm talking about. They were thumping the table and raising their voices on this President issue. It happened once, it happened twice, and it kept happening. So...

Have you watched Doordarshan recently?

I have not seen Doordarshan.

It's back to the worst excesses of the early Eighties. Eighty per cent of the news is about you. Any minister handing out sewing machines to war widows is regarded as a major news story.

No, that's not good.

You've really gone back full circle. That brief period when it was slightly watchable is over. If the shifting of Bhaskar to culture was merely to get a better man for culture, then I don't think the character of the network would have changed as much as it has.

Yes, something's slipped somewhere. I had a long session—almost what? When did we have that explosion in Cabinet? Partha, do you remember (*to G. Parthasarthy, his joint secretary*)?

(Parthasarthy: That was in September, sir.)

September. So it was about ten days...two weeks...after that I had a ses-



THE RAJIV GANDHI INTERVIEW

You spoke about taking India to the 21st century and, in a larger context, about the four powers and five powers in the next century...

The question is are we economically strong enough to take...

No, that's not the question.

To step into the wide world? I don't think we are...

No, Prime Minister, that's not the point. If you look at Asia then it becomes obvious that this is where the real economic miracle of the last decade has taken place, not in the white man's world. It's countries like Japan and South Korea. These are the miracle areas. But they haven't done this through the finance ministry. Now, the finance ministry calls itself the engine of growth.

No. Wait. Let us look at Japan. Let us look at Korea. There the scenario is totally different. In Japan, you are dealing with a country which was a superpower in the Second World War. It's not just a country which has developed. They had a massive industrial base. It's like Germany; you can't compare Germany and Japan to India.

I concede that. It's reconstruction rather than construction.

Korea, you can perhaps compare. But then you can't, because Korea has a very strong relationship with the United States. It gives it markets. It gives it...

A ten billion dollar trade surplus.

It gives it surpluses *(smiles)*. Internally, Korea works its industry in a totally undemocratic manner. We couldn't do it here.

Why not?

It wouldn't work here. Our democracy is like that. If you want to abolish the democracy, yes, then you can do it here.

No, not democracy. You don't need restrictive laws.

Korea has very strong restrictive laws. Japan has solid restrictive laws. They've only developed because of their laws being so restrictive. You talk to Germany or Britain or United States about Japanese laws or Korean laws!

No, those laws are only to prevent external competition.

What else are we doing?

No. Let's take FERA. Because of FERA, of the amount of foreign investment that has come to Asia over the past five years, only a very small portion has trickled into India. Now, we do not have enough capital to invest. Obviously, foreign investment would augment the total amount of money which can be spent. By framing needlessly restrictive laws like FERA...

No, you've got to look at a bigger perspective. India has taken a particular role or line in what it believes is its independence. Part of our independence is our foreign policy. None of the other countries which have had rapid development have a foreign policy of their own or have the strength to have a foreign policy of their own, including some of the big countries that you mention.

This is what the mandarins at the finance ministry would say.

No, this is something that we deliberately decided to do. And this is the cost that is part of that package. If we today say that this is not necessary—I personally feel it's very necessary...

What is necessary? Independence as a concept or the law of FERA?

The independence. The independence of foreign policy.

Economic Policy

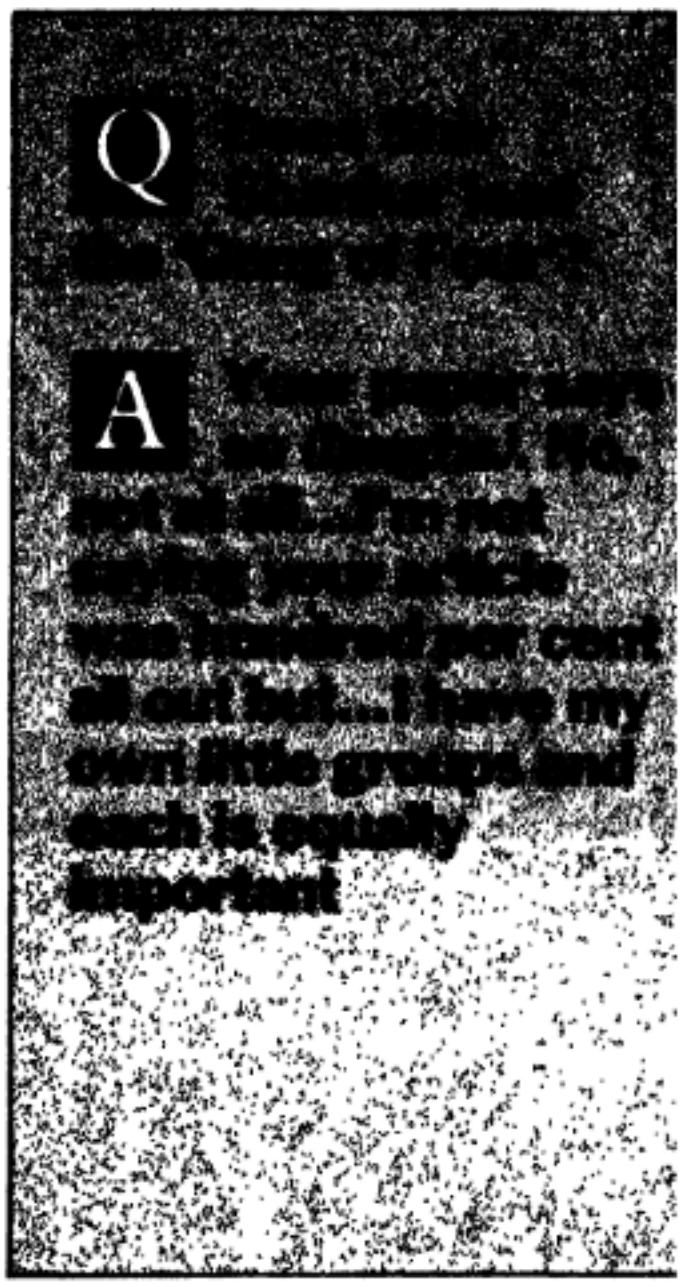
Prime Minister, I think I know what you are trying to get at, but your argument would break down if you analysed the flow of foreign investment after the enactment of FERA...

What you are going to say is...

That surely we had an independent foreign policy from your grandfather's days.

I'll come to that. If we want an independent foreign policy and the options for independent action, then it requires certain types of controls which other countries who do not strive for that don't have. Take the whole of Europe. What is the root of their foreign policy? They are all tied very closely to American foreign policy. They may disagree here and there, but in substance, when it comes to the crunch, they toe the line.

I have spoken to Heads of State and I have said, "Look, why have you done this. It is absolutely ridiculous and how can you, in all honesty, say that what you are doing is correct?" And they've said, "Yes, we agree 100 per cent with you but what can we do?" Now, I'm not going to let India go into a position to say, "I can't say this and what can I do?"



Prime Minister, let's take China...

Now, once having said that, then you have to have...you pay a price for that. Now, whether FERA, in its current form is...are we paying too much of a price for it is something we can ask. But to say that FERA is not necessary or that some sort of anti-trust laws are not necessary, I think is...we are not ready for that, we are not strong enough for that yet.

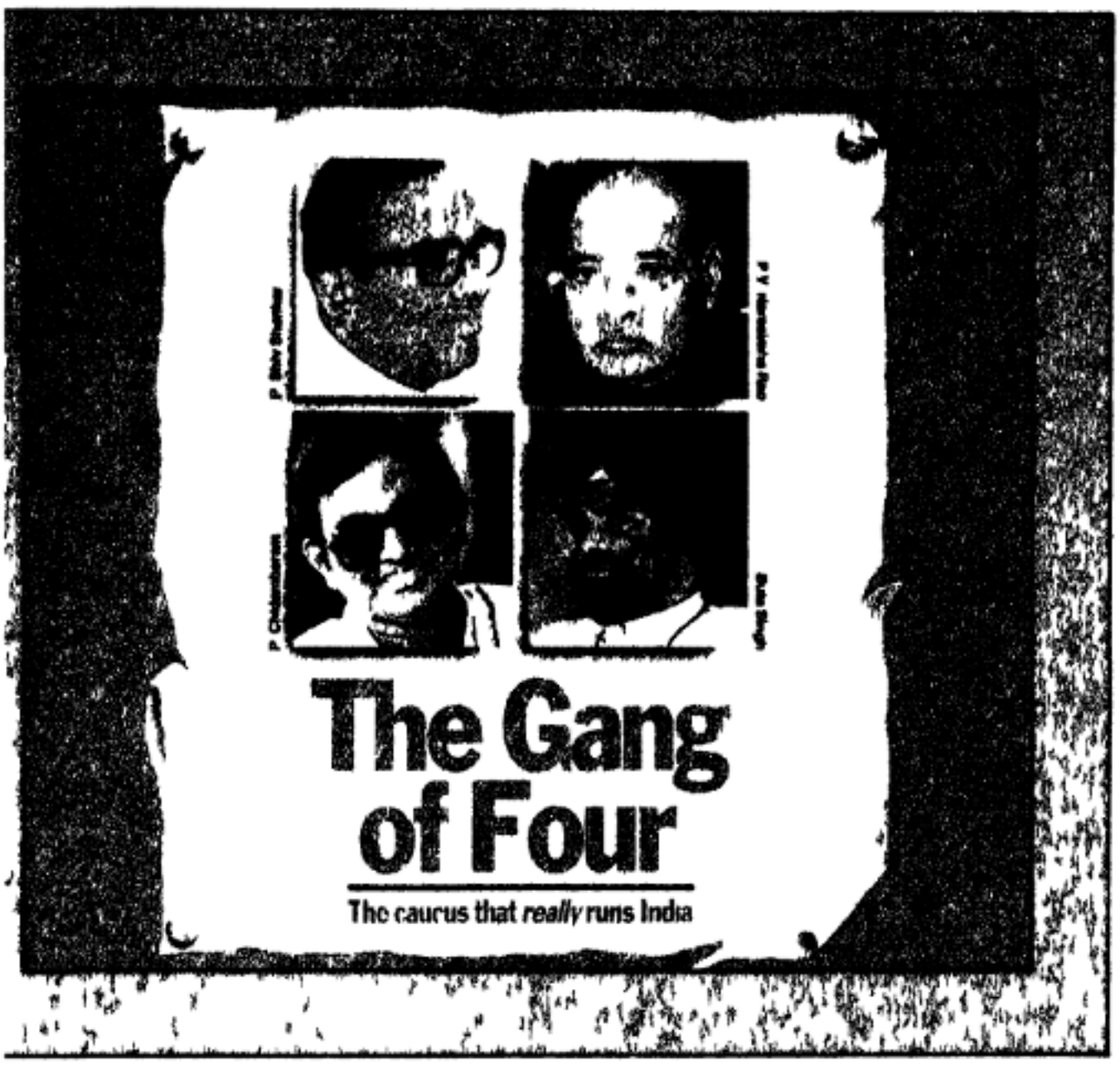
Our foreign investment laws are far more restrictive than even China's.

Yes, but China has a very strong base in many other things. It has a very substantive oil export. It has a good industrial base, much stronger than ours and, well, when we become that strong, I'm sure that we'll be able to remove these things.

They (finance ministry) will find another excuse.

I doubt it *(smiles)*. We've opened foreign investment in many areas. Food for a start.

In December 1984, when you became Prime Minister, the value of the rupee was Rs 14.40 to the pound (the middle rate). On 26 October, 1988, the Reserve Bank of India middle rate is Rs 26.10. Do you



think this drop in the rupee's value is a reflection of your economic policies?

I don t think the value of rupee or any exchange is significant in the sense that it is made out to be in India One should see it as a tool in your economic development process—in your economic relations with other countries And the significance of it going up or down should not worry you so much

What should worry you is the cost of living and the standard of living at home If that is moving in the right direction if your exports are going in the right direction, you are earning more, you are doing better—then, these sorts of things are not relevant But if this is causing such a problem that your system is collapsing, then it is significant

I feel that what we have done over this period is to strengthen the economy and, today, our economy is stronger than ever before and I don't think that this is so relevant It is more of an emotional factor than an actual factor

The cost of the Bofors gun goes up.

The price of our exports comes down

But the realisation from exports is lower. Which means that if I were to sell this khadi kurta, I'd get fewer dollars. So Indian exporters lose out.

But if you see in dollar terms, our exports have gone up very substantially

But by selling more and more units of the same.

No, both Quantity and quality

That can't be because when the price of the rupee goes down, then we are selling more and more to maintain the same level. You know, like Alice, running faster and faster to stay at the same place.

Partly The quantity has also gone up The dollar value has also gone up

If the rupee had been at a reasonable rate, then the dollar value would have gone up much more.

So, you wouldn't have been able to sell

You recognise that Indian goods are uncompetitive?

Yes

Overpriced?

Yes Our cost of production is high

Why?

Oh, because of too many things Because of many of the controls we've got Because of many of the taxes that we've got Because of uncompetitiveness Because of the low productivity of our labour Because of bad management It's right across the board. I don't think you can pin it down.

Doordarshan

A last, non-economic set of questions. Are we back to propaganda on Doordarshan?

No, no We are continuing Absolutely

Then why did you shift Bhaskar Ghosh?

Different reasons One, we were looking for somebody in culture We couldn't find anybody

That's a bit weak, isn't it?

No It s, in fact, true Because what was happening was that (the) culture secretary was always on tour (*laughs*) We couldn't get him in Delhi at all And the best man that we could find was Bhaskar Ghosh

Then, there were some problems on Doordarshan, like the President's It happened once, it happened twice, it happened a third time And it was getting a little difficult It kept coming up in Cabinet Ministers were really het up On the President, they were really worked up And even the very sober, cool ministers who would never say a word

K.C. Pant?

I won't name them (*smiles*) But I think you know the sort of people I'm talking about They were thumping the table and raising their voices on this President issue It happened once, it happened twice and it kept happening So

Have you watched Doordarshan recently?

I have not seen Doordarshan

It's back to the worst excesses of the early Eighties. Eighty per cent of the news is about you. Any minister handing out sewing machines to war widows is regarded as a major news story.

No, that's not good

You've really gone back full circle. That brief period when it was slightly watchable is over. If the shifting of Bhaskar to culture was merely to get a better man for culture, then I don't think the character of the network would have changed as much as it has.

Yes, something's slipped somewhere I had a long session—almost what? When did we have that explosion in Cabinet? Partha, do you remember (*to G Parthasarthy, his joint secretary*)?

(Parthasarthy That was in September, sir)

September So it was about ten days two weeks after that I had a ses-



THE RAJIV GANDHI INTERVIEW



Q Is TV's glasnost really over?

A There were some problems on Doordarshan...And it was getting a little difficult. It kept coming up in Cabinet. Ministers were really hot up. They were thumping the table and raising their voices

sion with Bhagat and Gopi Arora. And I gave them my very clear view of what I feel Doordarshan should be doing. I don't want to go into the details. It took me over an hour to tell them. But, basically, that they've got to be open. They must allow dissent. It must be expressed.

But I qualified that by saying that any time dissent or something against the government appeared, the option for government to answer must be there.

So, what happens when somebody like Ghulam Nabi Azad appears to answer and then makes a fool of himself? You can't blame the network for that.

No, I don't blame the network for that.

My perception is that you were cornered by many ministers and Congress MPs who kept coming to you and saying: "Sir, you are hardly on TV now. The Opposition is always on." And, finally, the pressure just got too much for you...

I'm not worried about me being on.

All right, maybe they said, "We are not being put on." But this pressure at the table-thumping Cabinet sessions finally cornered you. Do you accept that?

No, I don't accept that at all. In fact, when I talked to Bhagat and Arora, I told them that this does not mean that you have to have it full of ministers. They told me that pressure comes. I said: "No, you evaluate the quality of the news and, accordingly, you put it in. And the same for the Opposition. If the Opposition does something newsworthy, it should be in. If it's not newsworthy, whether it is us or them, it should not be in." And I, in fact, told them that if you have problems of too much pressure from here and there, for petty functions, then there should be a local news programme—which there is in some states. There certainly is in Europe –where there is the national news, there's the local news. And all the sort of...

Shots of K.C. Pant distributing sewing machines.

(*Laughs.*) Well, all that sort of local events can come on that. And the national news, in fact, I would say that even today our national news is not broad enough in its perspective. It still gets too much nitty-gritty into it. It should be looking more at the global perspectives, at the national perspectives, and less at the sort of *chaalu* things which can come in some other package somewhere. They have to come on, but it should be separated from the news

What happened during that brief period of glasnost was that ministers got—and very rightly so—shut out from TV. Which is why they thumped your table at Cabinet meetings and blamed it all on the coverage of the President.

Well (*pauses*), I don't think that is absolutely true. Doordarshan has to have a good balance between projecting what the government is doing, projecting what is of interest to the majority of the people—not just to the middle class, upper class and the elite—and of raising issues. Sometimes, controversies. Which they are not doing well enough.

(Parthasarthy: Sir, I think time is up.)

See, he is ending the *glasnost (laughs).*

Interviewed by Aveek Sarkar and Vir Sanghvi/New Delhi

A Gujarati renaissance

Led by Dhirubhai Ambani and Karsanbhai Patel, the community is re-establishing its entrepreneurial leadership

"If Dhirubhai Ambani had not come on the business scene when he did, the Gujarati community's reputation for business acumen would have crumbled into dust," mocked a prominent Marwari industrialist. The recent resurgence in Gujarati entrepreneurship appears to endorse his view. During the 1960s and 70s, the community which had ushered in the industrial revolution on Indian soil found itself in the wilderness of the Dark Ages.

The 1980s, in contrast, are witnessing the community's renaissance as industrialists of the calibre of Karsanbhai Patel of Nirma and Praful Shah of Garden-Vareli flex their muscles and minds to make their presence felt. Simultaneously, a few scions of patrician industrial families are trying to revive memories of former greatness—such as Sanjay Lalbhai with his denim revolution. Or the three Mafatlal boys: Hrishikesh, with his dreams of being one of India's largest textile exporters; Atulya, to be the Giorgio Armani of India; and Pradeep, to make finer, quality fabrics.

On another level, several first-generation entrepreneurs, engaged in a host of activities as diverse as *pan masala* and pharmaceuticals are reviving their community's reputation for making money. Jewellers Mafatlal Mehta of the Samir Diamond Group and Jatin Mehta of the Su-Raj Group are among them. M.M. Kothari of Pan Parag has concocted an entirely new multi-crore-rupee industry where none existed. In the pharmaceutical business, R.B. Patel of Cadila Laboratories has more than matched the performance of the large multinationals. The activities of these entrepreneurs, though often on a modest scale, are collectively responsible for revitalising the spirit of enterprise among the Gujaratis of today.

Of all these men, the two who between them have perhaps done the most to revive their community's self-esteem are Dhirubhai H. Ambani (55) of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and Karsanbhai Khodidas Patel (45) of Nirma Chemical Works. In the process Reliance has created a controversial legend and a stock market cult figure out of its founder. From next to nothing in 1966, RIL's sales for the 15-month financial year ending March 1988 were Rs 1,343 crores, making it the fastest growing company in recent corporate history. The third largest Indian company in terms of assets, the synthetic textile and petrochemicals manufacturer has outranked high-fliers like the Modis and the Thapars.





Praful Shah and the Garden-Vareli ad : winning combination

Nirma's growth has been equally outstanding. What started as a backyard operation--mixing a few chemicals by hand—has bubbled into a Rs 460-crore detergent empire. Its founder, K.K. Patel, started by selling 500 kg of washing powder a month. Today he easily sells 550,000 tonnes of the stuff a year, making Nirma the world's largest selling detergent brand in the world. Quite a miracle for the man who cycled around the neighbourhood, delivering packs of yellow powder in 1969.

Ambani's achievements lay in the innovative use of financial instruments, a close monitoring of the export-import policies and a subtle control of the media. Those of Patel lay in product development and marketing. Despite the obvious differences between the two companies--entirely different industries, totally contrasting management styles, disparate corporate cultures--RIL and Nirma share some intriguing parallels.

For one, the two chairmen possess similar characteristics: both are Gujarati workaholics. Both prefer simple lifestyles. Both companies are products of the times with their survival intricately linked to their promoters' abilities to understand government legislation. Ambani's strength has been to enlist the aid of a byzantine system of controls instead of fighting them, perfecting his knowledge, and using them to build a synthetic textile empire.

Patel's forte has been in finding a slot for his company as a small-scale manufacturer. Nirma's sales are about to cross Rs 460 crores but because his plants are below specified asset limits

and do not use power, Patel enjoys a freedom denied to his arch competitor, consumer products giant Hindustan Lever. Perks such as a coveted licence to manufacture linear alkyl benzene (LAB) have further enhanced Patel's reputation and positioned Nirma Chemical Works as one of India's prime companies.

Both men reached out to tap untouched segments of the market. In the case of Nirma, this meant the down-market, low-cost preference consumer, while Ambani galvanised nearly three million investors to invest in Reliance Industries, people who might not have otherwise been attracted to the capital market.

Brilliant salesmen both, these two men have clawed their way to the top with dogged determination. Ambani is unlikely to ever forget the hours wasted hanging around the plush offices of textile magnates, waiting for an opportunity to sell them his yarn. A farmer's son, Patel spent years as a government chemist in a poky, poorly equipped lab, earning Rs 450 per month, before taking the plunge to make the washing powder that propelled him into the big league.

Another Gujarati newcomer who is spinning success is Praful Shah, 32. Using state-of-the-art machinery to weave and print exquisite designs, the Surat-based entrepreneur has built a Rs 212-crore textile group which is metres ahead of the competition. Garden-Vareli's origins were as humble as those of RIL itself. Dhirubhai Ambani began production with four imported warp-knitting machines in a shed at Naroda in 1966. Praful Shah bought six Japanese sizing machines at a State Trading Corporation auction in 1982. Today, his clutch of public and private companies are dotted over a 100-acre complex.

The achievements of Garden and Reliance are all the more unusual because both are making money in the supposedly sunset textile industry. Their mills have charted a scorching path to prosperity while older established mills, even with the headstart of decades, are gradually declining. The entrepreneurs of yesteryear are finding that they can no longer match competition from the powerloom sector. The 1982 Datta Samant sponsored strike delivered a body blow from which few of Bombay's established composite mills have recovered. In Ahmedabad, over the last four years, 21 mills have closed down.

With their heavy involvement—and investment—in the textile industry, the decline of the Gujaratis inevitably followed the industry's degeneration. In Bombay, Parsis and Gujaratis (particularly the Cutchhi Bhatias) pioneered the cotton textile industry. Out of 81 mills in Bombay in 1925, 21 were put up and managed by Gujaratis. In Ahmedabad, nicknamed the "Manchester of the East", Gujaratis of various castes pioneered the industry which spearheaded the state's industrialisation.

Legendary Gujarati entrepreneurs battled poverty, indifference, and, on occasion, public humiliation, to build mills which became engines of change for the entire economy. Like Jivraj Baloo (1770-1843), a coolie who became a Bombay millowner, and Ranchhodlal Chhotalal, the founder of Ahmedabad's textile industry, who opened his first mill in 1861. Or Thackersey Moolji (1807-1890) who came to Bombay with Rs 800, lost the money but later became the owner of four mills. The gutsy Khatau Makanji (1818-1876), a small-time trader, floated a mill a few months before his death. In the process these pioneers established family fortunes on scales previously unknown.

With wealth came a taste for the good life. But many scions of the next generations, raised on a diet of culture and *bon ton*, appeared to take the job of earning money much less seriously than did their forefathers. Or, maybe, the spirit of enterprise simply dried up in the Gujarati business community. One by one, those of the Gujarati textile aristocracy who did not diversify, succumbed to red ink injuries.

The Thackerseys who, at the turn of the century, were the biggest textile magnates of Bombay, are today struggling to eke out Rs 1.13 lakhs as profits from the Rs 82-crore sales of Hindustan Mills. The Khataus, once the eighth largest business house, are today nowhere in the picture. Sales of the eight major companies of the two feuding factions together last year aggregated less than Rs 290 crores. In common with the rest of their fraternity, the Sarabhais, undoubtedly India's most gifted and charismatic family, today find their feet sinking through wisps of cotton.

At one time, the Sarabhais, who have given to the country an industrial pioneer (Ambalal Sarabhai), a courageous trade union leader (Anasuya Sarabhai), a brilliant scientist (Vikram Sarabhai) and two elegant dancers (Mrinalini and daughter Mallika Sarabhai), were one of India's fastest growing business houses. Until the 1970s, the group flourished financially. Since then, their story has been one of decline and dissension, with their companies wrecked by poor management decisions and family feuds.



Karsanbhai Patel: detergent wonders

Calico, the group's original flagship company, skipped the payment of dividend to its shareholders for the first time in its 100-year history in 1982. Losses last year: a cool Rs 18.27 crores. The situation is little better in the group's second major company, Ambalal Sarabhai Enterprises (ASE), which, out of sales of Rs 126.13 crores, recorded a profit of a mere Rs 1.89 crores (for the nine months ended 31 March, 1988).

The Gujarati nobility who survived the pecuniary holocaust were the ones who diversified into petrochemicals such as the Mafatlals. The founder of the group, Mafatlal Gagalbhai (1873-1944), was a small-time Gujarati trader who carved out one of India's largest cotton textile empires. Creating a business chain starting from the manufacture of the machines which help make the cloth itself, to spinning, weaving and selling cloth in their own retail shops, Mafatlal's



Sanjay Lalbhai: denim king



Dhirubhai Ambani: at the top

climb up the corporate ladder brushed off the Great Depression years of the Thirties with remarkable impunity.

As the textile mills of Bombay changed hands, the adroit Mafatlal not only bought a few for himself, but even built a palatial mansion on Altamount Road in Bombay's poshest residential locality. His grandson, Arvind Mafatlal(65), proved to be equally adept at managing change. Sensing imminent shortfalls, Arvind, along with his brothers Yogindra(63) and Rasesh(54), drew up plans for India's first major petrochemical complex.

Soon, the Mafatlals had a blueprint ambitious enough for *Time* magazine to file a report on 10 May, 1963. As NOCIL and PIL began production, sales of the group shot up from Rs 43 crores in 1964 to Rs 476 crores in 1978. Though the group fragmented into three the next year, currently the sum of the three parts boasts an impressive Rs 1,295.85 crores in sales. Their ambitions honed to a sharp edge by cousinly competition, and aided by top-notch professional managers, it is probable that the new generation Mafatlals—Hrishikesh(34), Atulya(23) and Pradeep(23)—will add rather than subtract to their inheritance.

The infusion of new blood can often block the decline of a business family—as the Ahmedabad-based Rs 400-crore 15-member Lalbhai group is fast discovering. A creation of the enterprising Kasturbhai Lalbhai (1894-1980), the entry of seven ambitious youngsters into the family business could change the group's fortunes. Cottoning onto the stark truth that composite mills are no longer the money-spinners they used to be, the clan has been assiduously scouting around for new avenues of growth. And surprisingly, have found it once again in textiles: denim.

Introducing designer denims to trendsetters, hope the Lalbhais, may be the way to blow away the blues and 32-year-old Sanjay Lalbhai's *dhoti*-to-denim diversification may propel one of Gujarat's foremost business families into a new, faster lane. Sanjay's brother and cousins have equally ambitious growth plans. Telecommunication equipment and television are just a few of their other diversification plans.

The determination displayed by the younger generation Lalbhais and Mafatlals to restore their family names to their former glory is matched by a similar display of determination by a host of first-generation entrepreneurs engaged in activities as diverse as diamond cutting and trading, *pan masala*, and pharmaceuticals. The scales of operation of some entrants may not match those of the Mafatlals or Lalbhais, not to mention Patel or Ambani, but each in his own way is carving a niche for himself as a leader in his field.



High geared advertising: key to success

M.M. Kothari (62), who like Nirma's Patel used to peddle his goods (hair oil) from door-to-door, has built a formidable reputation for himself in the burgeoning *pan masala* market. The Kothari family—father MM, wife Sharda, and son Vikram—started making the mud-coloured powder that was to transform their business in 1973 with a modest initial investment of Rs 12,000. Sales last year: Rs 34 crores. Television advertising, innovative and eye-catching packaging, changing consumer tastes, an impressive distribution strategy, all combined to make Pan Parag a major consumer success story and the Kothari is the biggest in this market.

Potential consumer success stories may also be brewing in southern India as the two sons of Chandulal M. Kothari, a Madras-based Gujarati stockbroker, Dayanand (DC) and Harshad (HC),

The two who have done the most to revive their community's self-esteem are Dhirubhai Ambani of Reliance and Karsanbhai Khodidas Patel of Nirma. From next to nothing in 1966, RIL's sales for the year ending March 1988 were Rs 1,343 crores making it the fastest growing company in recent corporate history

launch new companies in a spirit of fraternal competition. In 1986, D.C. Kothari announced an ambitious Rs 34.35-crore joint venture with the American food giant, General Foods Corporation, to manufacture and market coffee and other processed foods. It was quickly matched by H.C. Kothari's Rs 18-crore project to manufacture chemicals required by pharmaceutical companies in collaboration with Swiss and German firms.

The Kothari saga is interesting for another reason. The clannish Gujaratis are generally to be found in western India, and Chandulal Kothari (d. 1954), a stockbroker, was an unusually enterprising individual who dared to venture into virgin territory. Visiting Madras on a holiday in 1918, Chandulal found the city so attractive that he settled down there. He became the moving spirit behind the Madras Stock Exchange, set

WIN Rs 3.50 LAKHS IN PRIZES

There are over 8,000 Public Hydrants for the use of the general public all over Delhi.

Often taps, although tightly fitted on to the Public Hydrants, are removed by mischievous persons. This allows water to flow out for days till a new tap is fitted. This story of life-giving water being wasted by removal of taps is repeated day after day in hundreds of places. Should water which is nature's wonder be so negligently allowed to go down the drain? The wastage from hrdrants is calculated to be about 20 lakh gallons per day.

Delhi Administration, therefore, desires to promote the development of a new type of tap which can be fitted on the Public Hydrants to ease to some extent the water shortage and low pressure problems which the city has been facing for the past few years.

Here is an opportunity for Individual Inventors, Research and Development Institutions or other Organisations to design new kinds of taps.

1. Which cannot be easily/quickly removed by miscreants.
2. Which will not permit any leakage, howsoever little, when not in use.
3. Which, even if removed from the municipal pipe, will automatically put into function a self-adjusting device or valve that would not allow the water to flow.
4. Which should be easily operable by any person.
5. Which should be sturdy, durable, rust proof and manufacturable at a reasonable cost.

The inventors may add any other feature which will further improve the total performance of the Public Hydrants.

Design proposals should be submitted in the prescribed application forms in triplicate along with a working prototype on or before 15th February, 1989. Prescribed Application Forms can be obtained by sending an application on plain paper.

The Delhi Administration will constitute an Experts' Committee to scrutinise and assess the practical utility and feasibility of the designs/ prototypes submitted by the applicants. The Experts' Committee will select the best three designs for award of the following prizes:

1st Prize–Rs. 2,00,000/-, 2nd Prize–Rs. 1,00,000/-, 3rd Prize–Rs. 50,000/-.

The decision of the Experts' Committee will be final and binding on all concerned and shall be announced in the leading newspapers. The competition is open to Indian nationals only.

For any further information kindly write to:

JAG PARVESH CHANDRA
Chief Executive Councillor
Delhi Administration
Old Secretariat, Delhi-110054

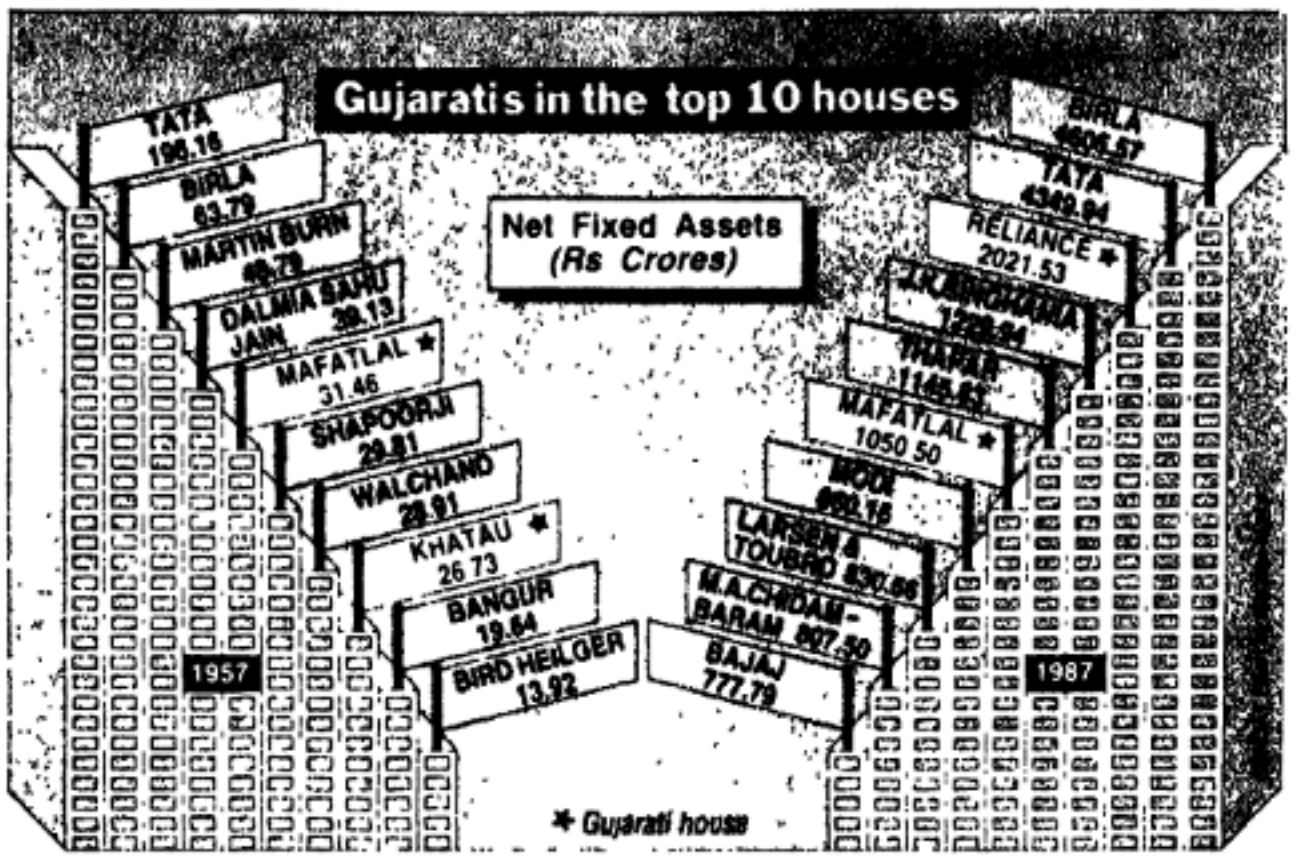
up a safe deposit company, and in 1937 transformed himself into an industrialist by establishing a textile spinning unit in Coimbatore.

Spinning money as well as yarn, the company's profits enabled Chandulal to take over coffee and tea plantations and to become the first Indian businessman to get into the tea industry. New projects proliferated as a sugar factory was added in the 1950s, a fertiliser unit in the 1970s, a caustic soda plant in 1978 and an electronic facility in 1980. In 1982 DC and HC split the group into two, with DC getting the plantations, textile and caustic soda interests (group sales: Rs 100 crores); and HC settling for the safe deposit, investment, sugar and electronic companies (group sales: Rs 35 crores).

Another enterprising Gujarati active in the south is Jatin Mehta (33), the only Indian diamond merchant to have gone public. Gems cut in his numerous factories in southern and western India, find their way into all the major global markets. His company, Su-Raj Diamonds (India) Ltd (sales: Rs 51.06 crores) is one of the 152 privileged "sight holders" or purchasers approved by De Beers and its marketing arm, the Diamond Trading Company, the South African firms which monopolise 80 per cent of the world's rough diamond trade.

The most prominent "sight holder", however, is Mafatlal Mehta (75), the founder of the Samir Diamond Group, one of De Beers' most important customers. Reportedly the group's companies in Belgium, the USA and India collectively trade in gems worth Rs 300-400 crores every year. When the family opened a diamond cutting factory in Bangkok in April 1988, a director of De Beers and the chairman of the Diamond Trading Company, Sir Philip Oppenheimer, deemed it worth his while to pay a visit. Partners of Aditya Birla in some of his Far East vetures, the Mehtas are symbolic of the domination of the diamond trade—national and international—by Gujaratis.

Many of these diamond traders, including Mafatlal Mehta, are Jains from Palanpur, an obscure village in Gujarat. Earlier, the Palanpur merchants managed to establish a control over the domestic diamond trade. Over the last 70 years, they have created a larger international market for Indian cutting skills. Spreading a trade network from Surat to Bombay and from Antwerp to New York and London, they have eclipsed the master-craftsmen of Tel Aviv (Israel) and cornered one-third of the Rs 3,300-crore global diamond trade.



Coping with international competition does not appear to have overly bothered the Mehtas. Nor does it seem to overly bother Ramanbhai B. Patel who, along with partner Indravan A. Modi, launched the Ahmedabad-based Cadila Laboratories (1986 sales: Rs 14 crores) in 1951. Requiring heavy investment in research and a large sales force, the pharmaceutical industry is dominated by German and Swiss multinationals possessing large budgets. Despite its leaner resources, Cadila has acquired a reputation of being among the top ten drug companies in India.

The company whose promoter-chairman did not even have a house to call his own in the beginning, today is part of a Rs 100-crore four-company conglomerate, with interests in pharmaceutical machinery manufacturing, packaging materials manufacturing, biomedical electronic instruments, personal computers and mopeds besides drugs, both allopathic and herbal.

The achievements of business potentates such as Dhirubhai Ambani, Karsanbhai Patel and Mafatlal Mehta contrast sharply with the lacklustre passiveness of the former cotton czars. Larger than life, these modern Gujarati empire-builders are characterised by unrestrained enthusiasm, towering ambition, unflinching determination combined by a mania for detail, and whose mental and physical constitution allows them to put in 25 hours in a day.

When Dhirubhai Ambani suffered a severe stroke and was told he may not walk, he set up a private gym at home and worked six hours a day along with a physiotherapist. He not only got back into his seat but made a dramatic appearance at RIL's 13th annual general meeting. M.M. Kothari proudly exults in the dignity of his long working hours. Karsanbhai Patel knows more about his factories than his managers and is famous for the speed with which he clears paperwork.

The difference between success and failure lies in the ability to grab opportunity, to move into fields of gold where others see dross, to be willing to risk whatever little one has so that the opportunity does not slip by. And the 1980s Gujaratis are doing so.

Gita Piramal/Bombay



With wealth came a taste for the good life. But many scions of the next generations, raised on a diet of culture and *bon ton*, appeared to take the job of earning money much less seriously than did their forefathers. Or maybe, the spirit of enterprise dried up in the Gujarati business community

PROCESSED FOODS

An international flavour

A boom is in the making with the giants of Indian industry and multinationals planning to set up shop



Indian processed foods: ordinary fare

Priyaranjan Rakshit

What do corporate giants like Tata Steel, fertiliser giant Zuari Agro, engineering company Goetze India, Jagatjit Industries and Apollo Tyres have in common? The answer, strange though it may seem, is that they are all working out plans to make processed foods.

It is Indian industry's latest boom area. Propelled by the promise of quick licensing and excise concessions, almost every other major business house is drawing up big plans to expand into the food processing business. Some of the biggest and best names in Indian business are already in the game or drawing up plans to get into it. K.K. Birla's Zuari Agro hopes to start exporting mushrooms next year. R.P. Goenka is planning to start making fruit juices, packaged tea and coffee. Several Tata companies are exploring the possibility of breaking into food processing including Tata Steel, Tata Tea and, of course, Pepsi-Voltas which is racing ahead with its project.

At times the new-found enthusiasm for food processing seems almost bizarre. Apollo Tyres which is flush with funds after several boom years in the tyre industry, is making an experimental foray into health foods by backing a group of professionals who are going into collaboration with British company Booker Health Foods to produce a range of health foods. But Apollo is also casting wider and looking at the possibility of exporting pineapple slices and fruit juices.

Similarly, Goetze India, which till now has been an exclusively engineering company, is now executing an order to export 800 tonnes of pineapple slices to West Germany. Buoyed by its quick success, Goetze has also lined up orders to export cuttlefish to Italy. Says Goetze's vice-chairman Anil Nanda: "There is almost unlimited potential in this field."

This is not the first time that Indian industry has shown itself to be over-enthusiastic about the processed foods business. For the last five years a whole host of companies have been experimenting with the possibility of diversifying into food processing—for the most part unsuccessfully. But this time around there is a crucial difference—it is the big boys of Indian industry who are jumping into the game. Says I.P. Singh, managing director, Dalmia Dairy Industries: "This is one area where the government is encouraging you, so everyone is jumping onto the bandwagon."

But nobody is taking any chances. To minimise the possibility of failure, most of the new entrants in the field are bringing in high-powered foreign collaborators to aid their ventures. Zuari Agro is tying up with US food company Pillsbury, Jagatjit Industries is putting the final touches to a technical collaboration with General Mills, the largest food processing company in the world, to make soya products. Dalmia Dairy is promoting two separate ventures with different foreign companies.

Even the foreign food companies have apparently developed a fresh interest in India. The latest arrival in India is Kelloggs, the giant US corporation

It is Indian industry's latest boom area. Some of the biggest and best names in Indian business are already in the game or are gearing up to get into it...At times the new-found enthusiasm for food processing seems almost bizarre

which has a stranglehold on the breakfast cereals business. The company has taken up office space recently in New Delhi and it is busy scouting for a collaborator and surveying the market. Kelloggs has talked to several companies including the Thapars.

For some companies the move is a logical extension of their existing businesses. Tata Tea, for instance, which is one of the biggest plantation companies in the country, plans to emulate Brooke Bond and make a range of spices. More ambitiously, Zuari Agro which has a grassroots understanding of agriculture from its years in the fertiliser industry, is now negotiating to buy 30 acres of land from the Himachal Pradesh government for its new mushroom cultivation project. Zuari Agro has big plans on the drawing board. It aims to start by processing ten tonnes of mushrooms but plans to double this almost immediately if the project is successful. In addition, the company is thinking of growing and processing a range of other products including baby corn and asparagus. Zuari Agro will be marketing its products under the Pillsbury label of the US Company executives say that the Japanese have also shown an interest in buying fruit products like peaches.

A brace of other companies too have decided that they should establish their presence in the food processing business. Companies like Jagatjit Industries, Dalmia Dairy and even Food Specialities have for years found that government restrictions have prevented them from expanding in the dairy business. As a result each of them is planning major ventures in food processing. Apart from making soya-based products, Jagatjit will also be marketing flavoured yoghurt and snack foods like potato chips. The company is also doggedly building up its 100 per cent ice-cream which was launched with much fanfare last year.

Dalmia Dairy is also working along the same lines and it is pulling out all the stops to make sure that it makes a splash in the food processing business. The company has set up a subsidiary in Nepal which will make soups, ketchups, juices and confectionery. A second venture in India will make frozen and canned foods. Dalmia Dairy is tight-lipped about its foreign partners but says that it has roped in major consumer product companies for both ventures.

Even the foreign food companies have apparently developed a fresh interest in India. The latest arrival is Kelloggs, the giant US corporation which has a stranglehold on the breakfast cereals business, and it is scouting around for a collaborator

The multinationals have also thrown their hat into the food processing ring pretty quickly and they are preparing to use their established marketing prowess to make their mark. Companies like Glindia, Food Specialities Ltd (FSL), Lipton, Cadbury's and of course, Pepsi, are all planning to be major players in the game and are pushing ahead with an array of new products.

Glindia has been one of the early starters. The company recently launched its Jack and Jill breakfast cereals under the brand-name Bonnie Mix in the south. The company has invested almost Rs 5 crores in its breakfast food venture. In addition to all this, Glindia is also participating in a joint venture with the Uttar Pradesh government to set up Veggro Foods and Feeds which will make soya based products. The Rs 21-crore project will start marketing soya oil in December. Over the next two years, Veggro will also be making soya meal, soya flour and soya proteins.

Food Specialities is also working along the same lines as Glindia. It is planning to set up a separate subsidiary which will make soya-based products. Besides this, the company also made a bid to buy Dipy's recently and was planning a range of jams. The deal, however, fell through when Dipy's withdrew from the deal. FSL has also recently launched a new tea on the market. Lipton is also trying to make its mark in the food processing business. It tried gamely to emulate the Maggi noodles success story by marketing Supermum noodles made by Auro Foods of Pondicherry. The company is also said to be test marketing chocolates and biscuits and is toying with a host of other food products.

Where all this will lead to is another matter that is tougher to predict. Already companies are bracing themselves for an onslaught of bruising competition. Jagatjit Industries' Hundred Per Cent ice-cream has already churned up the hitherto comparatively sleepy ice-cream business and the fight is likely to get even tougher when Cadbury's gets into the business. And areas which were comparatively untapped till recently, like breakfast foods, are bound to get fiercely competitive if some of the plans that are being hatched get off the drawing



Processed food brands abroad, looking to the Indian market

board. Glindia is the first off the mark but it is soon likely to be joined by Kelloggs. Even FSL is said to be nursing plans to get into the breakfast foods business.

But while the domestic market may still be hard to crack, many of the top companies are pinning their hopes on exports. They are confident that with the right collaborations they can carve out a niche for themselves in the export market. Tata Steel, for instance, hopes to meet its export commitments by cultivating shrimps in Chilka Lake. Says one food processing executive: "It is easy to sell if you have the right partner."

There are many who are doubtful about the new-found enthusiasm of the new converts to the food industry. The failure rate in the food business has always been extremely high. Even Maggi noodles which was a marketing triumph in its own way has failed to live up to expectations. Many others—not all of them small companies—have fallen by the way. Wallace Flour Mills which was, on the look of it, the early pioneers in the extruded foods business, is an instance. Even the TTK group which tried to make a strong foray in the food business and Kothari General Foods which had the best foreign backing possible have not been a great success. Says Mohit Satyanand of Sparks Advertising who has wide experience in the food business: "The food processing industry is littered with corpses." Others echo similar views. Says I. P. Singh of Dalmia Dairy: "Even with market surveys it is difficult to say which products will click."

Already companies are bracing themselves for an onslaught of bruising competition. Areas like breakfast foods are bound to get fiercely competitive if some of the plans get off the drawing board. Glindia is first off the mark and is likely to be joined by Kelloggs soon

But no matter how many failures take place, there is no doubt that the time has come for the Indian food processing industry. And in the near future Indian consumers should have plenty of new products to test out on their plates.

Paran Balakrishnan/*New Delhi*

COMPANIES

A setback for DCM

The group's decision to close down its heavily-losing textile mill in Delhi has been shot down by the High Court

It is a dispute that has dragged on for years. But last week, after much dilly-dallying, the Delhi administration finally gave DCM the thumbs down on its controversial efforts to close down the 99-year-old Delhi Cloth Mill at Bara Hindu Rao in the congested heart of the capital. And close on its heels, the Delhi High Court, in an order, has stayed the factory's closure.

In the few days before the final decision, it was never quite certain which way the government's stand would swing. Delhi Lt. Governor Romesh Bhandari at one time appeared keen to allow DCM to close down the mill which lost Rs 6.26 crores in 1986-87. But Bhandari found that any move to do so would put him into direct conflict with Delhi's political supremo, information minister H.K.L. Bhagat.

In the end it was Bhagat and the local political leaders who won the day. Delhi's chief executive councillor Jag Pravesh Chandra, who cannot afford to go against Bhagat, also came out vociferously against the closure move as did other Congress(I) politicians. Even the local Opposition leaders, not to be left out, came out strongly against the closure.

Faced with the cacophony of protest Bhandari played for time—and lost. Under a High Court order he was obliged to reach a final decision by mid-October. When the last date came, Bhandari rather feebly asked for an extension till 31 October. But the extension did nothing to change the existing realpolitik on the ground.

Dismayed by the government's decision, the company which has been pinning its hopes on being able to close the factory and redevelop the land, reacted sulkily. It announced the closure of the mill. Senior executives defended the move on the ground that they were forced to close the mill because they did not have enough money to pay the Deepavali bonus that was due to the workers.

For the company the worst part of the decision is that it threw its plans for closing down the factory and redeveloping the land into disarray. The management was hoping for two things from the government: initally it needed permission to close down. Then, in the second stage, it was hoping for permission to redevelop the 200-acre site into a residential-cum-industrial complex. It had even brought most of the unions around to agree to this solution by promising generous golden handshakes to the workers which would be paid only when the final permission came through for the redevelopment. But as the prospect



The DCM complex in Delhi : bone of contention ; (inset) Romesh Bhandari



of DCM being allowed to redevelop the land receded, the unions also began to have second thoughts. They were also extremely irate at the company's move to close the factory so abruptly.

DCM was also especially disappointed because this time it had looked as if it would be able to push through its plans to close down the factory. The DCM saga has been a long-running one. It started in 1981 when the Delhi administration first brought up the fact that the company had to shift location to conform to the Delhi masterplan of 1961.

From that time onwards the company has been trying to close down the factory and the saga has been through many tortuous twists and turns. In 1985 the Delhi administration threw a spanner in the works by refusing to allow the firm to close down and throw more than 6,000 workers out of their jobs. Since then it has been an uphill task for the company. The battle has been fought both in and out of court.

For DCM, the worst part of the decision is that it threw its plans for closing down the factory and redeveloping the land into disarray...The DCM saga has been a long-running one

In court the management fought against the Delhi Development Authority's (DDA) backtracking on a decision to allow the mill to close down. The court in July asked the administration to reconsider its decision and report back within 60 days. It also laid down the stipulation that if permission to close down was denied, then the administration should state its reasons clearly.

Bhandari still has to state his reasons. But the only thing that is certain is that the battle is not over. DCM is in dire financial straits and needs the money desperately. On the other hand, the government is worried about the repercussions of a decision in the DCM case. The nearby Birla Mill is in an equally parlous financial state and there are similar mills located on valuable real estate in other cities like Bombay and Ahmedabad.

DCM has clearly antagonised powerful local politicians like Bhagat and whether it can reach an understanding with them remains to be seen. But for the time being the fact remains that they have a long, hard battle ahead.

Paran Balakrishnan / *New Delhi*

INDUSTRY

A smoking controversy

The beedi industry is up in arms against the Madhya Pradesh government's decision to eliminate middlemen

The *beedi* industry is smouldering. The decision of the Arjun Singh government in Madhya Pradesh to cut out middlemen and hand over the business of plucking *tendu* leaves to tribal cooperatives has turned into a furious controversy. It is now traders and manufacturers against Arjun Singh. The All-India Beedi Federation, the apex body of manufacturers, is working out a detailed action plan to counter Arjun Singh's move which manufacturers claim will destroy the lucrative industry.

For the *beedi* trade, the importance of Madhya Pradesh is obvious enough. More than 60 per cent of the industry's requirement of *tendu* leaves, the basic raw material, grows widely in the forests of Madhya Pradesh. At a conservative estimate, the organised *beedi* industry is worth Rs 2,000 crores plus another Rs 1,000 crores in the illegal sector. The entire industry, together with the organised and illegal sectors, employs directly 50 lakh workers all over the country. It is the claim of the manufacturers that if the government cooperatives take over the tricky business of plucking, the quantity of leaves will decrease by 50 per cent which would trigger off labour retrenchment, cost hikes and a severe crisis in the industry.

Says Nitin R. Desai, a manufacturer and vice-president of the federation, "It is not that the manufacturers are against the forming of cooperatives. We are only afraid that the quality and quantity of leaves will go down."

Industry sources point out that Singh made the move to cut out traders at a cabinet meeting a day after he was declared elected. The state government's plan is simple: it would set up 2,000 cooperative societies with Adivasis as members. Under the direct supervision of the district collector and with the assistance of the police and forest officials in each district, the societies would conduct the business of plucking. The Adivasis would get a hike in minimum wages from an average Rs 8.50 per day to Rs 12. The leaves would then be sold by the societies by calling tenders from manufacturers all over the country. The profits will be shared among the Adivasis.

Manufacturers, however, argue that plucking is a tricky business. The operations are done within a period of six weeks and the actual plucking has to be done only in the month of May. Says the memorandum to the Madhya Pradesh chief minister from the Beedi Manufacturers and Tobacco Merchants Association of Nizamabad: "*Beedi* leaves industry's operation calls for prompt and timely decisions involving additional finance depending on crop positions, weather conditions, etc. The risk factor is very high and normally no government agencies will be willing..."

At present, Madhya Pradesh earns an average royalty of around Rs 65 crores from plucking. The *beedi* industry in the country yields central excise worth Rs 200 crores. Says Nitin Desai, "The manufacturers will be only too happy to buy from the cooperatives if there is the assurance of quality and adequate quantity. To ensure this, let the Madhya Pradesh government allow us manufacturers at least the supervision of plucking operations by societies from the green leaves' level itself." The manufacturers fear that, otherwise, government red-tapism, unpredictable monsoons, and inefficient drying operations will result in a small yield of only 30 lakh bags, most of which will be consumed by manufacturers in Madhya Pradesh itself. And the traders, disgruntled about the fact that they should be left in the cold in the new system, have begun to mount a campaign against Arjun Singh as the stocks peter out.

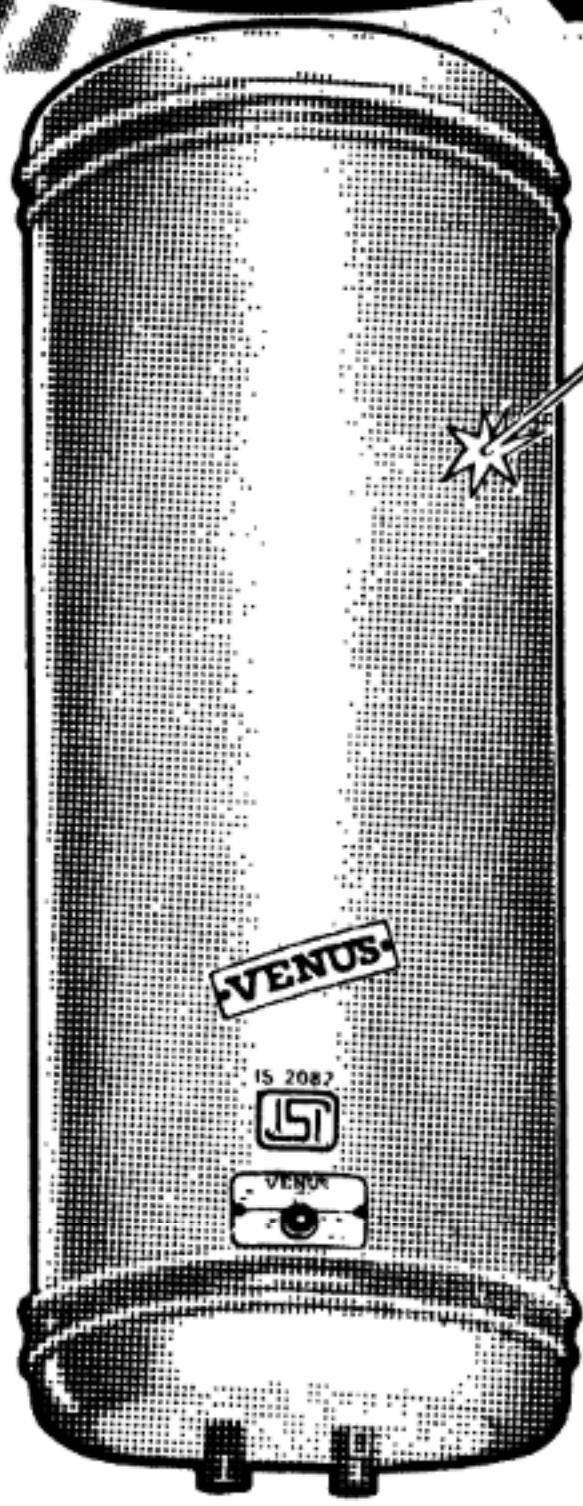
Prakash Belawadi/*Bangalore*

Arjun Singh: clever move



Quality.
The built-in magic that has made VENUS a best-seller...

For 27 years





Venus has the distinction of staying on top for over 27 years.

Built-in quality

Unlike several cheap water heaters where only buying and assembling of parts are done Venus is manufactured to strict quality control standards all through the production process That's why all the models of Venus water heater from 10 to 50 litres carry the ISI mark

Making Venus in the long run maintenance free and ensuring a trouble-free service

Built-in safety

Venus comes to you with built-in safety features like Fusible Plug, Pressure Release-cum-Vacuum Release Valve Unlike other water heaters where safety features are optional accessories.

Making Venus totally safe

Built on expertise

Venus water heaters are built on innovative technology that comes with the expertise of 27 years.

Quality in service

A nation-wide distribution network makes Venus available every where and assures prompt after-sales- service

Built to your choice

Venus water heaters are available in a range of 10, 25, 35, 50, 70 & 100 litres capacity in Vertical, Horizontal and Dwarf models

Venus, always the leader.

IS·2082

VENUS®
WATER HEATERS

Manufactured and marketed by

STANDARD ELECTRIC APPLIANCES

Central Marketing Office :
S-2, Green Park Extension, New Delhi 110 016

H.O. & Factory : Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu
Branches at : Madras • Bangalore • Calcutta • Bombay.

Changes afoot in ACC

Nani Palkhivala, the outspoken chairman of Associated Cement Company (ACC), appears on his way out. Tipped to take his place in Cement House, the ACC headquarters, is another high-profile achiever from the Tata group, Darbari Seth, chairman of Tata Chemicals, a company he has set on a scorching growth path. The change of guard is expected to be formalised at



Darbari Seth: new office

the ACC annual general meeting at the end of the year. Seth and his colleague from the Tata group, Noshir Soonalwala, the finance director, were inducted into the ACC board on 1 October.

Seth's induction was inevitable as he has become the largest individual shareholder in the cement giant after acquiring the 7.13 per cent stake that Calcutta industrialist Mahendra Swaroop had bought up and created ripples about a takeover bid earlier this year.

As for Palkhivala, he seems to have finally paid the price for a botched up debenture issue and then getting involved in a wrangling match with Wadia who is close to J.R.D. Tata.

Sound advice?

There is widespread dismay over the refusal of Shivraj Patil, the dim-witted aviation minister, to resign after the Indian Airlines crash (remember Madhavrao Scindia and the Quilon tragedy?)

But would Rajiv Gandhi have accepted the resignation? Apparently, Rahul Bajaj offered to resign as chairman of Indian Airlines once he heard about the accident. The PM's response: "Don't take these things so seriously."

Bajaj on the chase

Hero Honda is riding the crest of the wave – but Rahul Bajaj is opening up the throttle in his bid to catch up. At the moment Hero Honda is way in front of the competition and it is doing its level best to improve its lead. Next March, the company is planning to bring out a more powerful bike in 1990. The company reported profits of Rs 2.16 crores this year and it is buoyant about the future. Bajaj, however, is not taking this lying down. The Kawasaki Bajaj is gaining ground rapidly and there are rumours that Bajaj plans to bring out a new four stroke model which will compete directly with the Hero Honda.

Money in a tunnel

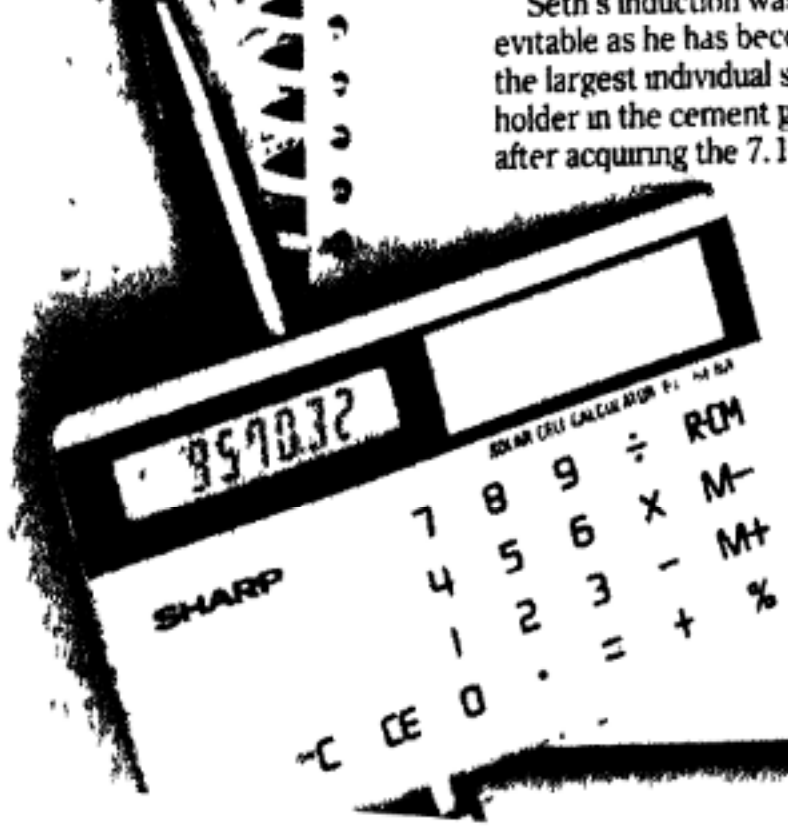
Is it a game of one-upmanship, or can four play the game better than one? In September this year Dhirubhai Ambani gave a Rs 2,500-crore proposal to chief minister Sharad Pawar to build a Y-shaped, 15 km-long underwater tunnel connecting Bombay with the Uran-Panvel mainland across the harbour. The Bombay-Uran distance would then be covered in 15 minutes instead



Ratan Tata (left) and Wadia

of the three gruelling hours it takes now. Ambani plans to finance the spectacular project by selling 35 sq km of land in the Panvel township which would become his *zamindari*.

Meanwhile, Ambani's rivals calculated the millions that he would net, grew green with envy, and finally a counter-proposal was submitted by Ratan Tata, Nusli Wadia, Arvind Mafatlal and Keshub Mahindra. The foursome have proposed to float a company with public shareholding. The land in the township, would be distributed *pro rata* to all subscribers.



Where doubles dare

Behind every hero's daring escapade is a little known stuntman who risks his life time and again



Remember this scene from Sholay*: Amjad Khan is making Hema Malini sing and dance on a bed of hot coals. Amit and Dharmendra are straining at the leash, glaring around in impotent rage. Suddenly the tables are turned. The good guys seize the guns and bang—there goes the villain's lookout. A stereophonic sound track of galloping hooves and screeching violins. In ride a group of horsemen and mayhem ensues with horses and men going berserk.*

To the average movie-goer, such a scene is but one in a million that occurs in the unchanging patterns of commercial cinema. For the stars, it acts as one more show-window of their talents, one more opportunity to receive applause and adulation. And for the producer and director this is yet another device to get the audiences into the theatres to satiate their lust for thrills and chills. But for stuntmen, a scene such as the one described above is only one more arduous, bone-breakingly

tough step in their careers—one that could result in serious damage to life and limb, often ending in hospitalisation, sometimes in death.

Consider these figures for a moment. The Movie Stunt Artists Association, one of the more active unions in the film industry, has, after much haggling and demanding, arrived at a table of charts and figures that tells you just how precious a stuntman's life really is. A stuntman, or fighter, as the industry likes to call him, gets paid Rs 226 per day; this includes transport and food allowance. An assistant stuntmaster gets Rs 286 per day, and a duplicate, the man who takes on a star's mantle of glory for a brief while, and performs daredevilry for some of the most macho machines of the silver screen, gets Rs 580 per day.

For these pitifully low figures, a stuntman will do just about anything you ask him to. He'll fall off a horse. He'll jump through glass, smashing it into smithereens; he'll drive a car careering through crowded streets. He'll jump off a 400-foot cliff or wrestle at the edge of it. He'll fight on the outside of a plane in mid-air, he'll slide between two buildings hanging onto a rope, with no safety net below. He'll crash through walls, he'll get burnt by bombs, he'll be thrashed by the hero, he'll limber across roofs; he'll get kicked, whipped, beaten, broken, scarred, wounded and what's more, he'll be grateful for it, for such is the life of a stuntman.

Abdul Rashid Mehta, 29, holds out both his hands as if he were a child awaiting a caning; but it is not punishment but admiration that he is seeking. On both hands there are welts the size of zipper chains. "These", he says dramatically, "are the stuntmen's medals." There is a lot of swagger in the talk of stuntmen. Jabbar Khan, 36, a stuntman with the combined good looks of Vinod Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan, says, "A stuntman has no fear—we do what we are told, pinning our faith in the chap above. We never tell our families what stunt we're performing that day when we leave home. When we do a particular hard stunt some of the unit members come up to ask how we're feeling. However hurt we are, we never tell them the truth. We say we're fine—dust ourselves, and get ready for the next piece of action. And when we go home, we sleep like we're dead to the world."

Every working stuntman is a student of the school of hard knocks. When Taj Mohamad, 27, whose speciality is acrobatics and trick-riding, was shooting for a film in a snake temple in Orissa, a venomous snake bit him in his eye. A cursory round of first-aid saw him back on the same set later that day, jumping through glass. Today his eyes have a distinct droop to them, giving him even more of a resemblance to Italian stallions like Stallone, or De Niro.

For pitifully low figures, a stuntman will do just about anything you ask him to. He'll fall off a horse. He'll jump through glass, smashing it into smithereens; he'll drive a car careering through crowded streets. He'll jump off a 400-foot cliff or wrestle at the edge of it

Ranjit Thakur, 39, the light-eyed soft-spoken stuntman from Kutch, who started out in life as Shatrughan Sinha's driver, knows all about danger too. In *Razia Sultan* a horse falls on him, crushing his body with all its weight. Thakur, by any standards, is a big-built, heavy man, six feet tall, and weighing 90 kg. But a horse weighs 300 kg, and there were many retakes of that scene. In *Ilzam* Thakur crashed through a plate of glass with a diameter of 4x5 feet. In *Aag Hi Aag, Mera Dost Mera Dushman, Badal, Daku Hasina, Yudh, Vidhaata, Sultanat* and about 30 other such movies, Thakur has displayed such feats of daredevilry. Often he is asked to supplement his stunts with a bit of acting too. A few harsh lines spoken to pad up a character. In *Pratibha* he's supposed to abuse and beat up an old man. He says he doesn't like doing things like that, even if he knows it's not for real.

The opposite has been the case in Mehta's life. Once he'd taken his entire family to watch a movie he'd played someone's duplicate in. A couple of rowdies began to tease the women in his family. Mehta rushed to their defence. Fisticuffs outside the cinema that night!





(Above) Jabbar Khan: resting at home; (left) Jai Singh: performs for a livelihood



HERE'S ONE LOVELY REASON WHY YOU SHOULD TAKE UI'S HOUSEHOLDERS INSURANCE POLICY

Your valuable belongings
Things that you toil for Things that you buy for your wife and family To build your very own world of comfort and happiness

Wouldn't you like to do everything you possibly can to keep that world safe and secure?

United India's Householders Insurance Policy is one way of giving your wife and family a sense of security about your belongings

With this one policy you can cover the building and contents of your house against burglary, fire, flood, lightning, cyclone, riot, earthquake and other such misfortune and perils. The goods covered could include anything from refrigerators, VCRs and music systems to watches, cooking appliances and furniture

So whether you live in a metropolitan city, small town or village, whether you have household goods worth Rs.25,000 or 1,00,000 . United India's Householders Insurance Policy is the one simple step to comprehensive security. A sensible act of caution that shows how much you care.

Act now. Contact any of our 1000 offices.

UNITED INDIA

UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.

(A subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India)

24 Whites Road, Madras 600 014

HTA 7015

And through it all, he felt he was in a dream. "I felt we were enacting a scene," he laughs in retrospect, "that the blows were landing in the air."

In *Kaaha*, Jai Singh, who is assistant stuntman to Veeru Deogun, one of the top three stuntmen in the film industry today, had to slide across an iron rope between the Air-India building and the Oberoi Towers, attached with nothing but a hook. He was given Rs 1,000 extra for that particular stunt. Once, when he had distinguished visitors watching him on the sets the following dialogue ensued.

Rakesh Sharma (astronaut): You people really indulge in extremely dangerous antics. Jai Singh: "Yes, but Sir, we do it for our stomach, you do it for the nation."

One of the first female stunt artists to hit the screen, Nutan is today amongst the top. She guards her dignity with a rare ferocity. She has been recently married. But even today she does not tell her husband what stunts she is about to perform and he, for his part, has never asked because he'd rather not know

Similarly, for Nutanji, an attractive young lady of 36 with large soulful eyes, being a stuntwoman is just another job. "I took it on as a profession," she keeps emphasising. What she fails to add is that, for her, there was hardly an alternative. For the better part of her childhood and adolescence, Nutan passed herself off as Nitin Kumar, a male child star. It was as Nitin Kumar that she received an award for a performance from the President; and it was as Nitin Kumar that she completed her schooling in Bombay. But by the time she reached 15, femininity caught up with her. The usual family crises presented themselves: aged parents, young siblings. So Nitin became Nutan, the stunt woman, as a result of a quick trip to the Stuntmen's Association in Mahalaxmi.

One of the first female stunt artists to hit the screen, she is today amongst the top. Nutanji guards her dignity with a rare ferocity. She has been recently married, her husband being in the catering business. It was an arranged marriage. In the beginning he objected to the nature of her career, the risks, the daredevilry, the uncertainty. So she stayed at home. Then he noticed that his wife was getting thinner, looked pale, never smiled: she missed the uncertainty, the risks, the fierce camaraderie of the stunt world. So he relented. But even today she does not tell him what stunts she is about to perform and he, for his part, has never asked because he'd rather not know what his wife will put herself through that day. They live together, each preciously protecting the others's ideals, guarding his or her illusions. "When we are asked to perform a stunt, the assistant fight master always informs us exactly what the stunt is, and how much of a risk is involved so that we have the option of saying no," she says. And has she ever refused a stunt? "No, word gets around. You may not be asked again. Besides," she says, "I know no fear."



Three artists: a relaxed moment



Nutan: has never refused a stunt

Fear is not something that most stuntmen in the Bombay film world will admit to easily. But given the circumstances, fear is always a heartbeat away. Consider the risks: India may have the largest film industry in the world, but even today safety methods and techniques that reduce the dangers of a stuntman's life are shockingly low. For instance, in Hollywood it is common practice to cushion the blow to the body by falling on packing cases. In India it is only recently that such a technique is catching on. Or glass-breaking. Abroad, a special type of reinforced plastic is utilised, giving the impression of real glass; but in India, stuntmen fling themselves through real glass. And of course, given the substandard, haphazard nature of things here, nothing works as planned, nothing goes off as scheduled.



Jai Singh: enjoying domesticity



Stuntmen: risks are a way of life

Ladders break, walls cave in, and bombs go off at the wrong moment. Then there's the question of first aid on the sets. Witnessing an action scene in Chandivili for a movie that starred Dharmendra, Chunky Pandey, Anupam Kher, Amrita Singh and Mandakini, the sight an ambulance parked nearby brought solace, until one learnt that it was merely a dummy ambulance. Nor is a stuntman covered by any insurance scheme. After all, which insurance agency would be foolhardy enough to involve itself in a business as risky as the stunt business?

Inevitably, the stuntman is a very insecure man. Coupled with all these fears are the usual ones that plague people in showbiz. Old age, sickness, and growing competition from youngsters. For there's always someone desperate enough to jump higher, fall harder or burn slower. And yet only twice is fear mentioned in all these interviews. Rashid Mehta says he is too frightened to approach a star to invite him to his house for a celebration, in case he refuses. And Jabbar Khan begs me not to mention the names of the stars he has doubled for, in case they feel he has robbed them of their macho image and decide to boycott him.

The stunt world is dominated today by just three or four big stunt directors. Pappu Verma, Ram Shetty, Veeru Deogunj and A. Mansoor. These men rule the roost, have the biggest films, the fittest men, the most thrilling stunts. But there are at least 30 stunt directors in the business. Most fighters like to belong to either one stunt director's camp or another, because it ensures them a steady stream of work, security and brotherhood. (Except the swashbuckling Jabbar Khan, who described himself as "an international fakir").

But what no one will add is that there is almost always, a kickback (out of one's pay) handed over to the stunt director. This commission, coupled with the mandatory dues taken out of a stuntman's wages by the union for a small insurance and for office dues, etc, must leave the stuntman with a very small take-home pay eventually.

But the stuntman knows he's one step up the ladder from the Junior Artistes. What is known as a "Decent Man" in the film industry wage book, receives Rs 97 per day. And a "B Class Man" Rs 49. An "A Class Girl" gets Rs 87, and a "Super Girl" Rs 130. This, plus a fragile dignity that requires people to call them Junior Artistes and not extras, is what the Junior Artistes have fought for and won. So the stuntman knows he is better off than many others in the industry. Those whose spirits have not already taken a beating, aspire upwards. Many of them want to be assistant fight masters who want to have acting roles, or better still, to become stunt directors who want to produce movies.

Recently a couple of stunt directors have launched big budget films—a far cry from the days of the legendary stunt director, the late Azim Bhai, who fostered a whole generation of masters, but who was content to remain a stunt director to the last, humbly travelling from studio to studio on his beat-up old motor cycle. Azim Bhai fought for professionalism and dignity for his tribe and won. Today many stuntmen put up his picture in their homes. In a world of illusory heroes and make-believe, he is one icon who didn't pull his punches or cushion the blows. At the mention of his name, many stuntmen, in the absence of a spokesman, or father figure, get moist-eyed.

You can see them at any given morning on Juhu Beach. In tight little clutches of 10 or 12, spread out over the sands. The sun is hardly up, the sand is cold under one's feet, and the foam has left patterns on the mud, that haven't yet been obliterated by footsteps.

Here they practise their deadly art. Cartwheels, jump kicks, somersaults, judo, karate, wrestling, boxing, that grab bag of assaults and defences that send shivers of excitement down an audience's spine. Good-looking, well-built young men, with rippling biceps, and broad backs, and shoulders intent on their craft. Then off they go to work—and to take a beating.

Malavika Rajbans Sanghvi/Bombay

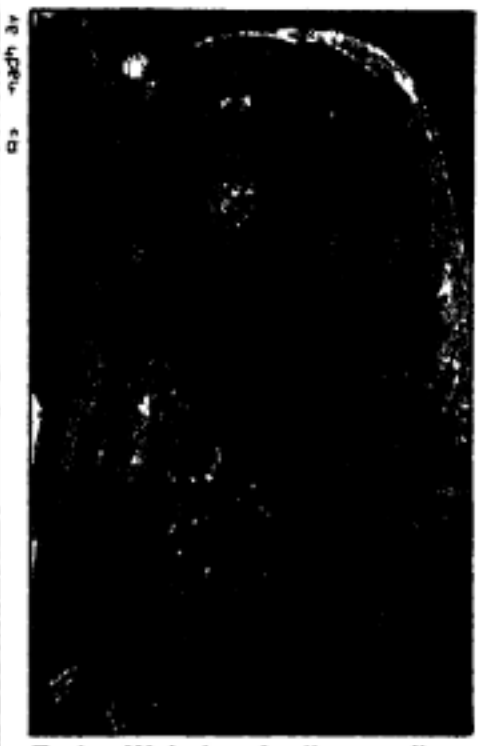
Fear is not something that most stuntmen in the Bombay film world will admit to easily. But given the circumstances, fear is always a heart beat away. For instance, in Hollywood it is common practice to cushion the blow to the body by falling on padding cases. In India it is only recently that such a technique is catching on.

Photographs Gautam Patole

Pooja Bedi, the progeny of Kabir and Protima Bedi and very much her mother s daughter is very, very hung up on video star Aditya Pan choli, better known as Zarina Wahab's child husband Cur rently concentrating on get ting her career organised, Pooja insists that Aditya wait for her until such a time as when she has made it Then, evidently, he is to divorce wife Zarina and walk off into the sunset with her

In most such situations, the wife is generally the last to know So is Zarina too blissfully ignorant of this new presence in her *miya's* life? No way, says an indignant Wahab Dear husband Aditya tells her all about his little peccadilloes (those involving Pooja Bedi and otherwise) And as long as he conde scends to confide in her, Zarina will graciously consent to forgive all his trespasses, or so she says

Something tells us, however, that in this one case,Zarina is being a trifle too sanguine It doesn't pay to underestimate your opponent, especially one such as the sultry Bedi



Zarina Wahab a fool's paradise

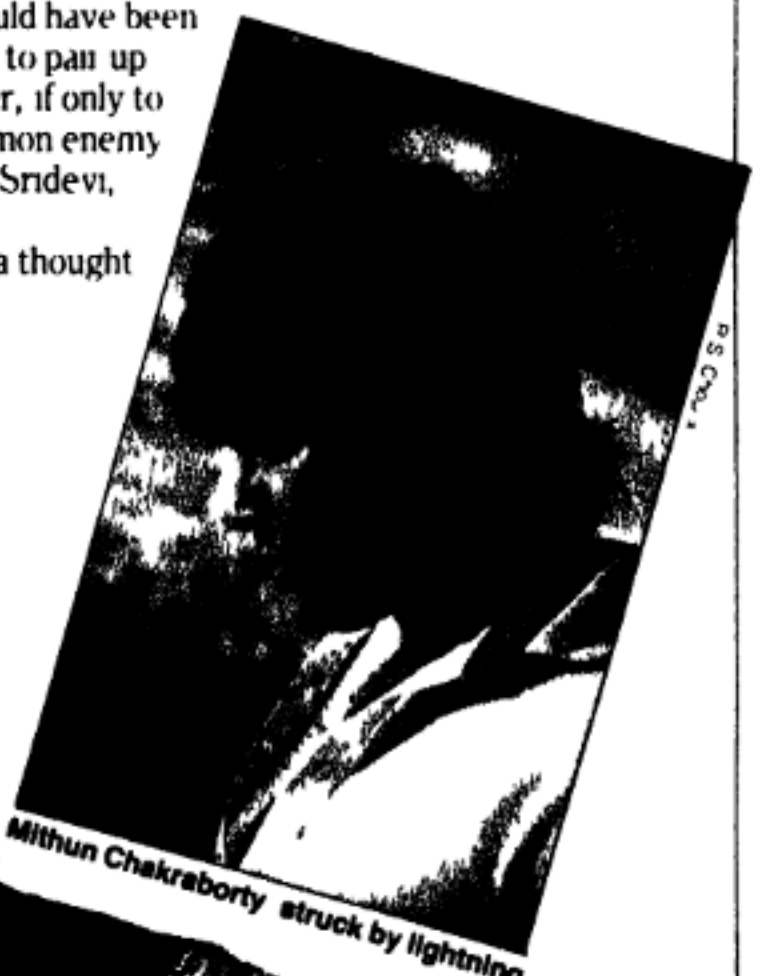
Mithun has been smitten by Bijli (Sangita Bijlani to you and me) and Rekha has fallen in love with *firang* What a pity, say well wishers of the pair They would have been better advised to pair up with each other, if only to deal with common enemy number one—Sridevi, of course

Now that is a thought isn t it?

"Am handsome, can dance " All you guys who can say that should make a beeline for Bombay and Pehlaj Nihalani

It is Chunky Pandey s in competence which makes him put such a premium on dancing skill The film indus try s favourite stud is such a bad dancer, that everytime a dance sequence featuring him has to be shot the dance director and the junior artistes who have to shake a leg with him, wake up with ulcers

When the shot is finally done the set resounds with applause Not because Chunky has, after all that agonising, done a Fred Astaire, but out of sheer relief that the tor ture is finally over



Mithun Chakraborty struck by lightning



Rekha ganging up?

Govinda, of the gigantic Oedipus complex has finally come of age And he gave notice of that by affecting a reconciliation with his father whom he had given up on ever since his parents sepa



Govinda father, dear father

rated when he was but a little boy Recently, however, his father (who still lives in Virar) had a paralytic stroke and Govinda after some soul-searching came up with the remains of a filial affection for him Hence early morning trips to Virar everyday to check on papa's progress Result late arrival at every set But for once nobody was complaining *Filmi* hearts have some feeling left yet

Has she really accomplished what most people thought impossible? Has Amrita *Mard* Singh, the he-woman of the film industry, finally nagged Cinthol-peddler Vinod Khanna into matrimony? Yes, if the rumours that set Bombay abuzz last fortnight are anything to go by Know-alls insist that the pair have got married *chupke-chupke*, hence Vinod's finally screwing up courage to admit to the Amrita connection in a recent issue of a film glossy

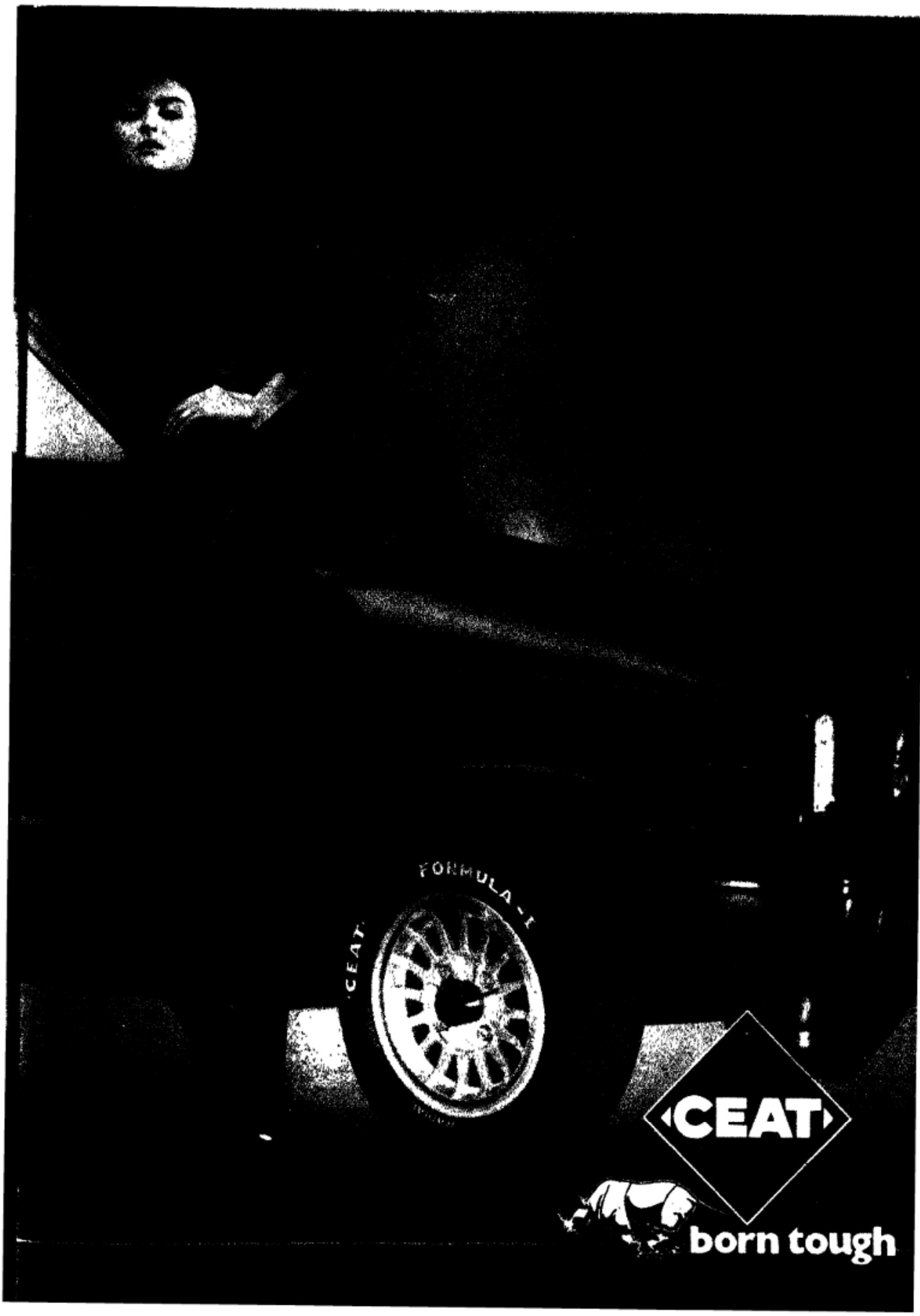
So, we've finally had it proved to us Khannas do rush in where Shastris fear to tread! ■

The road stretches endlessly.
The wider, squat tyres never release the ground.
The tyres continue to devour the miles.

Get the longer tyre life of
CEAT FORMULA-I RADIALS

LONGER TYRE LIFE THROUGH ENDLESS MILES

FOR BETTER CAR CONTROL


FORMULA-1
CEAT
CEAT
born tough

EVERYONE KNOWS that Indian politicians are a bunch of heels, but this *padayatra* business is really getting out of hand. The latest to join the ranks of Chandra Shekhar, Sunil Dutt and a host of other peripatetic politicians is the controversial Jan Morcha leader **Sanjay Singh.**

In mid November, the MP will begin his long constitutional from his constituency, Amethi to New Delhi. Ostensibly an exercise (geddit?) in "raising mass awareness" on unemployment, corruption and the like Singh's long march will end at the doorstep of Rashtrapati Bhavan, where he will submit a memorandum to the President. And then, no doubt, the former Raja will catch the next flight back home.



Sanjay Singh: another peripatetic politician

◆

IT WAS a classic case of the communication gap. Punjab's Governor **Siddharth Shankar Ray**, speaking at the inaugural function of a private-sector, agro-based chemical complex in Sangrur district, made the most innocuous of remarks: the state, he told the audience, did not have a "single hill station." The gruff Punjabi interpreter, alas, heard differently—the Governor, to him, sounded like saying that the state did not possess a strict administration. Not his to question the propriety of such an admission, he obligingly translated it for the benefit of those present and was stupefied when greeted with gales of laughter.



S.S. Ray: communication gap

Ray, tried to save the situation by repeating the sentence but the interpreter persisted with his version. Matters were finally sorted out to everyone's satisfaction, though not before there were plenty of red faces around.

STARRY *NAKHRAS* are strictly for stars. **Rupa Ganguly,** reigning teleserial queen of Calcutta Doordarshan, learnt that the hard way recently. Happily hamming her way through P. Vasudev Kumar's latest production, *Ganadevata*, Rupa thought she was indispensible as Durga, the feisty heroine of the latest in soap operas. Hence, regular tantrum-throwing which ended with the no-nonsense Kumar throwing her out on her ear, as retribution for her misbehaviour.

Soon, an ad appeared in the local press inviting "fair and talented" females for the role. Ganguly then knew, it was well and truly over. She could, of course, ask Rajesh Khanna to produce another TV serial, especially for her benefit, considering what "good friends" they are.



Rupa Ganguly. expensive *nakhras*

◆

WHAT DO **Mahendra Singh Tikait** and his rustic band of followers have in common with Bob Dylan and the Band? Ask the Delhi police. One dark night at the Boat Club as the farmers



M.S. Tikait: saying it with music

continued their *dharna*, they were hard put to hear themselves, leave alone their leader M.S. Tikait's harangues. The police, ostensibly deployed to provide security and maintain law and order, decided in its wisdom, to regale the farmers with loud pop music of Sixties and Seventies vintage.

A public scandal, said the general public. **Romesh Bhandari,** Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, however, differed. At a press conference called soon after he tried to justify the unjustifiable: "It was done to relieve the far-

.ners from boredom." Indian farmers, of course, liking nothing better than jiving to Western music. The police commissioner, Vijay Karan, also joined in the what's-wrong-with-doing-so routine.

Come next day, wisdom had dawned and Karan owned to moral culpability for the incident. But the identity of the prankster remains a mystery, if government sources are to be believed. Say police officials: "It had to be an IPS officer as no lower-level policemen would have chosen to play Western pop." Some say, however, that the choice of music means nothing. A *daroga* was probably asked to buy some cassettes and picked up the first thing that came to hand. Some government apologists cited precedent as a valid excuse: "We did the same thing during the Indo-China war. We blared Hindi songs across the border at the Chinese troops." All is, evidently, fair in love and war.

◆

FOR THE chicest Indian woman on the wrong side of forty, this was a dream debut. Expelled from a film industry which couldn't quite slot her Western sophistication, **Simi Grewal** dabbled in various fields trying to find her niche. After the critically acclaimed documentary on Raj Kapoor, she decided to try her hand at ad filmmaking and was hired by (who else?) Reliance. The film: Michael Ferreira and Geet Sethi play a match poised at championship point. Neither of them is able to win the crucial point. Enter a ravishing blonde. With great elan she achieves what they couldn't. The duo break into applause and the lady is a picture of shy embarrassment. Moral of the story: Vimal fabric is what it takes to be a winner.

The film was entered in the competition for Australia's International Patters award for the best ad film.



N Prasad

Kapil Dev: master intriguer?

From among the 1,660 entrants from 40 countries, Simi emerged the winner. Said she delightedly: "I am happy, very excited and surprised. How could I win the award when the most professional ad filmmaking countries had sent their best entries." Well, as they say, Ms Grewal, the strangest things will happen.



Durga Prasad

Simi Grewal: dream debut

DID INDIA'S dismal performance in the league encounter against Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup tournament in Bangladesh have anything to do with the intrigues of ex skipper **Kapil Dev**? A news item in the *Bangladesh Observer* made out recently that Kapil had, "mustered enough gunpowder to blast **Ravi Shastri** off the field."

The paper also alleged that Shastri had wanted a lay-off to avoid aggravating the injury at the base of his neck, but the rest of the team suspected him of malingering. Therefore, the attempt, apparently spearheaded by Kapil, to keep him out of the team.



N Prasad

Ravi Shastri: muscled out?

The Haryana hurricane of yore reacted strongly to the allegations: "I'm stunned that a newspaper has published such bunk... I encouraged Ravi to think twice before saying he couldn't play because the team needed him."

Shastri, evidently, hasn't taken the report too seriously. Nor, in fact, has the rest of the team. Krishnamachari Srikkanth, clown prince of Indian cricket reacted by bowing low to touch Kapil's feet. It pays to stay on the right side of the powers that be.

Compiled by Seema Goswami

Bold, sporty and fashionable. The statement of rich and refined Vimal Suitings. The statement of Ravi Shastri.



V I M A L ' S ☐ W I N T E R ☐ S T A T E M E N T S



The looks of a winner

VIMAL

WOOLLEN & POLYRICH SUITINGS

Mudra/ARL/4394/A

The star evader

Tina Munim is charged with violating foreign exchange rules

After Bofors and the Bachchans, revelations about foreign bank accounts no longer raise eyebrows as high as they used to. But eyelids may blink in mild surprise each time the government's enforcement directorate happens upon yet another celebrity who has been naughty enough to stash away large sums of money in a foreign country. The latest offender is Bombay film actress Tina Munim.

Officials of the Union finance ministry were apparently tipped off when a copy of a bank statement, allegedly in the name of Tina Munim, landed on their table. It was an account in Dubai. The statement showed that between 1986 and 1987 huge sums of money had been deposited and withdrawn by cheque, the total transaction involving almost Rs 8 crores. The local Dubai address given on the bank statement was that of Bombay's underworld don, Dawood Ibrahim who is absconding from the police. According to some sources, Ibrahim is currently utilising all his high-level political connections to buy himself a safe return to Bombay.



Tina Munim: framed by the drug mafia?

The Delhi enforcement directorate considers the evidence of the statement serious enough. Reliable sources confirm that preparations are being made to file prosecution charges under the Foreign Exchange Regulations Act (FERA). What is more, Tina Munim and her foreign exchange peccadilloes obviously warranted direct intervention by the Delhi office of the directorate. On 13 October a group of sleuths, led by special director Singhvi, flew into Bombay for their celebrity raid.

The morning of the 14th saw them descending on Rajesh Khanna's palatial bungalow in the posh Bombay suburb of Ashirwad. Later they also visited Tina Munim's mother, Mrs Meenakshi Munim at her Khar residence. Though the much publicised affair between Tina Munim and Rajesh Khanna has been over for two years, the directorate obviously thought ex-flames could still provide financial information.

Two facts about the Khanna-Munim connection are making tongues wag in Bombay's film circles. It was Munim who walked out on Rajesh Khanna, in favour of the son of a textile tycoon. Repeated lures thrown out her way by the jilted lover failed to make her change her mind—and a man scorned can be just as poisonous as his female counterpart.

Secondly, once the bank statement had reached the offices of the enforcement directorate, Khanna was in a unique position to utilise damaging information to settle old scores. He is a close friend of Ashok Chavan, the MP from Nanded who also happens to be the son of the Union finance minister.

As is only to be expected, Khanna has denied having anything to do with Tina Munim over the last two years, but he does admit to having visited Dubai with her before that period. Loyal friends of the actor refuse to believe that he could be spiteful enough to get back at an old flame in this underhand manner. "He is among the most magnanimous of men, particularly where women are concerned," said one enthusiastic supporter. Even to the woman who threw him over for another? Perhaps. But perhaps not.

A less publicised theory is that Tina Munim has been framed by Dawood Ibrahim and the drug mafia. Most of the country's top film stars have been guests of the don in Dubai at some time or the other. Recently, a whole planeload of them were transported to Dubai to participate in Ibrahim's son's birthday fest. Tina Munim's name could conceivably have been used to account for some funds that were uncomfortably unaccountable. Some officials of the enforcement directorate are also supposed to hold this view.

But theories cannot determine legal procedure. For the moment it is Tina Munim who is the offender. The actress, together with her brother Nain who lives in Australia, is supposed to have been interrogated in the Bombay office of the directorate. Munim's answer was that though the account was in her name (a definite admission), the person who really operated it and owned the funds in it, was her secretary Ravi Kohli who had started Futura Fashions (questionable justification for an illegal action).

Like so many other charges of foreign exchange violations, this one too will have to go through the legal processes of settlement. For the outsiders, however, it will be the celebrities involved that will keep the story alive.

Olga Tellis/Bombay



Swamy and friends

Nobody tells it quite like he does

There is a famous anecdote about a professor of economics who set the same exam paper every year. It was not necessary to change the questions, he would explain. In economics, it was the *answers* that changed.

As a former full professor of economics at Harvard, it is only fitting that Subramaniam Swamy should use a similar justification for the apparent shifts in his political alignment. When Swamy first joined politics, it was as the blue-eyed boy of the RSS, then as a Jan Sangh ideologue and Emergency-era Khaki Pimpernel till Janata won the 1977 election, when he became one of the new party's most vocal members. When Janata split in 1979, he switched loyalties from the RSS clique (which became the BJP) and remained in the party. He was expelled in 1984 and joined Charan Singh in the Lok Dal. Next, it was back to Janata when the Lok Dal(A) merged with Chandra Shekhar's party. And now, it is the newly formed Janata Dal.

All of this may suggest a man who switches parties with the dexterity of a Bahuguna or a George Fernandes, but Swamy argues, quite convincingly, that it is the political scene that has changed, not his political ideology. After all, he only joined Janata in 1977 when the Jan Sangh merged with it. He remained with the new party (though the Lok Dal and BJP walked out) till he was thrown out. Then, he had no choice but to find a new home (the Lok Dal). And, he has remained with that grouping since 1984: it is not his fault that the Dal first split, then joined Janata and finally ended up as part of the Janata Dal.

Moreover, he has remained remarkably true to his political beliefs. Shortly after he returned from Harvard, he used what he calls the "Parsi network" (his wife is a Parsi) to write three articles for *Blitz*. The first argued that India should make the bomb; the second pleaded for better relations with China; and the third tore into the license-permit-quota raj. Twenty years later, these three issues still form the central planks of his ideology.

So, why then do Swamy's detractors persist in portraying him as a rootless gadfly who flits from party to party, making up his policies as he goes along? One reason, unfortunately, is that his views are not as widely understood as they should be. In a political scene peopled by economic illiterates, his conception of a market economy makes no sense to his contemporaries. And few Indian politicians care about foreign policy. Thus, Swamy finds himself in the bizarre situation where, despite being the one politician with a well thought out body of beliefs, he is regarded as a gadfly.

The other reason, of course, is that Swamy rejects many of the rules of Indian politics: among them the twin notions of party discipline and feudalism. Tradition has it that even if somebody in your party does something terrible, you can only conspire against him: to actually criticise him publicly is close to sacrilege. And that it is wrong to openly display any ambition.

Swamy's unwillingness to play by these rules has made him extremely unpopular with his colleagues. When he announced that he would stand against Chandra Shekhar for the presidentship of the Janata Party, this was regarded as blasphemy. (On the other hand, Hegde, who is content to stab Chandra Shekhar in the back, is something of a media hero.) Nor does his plain-speaking endear him to other politicians. Everybody in the Jan Sangh knew that A.B. Vajpayee was not quite the *brahmacharya* he claimed to be: he liked his drink and functioned as a normal red-blooded male. But nobody was prepared to tolerate Swamy's saying this in public.

Since he parted company with the RSS/Jan Sangh/BJP, Swamy has continued to shock colleagues. While he was in Janata, he took to attacking Hegde ("snake" was one of his milder epithets) and regarding George Fernandes as a contemptible has-been. When he shifted to the Lok Dal, Bahuguna received the full treatment ("Russian stooge"). And once he returned to Janata, he launched the telephone tapping investigation that toppled Hegde ("hypocrite and crook"). All of this has appalled those who believe that all Opposition members must stick together with the iron-clad discipline of an SS regiment.

Swamy has never cared. While he was one of the first Opposition politicians to tear into Rajiv Gandhi (in early 1985, in a monthly column for *Imprint* at a time when Hegde was praising the Prime Minister), he refused to join the Goenka/Chandra Swami/Nushi Wadia coup in 1987. After Ram Jethmalani began asking his ten questions, Swamy demolished him ("not a barking dog but a hovering vulture") in a SUNDAY column. Rajiv was probably corrupt, he suggested, but Jethmalani's own affairs did not bear too close an inspection.

His friends, while supporting his right to tell it like it is, sometimes feel that he goes too far. They fear that the abuse detracts from the policies and suspect that he is too unforgiving when it comes to attacks on himself. For instance, when Jethmalani's son Mahesh ("Mongoloid idiot") replied to the SUNDAY attack on his father, Swamy went into a deep sulk. ("There is no dynastic right to reply," he argued with some justification.) But Swamy's personality is such that take away the outspokenness, and you lose most of the charisma as well.

Where he goes from here is anybody's guess. In 1979, he gave me an interview in which he declared that he would be Prime Minister by 1989. It seems unlikely that he will keep to that deadline but equally, there's no denying that he is the only man in Indian politics to have survived the most determined assaults from such heavyweights as Vajpayee, Chandra Shekhar, Bahuguna and Hegde. He has done so on his own terms, without bothering (until recently, when he turned to Tamil Nadu) to build up a regional base, without mouthing the clichés of Indian political discourse, and without beconing a *chamcha* of the mighty.

Vir Sanghvi

Despite being a politician with a well thought-out body of beliefs, Swamy is regarded as a gadfly



Hostile neighbours

Stephen Philip Cohen examines Indo-Pak relations in the perspective of the security of South Asia



One need not be a psychological reductionist to recognise that the images of each other held by Indians and Pakistanis contribute significantly to hostility between their states. This hostility has two aspects: the conflicting identities of the two states and the problem of generational continuity. There are also important perceptual obstacles associated with America's involvement in South Asian affairs.

The very identities of Pakistan (an avowedly Islamic state, the first such nation created in the modern world) and India (a predominantly Hindu but secular state with a large Muslim minority) stand as a challenge to each other. Pakistanis still find it hard to accept that millions of contented Muslims live reasonably Islamic lives in "Hindu" India, because much of the impetus for the creation of Pakistan was based upon the premise that South Asian Muslims—forever in a minority could never achieve safety and freedom in a vast Hindu sea. Conversely, Indians find it difficult to accept that Pakistan is a functioning and reasonably successful state, and many Indians fear the attraction of Pakistan for "their" Muslims.

Pakistan's Islamic orientation has also given rise to important strategic differences between the two states. Pakistanis tend to look to the Middle East and like to portray themselves as a Southwest Asian or even Middle Eastern power. Indians remain skeptical of this effort, even as they fear that it might succeed, and they prefer to emphasise Pakistan's subcontinental (and thus Hindu-influenced) roots. Thus even cultural artifacts such as films and cuisine are linked to the question of national identity.

Complicating matters, India and Pakistan have diverged significantly from the British, parliamentary, democratic norm. Indians in particular are scornful of Pakistan's history of military rule, often using it as an excuse to avoid serious discussions with their Pakistani counterparts. Yet they have no such problem in dealing with totalitarian dictators and military rulers elsewhere in the world. Pakistanis, on the other hand, regard the Indians as having betrayed the assurances to minorities (such as



Rajiv Gandhi addressing the Kathmandu SAARC summit: the search for peace and stability

Muslims) that the British provided; they see India as a thinly disguised Hindu state under continued Nehru family domination.

Between Partition and the mid-1950s a consensus developed in both India and Pakistan around the idea of hostility to the other. This situation has its parallels in the Arab-Israeli dispute, the dug-in fears of the US-Soviet relationship, and, earlier, in Franco-German hostility. The "hostility consensus" is based upon real concerns and fears, but it also exists because some groups in each state find it useful to keep the threat of the other alive. Thus among the new generation, Indians and Pakistanis are less able to get along with each other than their predecessors and the regional psychological climate has deteriorated. This insight has not yet been tested by empirical study; indeed, there has been no serious cross-national research conducted among the nations of South Asia, which suggests the need for a closer look at the problem.

I would argue that the process of generational change now underway is likely to have contradictory implications for the prospects of regional accord. It is true that the members of an older generation knew each other intimately, many grew up in what is now foreign territory and have powerful memories of life in pre-Partition India. But these memories are mixed: some remember the horror of Partition and its attendant communal riots, all can recall the everyday slights and insults that necessarily occur when two religious or ethnic groups find themselves in close proximity.

But members of the younger generation—those born after Partition will have their own advantages and disadvantages in coming to grips with the realities of regional politics. First, they naturally tend to question the dogmas and prejudices of their elders, and generational change will naturally lead to the diminution of some historic fears and stereotypes. But countering this change will be their own deformed understanding of "Pakistan" or "India". The results of an examination of the textbooks, novels, and scholarly studies written in each country about the other are not reassuring. Even more distressing are the systematic distortions taught in the universities and military academies of both states.

Pakistanis still find it hard to accept that millions of contented Muslims live reasonably Islamic lives in "Hindu" India... Conversely, many Indians fear the attraction of Pakistan for "their" Muslims

Without systematic research on the problem, it is difficult to predict whether the "new" generation of leaders coming to power in India and Pakistan will be better able to resolve their differences and dampen the corrosive effect of religious, racial, and regional stereotypes. (This would seem to be an ideal question for SAARC to examine.) What does seem likely is that such a reconciliation will have to take place under very different conditions from those that prevailed in 1947-49. Let us turn to some of these new circumstances, in particular the altered regional security structure and the greatly enhanced power at the command of leaders in both countries.

There is a critical difference between many Indians and Pakistanis about South Asia's "natural" or proper strategic structure. Indians like to believe that they inherited the strategic responsibilities once held by the British and that the defence of the subcontinent is indivisible. To most Indian strategists, Pakistan's effort to build a separate military machine not only threatens India but will be ineffective against a major external threat since Pakistan does not have the depth or the resources to stand alone.



Indian Army jawans: responsible for the defence of the subcontinent?

Conversely, Pakistanis have tended to believe that the defence of the subcontinent is divisible and can be shared by India, with Pakistan holding responsibility for the north west and India for the north east

All of this is purely theoretical since India and Pakistan remain each other's major threat. They have been unable to agree upon a structure in which the smaller South Asian states can coexist with a more powerful and developed India. Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka have tried to accommodate Indian power in various ways, although they have each sought political protection via close relations with major outside powers and have been enthusiastic supporters of a regional association (SAARC) that might tame Indian power Only Pakistan has tried to contain Indian power by seeking outside military ties.

The difference between Indian and Pakistani views on this critical question is exemplified in the language they use to describe India's regional position Noor Husain and A.I. Akram of Pakistan call India's goal "hegemonist"—that is, India seeks to dominate completely its smaller neighbours and to turn Pakistan into a Bangladesh, rather than agree to a proper division of responsibility for subcontinental defence. That may be true of some Indians, but not of all. Jagat Mehta and P.R. Chari (who uses the phrase "regional preponderance" to describe India's position) seem to be willing to accord Pakistan a regional role and adequate capacity for self-defence. Indeed, even K Subrahmanyam has recently written of Pakistan's nuclear option, acknowledging that such an option is a legitimate objective for a state with an acute two-front security problem (a category that includes India).

The first step in forging a regional security doctrine that can be accepted by all South Asian states (and ratified by major external powers) may be the abandonment - or rigorous clarification - of such vague and emotive terms as hegemony, dominance, preponderance, and superiority, all of which have been used to describe India's ambitions and position, and none of which actually correspond to a changing reality. Again, there has been little serious analysis of the minimum conditions under which the security of the smaller and weaker South Asian states can be assured, without heavy intervention and ties to major outside powers, that in turn threaten India's position. Indeed, can India come to tolerate the limited external connections by Pakistan or Sri Lanka or Nepal as the price for regional cooperation on other issues such as trade, regional defence, and sharing of water resources? Can the smaller states, especially Pakistan, resist the temptation to bring in such outside powers?

Since India accepts massive military assistance from outside states, it can hardly object in principle to such practices by Pakistan What Pakistanis fear most is that Indian objections to American military sales are not based on principle, but on the desire to monopolise military power in the subcontinent. Although India can impose such a veto over Bangladesh, Nepal, or Sri Lanka, it will have a hard time doing so in the case of Pakistan.

While there is, as yet, no consensus on the regional strategic structure, there is room for cooperation on peripheral matters. All of the South Asian states belong to the nonaligned movement, and all have a shared view of the evils of colonialism, racism, and economic exploitation. They are all opposed to "foreign bases," and they all recognise (albeit not publicly) that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan represents a real threat to regional integrity. They have all embraced the concept of a regional organisation (SAARC) albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm, and there remains the hope that SAARC will

Rajiv Gandhi with General Zia-ul Haq: rising above military considerations





A Sind Regiment infantry platoon in combat training exercise: eternal vigilance

eventually serve as an instrument for the coordination of regional strategic policies.

In all of this commonality there is the making of a South Asian regional security doctrine. I have no doubt that this regionalism is an indirect response to the stark fact that the Soviet Union has occupied a major South Asian state since 1980. In these terms, regionalism is an inadequate response; SAARC will not be able to exert military or political pressure on the Soviets at this time. However, the process of regional consultation may make it easier for individual states (and especially India), both to pressure the Soviets and to provide tacit support for Pakistan's efforts to keep the Soviet Union from consolidating its power in Afghanistan. While Indian rhetoric has been unhelpful, there have been no known Indian actions that might indicate overt cooperation with the Soviet Union in squeezing Pakistan.

There is no doubt that india has larger and more powerful military forces than Pakistan; it did achieve a major victory over Pakistan in 1971. Beyond that, there is uncertainty about the degree of Indian superiority, the trends in the military balance between the two states, and the political implications of this balance.

Weapons are important in their own right, in that both India and Pakistan are unusually vulnerable to threats from each other, and because both face a potential two-front war, neither can be sure that its present weapons inventory will be adequate to meet a worst-case situation. The weapons themselves are not, of course, a cause of tension, but the inability of Indians and Pakistanis to talk about arms control, limitation, or restriction tends to give them a menacing symbolic quality out of proportion to their military importance.

Since India accepts massive military assistance from outside states, it can hardly object in principle to such practices by Pakistan...Although India can impose such a veto over Bangladesh, Nepal, or Sri Lanka, it will have a hard time doing so in the case of Pakistan

A first step would be to confront the dual two-front problem. Can Indian defence needs be met by levels that do not allow India to overrun Pakistan? Will Indians tolerate a level of Pakistani armament that is adequate to insure that an Indian attack will not succeed, but that does not in itself threaten India? Realistically, it may be impossible for even unbiased military experts to work out a weapons mix that ensures the security of both states without threatening the other.

If there were to be discussions on overall levels of particular weapons types, they would have to account for qualitative differences among systems. This is not an insuperable problem, since India and Pakistan both lack the resources to equip their ground, air, and naval forces completely with the most modern weapon types. Finally, some systems might simply be banned or acquired in very small numbers. The interesting case under discussion is AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control Systems), which greatly enhance the effectiveness of interceptor and attack aircraft.

These are the areas where security and arms control concerns merge. Remarkably little thought has gone into this problem in South Asia because it is difficult to apply the chief arms control criterion—stability—to a situation where both military powers have uncertain two-front security problems. Moreover, India and Pakistan are psychologically predisposed to distrust each other. Nevertheless, there is a powerful strategic logic behind the argument that India and Pakistan might begin to cooperate with each other in certain arms limitation arrangements. Ultimately, they have a great deal to gain from such arrangements, and with adequate safeguards, would face little risk. History has shown that institutional and bureaucratic commitments to a worst-case threat analysis perpetuate some disputes long after the real threat has moderated or dissipated. But it also shows that change does occur—if slowly—as perceptions alter, as other and more real threats emerge, and as new concerns and interests replace old ones.

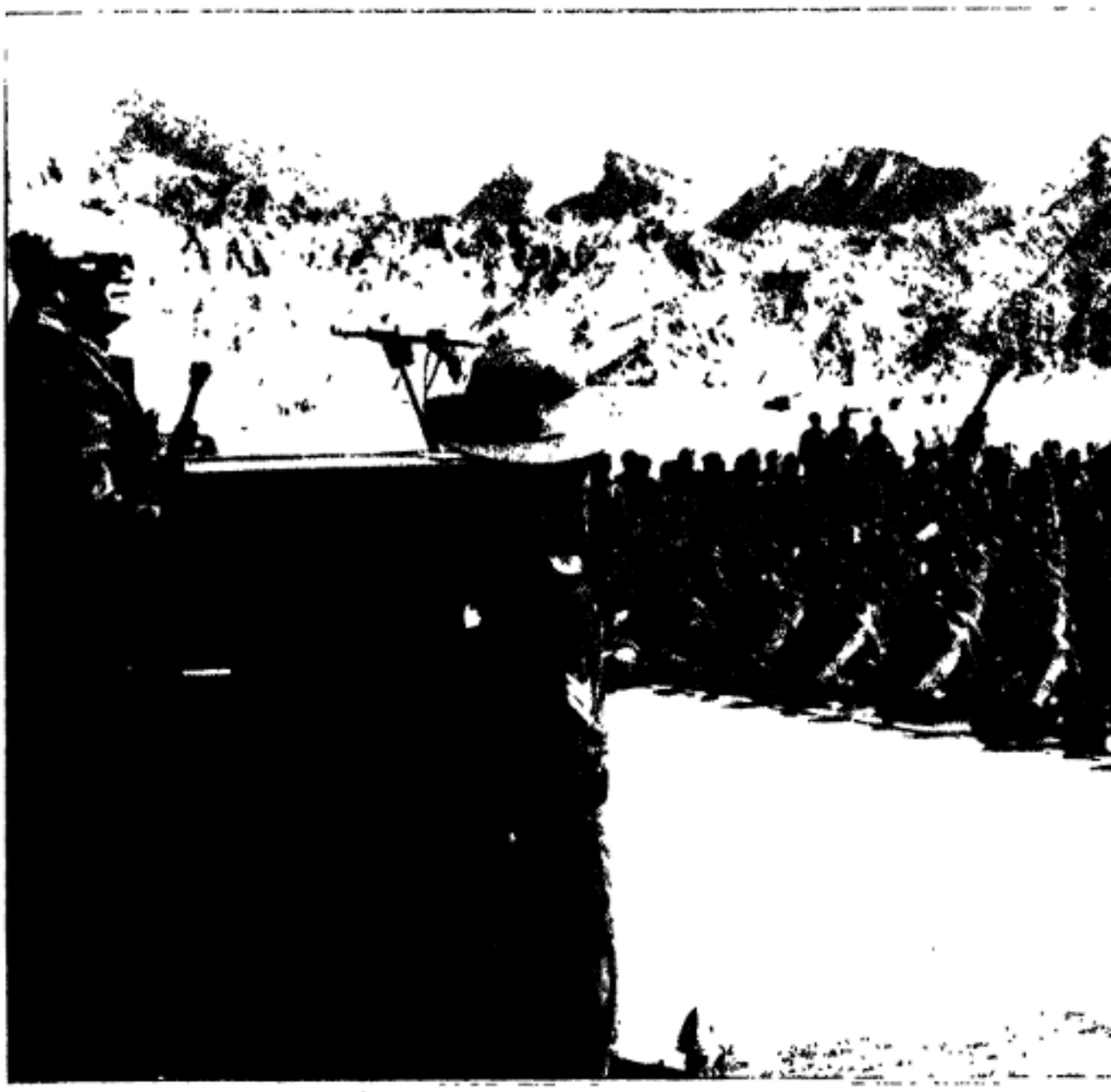
The most problematic regional military development is the slow crawl of both India and Pakistan towards a nuclear capability. Public evidence indicates that both states are within easy reach of a nuclear device. (India, of course,

tested one in 1974,) Will they move to a new test, to the deployment? These are way stations along the nuclear road, although testing may, with some risk, be skipped. India and Pakistan could thus position themselves at the edge of weaponisation without any public statement, test, or other indication of their plans. In this they would be following the Israeli example. They might even coordinate their nuclear cadence: both have an interest in keeping up with the other, but neither would find an outright nuclear arms race particularly useful.

Indeed, the present ambiguous situation seems to suit the interest and pocketbooks of both countries. A Pakistan bomb would mean the loss of American financial and military support and would be followed by a much larger Indian programme. An Indian bomb might lead to greater prestige in the developing world, and even a Security Council seat, but it, too, would be followed by a Pakistani equaliser and might endanger India's access to western high technology. Nuclear weapons are likely to remain attractive for both India and Pakistan for the foreseeable future, although not taking the final step has its attractions as well. Indeed, the present situation would seem to justify the position that proliferation can be stabilising. There is already a *de facto* regional nuclear standoff, since both India and Pakistan have civilian nuclear facilities that are vulnerable to retaliatory attack by conventional forces. Nevertheless, maintaining the nuclear "option", let alone assembling, testing, or deploying nuclear weapons in South Asia, will create serious problems for regional states and others.

First, there is little doubt that in the absence of agreement, regional nuclear proliferation would not decrease the need for conventional weapons and would be most likely to lead to a major overall increase in defence spending. Few South Asians are aware of it, but the ancillary costs of nuclear weapons command and control systems, delivery systems, testing and development of new designs – far exceed the simple cost of fabricating fissile material into explosive devices. Of course, if agreement were possible on the limitation of conventional weapons, nuclear proliferation would be both less likely and less threatening.

Second, proliferation might not reduce the overall likelihood of war. It is argued by South Asian nuclear advocates that nuclear weapons will eliminate the possibility of conventional war between India and Pakistan as they have virtually eliminated the possibility of conventional war in Europe and elsewhere. However, the risk of nuclear war in South Asia might be judged somewhat higher. Not only are regional governments occasionally unstable, but they would be under great pressure to share nuclear technology with nearby states, and their systems would inevitably react with those of existing nuclear powers, especially the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.



President R. Venkataraman addressing jawans at a border post: a two-front security problem

Finally, regional proliferation will be regarded as a grave threat to the present nuclear regime. Even if it were to stabilise South Asia or bring advantage to India or Pakistan, proliferation would be regarded by the superpowers as a disastrous precedent for the Middle East, Latin America, and East Asia. It would certainly stimulate the development of SDI systems and might revive discussions of the preemption of fledgling offensive systems. It would be ironic if regional nuclear proliferation contributed to such responses, since nuclear advocates argue that it will tend to insulate South Asia from outside intervention.

Nuclear weapons are likely to remain attractive for both India and Pakistan for the forseeable future, although not taking the final step has its attractions as well. Both India and Pakistan have civilian nuclear facilities that are vulnerable to retaliatory attack by conventional forces

The nuclear dilemma is quite real. Going nuclear might immediately enhance the security of whichever state took the first step. Even if both India and Pakistan acquired military nuclear systems, it is possible to envision a stable, regional nuclear system. However, such a system could not be made leakproof and would be regarded as a threatening example by the present nuclear powers. They might respond with elaborate defensive technologies, but they are also likely to consider preemptive or counterforce strategies that would effectively cancel out whatever security gains were achieved by India or Pakistan. The nuclear path is self-defeating although one is compelled to acknowledge the hypocrisy of the major nuclear powers whose own arsenals are justly criticised



by South Asians as wildly excessive. However, emulation of Western and Soviet error is not an effective strategy for correcting it.

I envision four alternative security "futures" for South Asia. These are

- The continuation of the *status quo* (that is, hostility between India and Pakistan just short of war, or perhaps leading to another inconclusive war);
- Indian emergence as the regional dominant leader after the destruction of Pakistan's military capability;
- Increased Soviet influence to the point of managing the subcontinent; and
- India acting as a regional leader in cooperation with Pakistan. The last alternative would involve real detente between India and Pakistan, the negotiation of a series of security and arms control agreements, and joint determination of relative force levels and disposition of major units in the context of an understanding that Pakistan could maintain a minimum deterrent.

The last future is not an impossible goal. The presence of the Russians in Afghanistan and the chaos in the Gulf may have encouraged regional states to move in this direction. What can be done to promote cooperation between these two states or at least to preserve their balanced imbalance?

First, it must be acknowledged that Pakistan's security will always rest upon India's restraint (or at least Indian calculations of gain and loss). Outside assistance to help Pakistan meet the threat from the Soviet Union has been necessary, but it will be futile without equally vigorous efforts to help Pakistan normalise its eastern border with India.

Further, Indians are now coming to recognise that a weak Pakistan is no less a threat to them than an excessively strong one. There is an appropriate range of Pakistani military power above which Pakistan becomes a threat to India and below which it becomes a temptation. The determination of these levels is perhaps the most critical regional security issue, although it is difficult to deal with because both India and Pakistan have a legitimate two-front security problem.

Second, there still remains a great deal of uncertainty concerning regional nuclear proliferation. Does Pakistan intend to acquire a full-fledged nuclear system? Would even a lesser capability be tolerated by India, and if it were would the United States be willing to continue a conventional military relationship with Pakistan? This seems to be the way in which the region is evolving, but there are enough uncertainties (including those surrounding India's own nuclear ambitions) to make the nuclear issue both urgent and critical for regional and non-regional states. Ideally, India and Pakistan can be encouraged to work out their own regional nuclear arrangement, which could be ratified by others, but this raises serious protests among Indians (who resent the equation with Pakistan) and among anti-nuclear advocates who would resist any agreement that did not meet Non-proliferation Treaty standards.

Third, there are areas where the major outside economic powers can make a useful contribution to regional stability by offering inducements to regional strategic cooperation. There are a number of joint river and water projects that could be pursued by India and one or more of its neighbours; there is a need for expanded regional, cultural, technical, and educational programmes (which could be addressed through the SAARC forum) that would benefit from outside support.

There is an appropriate range of Pakistani military power above which Pakistan becomes a threat to India and below which it becomes a temptation. The determination of these levels is perhaps the most critical regional security issue

There will some day also have to be movement on those territorial disputes that are also disputes over national identity and purpose. Kashmir is the most obvious problem, and its most recent manifestation—the struggle over the worthless and remote Siachen Glacier—is like a fight between two bald men over a comb. One hopes that India and Pakistan will address their differences across the negotiating table, where they can also seek out and pursue common interests, rather than have those differences assume the form of absurd military conflict.

I have never thought that the problems of South Asia were insuperable, nor that the role of outside powers, and especially that of the United States, is necessarily disruptive or divisive. Without accepting Indian claims to dominance (or a latter-day form of paramountcy) Indian ambitions could be accommodated in the framework of a regional system that both keeps the peace and allows a considerable degree of freedom for its smaller states—especially Pakistan—and that channels outsiders into useful regional roles.

Finally, the regional notion of "security" will have to be redefined and broadened. We must be willing to look beyond military calculations to address other dimensions of security. In the last analysis, security involves the preservation of deeply held, shared values, military power is merely a means to that end. India and Pakistan may have already compromised many such deeply held values (including some that they hold in common) by the very process of acquiring and deploying large armed forces to protect them. The United States, on the other hand, has so often pursued such a narrow definition of "security" when addressing the region—for all practical purposes, it has been one or another form of anti-communism—that it has neglected the threats to other important US regional interests, especially the survival of democracy in large, pluralist, and relatively poor states.

The Security of South Asia edited by Stephen Philip Cohen. Published by Vistaar Publications, New Delhi, and distributed by Sage Publications (India), New Delhi. Price Rs 195.

Because for a child
love alone is not enough...



Unit Trust's Children's Gift Growth Fund

Today, all that your little baby needs is lots and lots of love
But can love alone see him through life?

There are things your child will need when he grows up
There are things you want to give him.
Like a good education
Like helping him to set up a business.
And it all needs careful planning.

To help you with your plans, Unit Trust has a unique savings scheme — the Children's Gift Growth Fund
Under this Scheme, you can make an irrevocable gift to your child

Your investment grows with your child
If, for example, you invest Rs 1000 for your new-born baby, the amount grows to over Rs 12,000 in 21 years time

Or, alternatively, you can even invest a sum of money every year
For instance, Rs 1,101 invested at every birthday till a child is 15 years old, will make him a 'lakhpati' at 21 years

So when your child is ready to step out into the world, there'll be quite a sum waiting for him

A gift from you
To help your child make the most of tomorrow and all that life has to offer.
That's a gift of love isn't it?

Mail this coupon to any of the Unit Trust offices given below

Please send me the free CGGF brochure
Name _____
Address _____

Bombay 400 020, Post Bag 11410
Tel 2863767 6201995
Calcutta 700 001, Post Bag 60, Tel 209391
Madras 600 001, Post Bag 5063
Tel 587433 580938
New Delhi 110 002, Post Bag 5 Tel. 3318638

UNIT TRUST OF INDIA
(A Public Sector Financial Institution)

Sista's-UTI-637188

A woman of substance

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya's death leaves a void in the world of culture

"We hope you will become queen when India is free", wrote a group of Kenzai potters after Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya visited Japan in 1941. It was not a suggestion that would have pleased her, but in the eyes of many people Kamaladevi, who died on 29 October at Bombay's Breach Candy Hospital, was indeed the uncrowned queen of independent India. Hers was a rich, full life, spanning three-quarters of a century during one of the most eventful periods of Indian history. Freedom fighter, champion of women's rights, pioneer of women's education, high priestess of the performing arts, doyen of the country's most prestigious institutions of culture, and *grande dame* of Indian handicrafts and folk art, Kamaladevi was, to say the least, a legend in her lifetime.

Her life, as her biographer and friend Jamila Brijbhushan put it, is the "portrait of a rebel". Born on 3 April, 1903, the youngest of a Mangalore Saraswat family, Kamaladevi had an unusually enlightened lineage. Her grandmother, she recalled, was more fond of books than of cooking, and travelled incessantly by rail, by bus and even on foot, well into her old age. Kamaladevi learnt to appreciate her mother Girjabai's scorn for empty ritual early in life, and in an age when women had no voice, strove for equality rather than privileges. After an all too brief arranged marriage (her husband died soon after the wedding ceremony), Kamaladevi married Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, poet, musician and scion of an illustrious Bengali family from Hyderabad.

In 1920, Kamaladevi joined her husband and his brother Virendra in England, and gave up a seat in Newman College, Cambridge to join the Bedford College of Social Work instead. Her family was horrified at this decision to bypass a formal education, and the principal of Bedford College tried to dissuade this foreign woman in strange attire (Kamaladevi refused to shed her sari) from entering London's notorious East End. Her meeting with Annie Besant in India some years back had made a lasting impression on Kamaladevi, and finally she decided to return to India to participate in the burgeoning freedom movement there.

She chose to settle in Pune, the hotbed of Indian nationalism. Inspired by Gandhiji's speech at Chowpatty and having "felt the power of his appeal" reach her over a "sea of heads", she enrolled as a volunteer in the Belgaum Congress of 1924. She was happy to have joined in politics "with a broom and a basket" as it were.

Having realised the potential benefits of mobilising woman power, the Congress asked Kamaladevi to join the party in 1927, and to help mobilise a volunteer corps. This she did with considerable ease. In 1928, this spirited woman was elected to the All India Congress Committee. Despite Gandhi's orders that women should not participate in the Salt March, Kamaladevi became one of the first to defy the strict salt laws.

In 1946, Kamaladevi invited the wrath of Sardar Patel by refusing to take her place in the Constituent Assembly, though she was a member of the Congress Working Committee. "I have no interest in active politics," she said, once India had achieved freedom. Later, she refused cabinet posts, and even ambassadorships to Moscow and Cairo.

As founder-president of the All India Women's Conference, Kamaladevi did much to elevate the cause of equality for women. Her deep and abiding interest in theatre which she saw as a synthesis of all art, prompted her to set up the National School of Drama, amidst much opposition from people who believed that art could not be formally taught. "To her all performing arts, as well as handicrafts are part of a long tradition, deeply integrated into the daily life of the people," explained Alkazi, one of NSD's most illustrious directors. Her interest in culture was that of a visionary's, and the first thing she did after Partition was to establish a handloom and handicrafts board, a crafts museum and the Central Cottage Emporium to provide an impetus to Indian handicrafts, long before Pupul Jayakar and the Festivals of India came on the scene. "She made museums appear like bread and water, things without which one could not live," said her friend and associate, Devaki Jain.

Her last years saw her frail and in bed, but not confined to Delhi by any means. She continued to play an active role in the organisations that she had founded, and made scathing remarks on Indira Gandhi's regime, as she had against her close friend Nehru when he attacked the socialists after Independence. "Life seems to have been for me a series of hurdles," wrote Kamaladevi in her autobiography. "whatever I have achieved has been the hard and rugged way." But to everyone who knew her she seemed to have accomplished everything with miraculous ease.

Shiraz Sidhva/*New Delhi*

Doyen of the country's most prestigious institutions of culture, and *grande dame* of Indian handicrafts and folk art, Kamaladevi was, to say the least, a legend in her lifetime

Kamaladevi: culture's saviour



NIPPON DENRO ISPAT

A multi-product multi-dimensional company that has brought the finest technologies to India



Nippon Denro Ispat - A company dedicated to bring the finest technologies to India Pioneering the introduction of 100% import substitute products thereby saving substantial foreign exchange

The saga of Nippon Denro Ispat's pioneering effort began in 1985 when India's first plant to manufacture thin gauge Galvanised Steel Sheets in technical collaboration with **Nippon Denro Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Japan,** commenced operations

Nippon Denro Ispat has now collaborated with the renowned industrial giant – **Hitachi Ltd. of Japan** for installation of a sophisticated 6 Hi-Combination Reversible Cold Rolling Mill, which has already commenced operations ahead of schedule in October, 1988 The product range comprises of a wide variety of Cold Rolled Sheets including ultra thin gauge sheets for the first time in India. The operational and maintenance know-how is from **Taiyo Steel of Japan.** The modern computer controlled Continuous Pickling Line and Electrolytic Cleaning Line for the Cold Rolling Mill Complex incorporates technology from Nippon Denro of Japan

Yet another venture is the plant to manufacture PVC Colour Coated Steel Sheets for the first time in India, in collaboration with Nippon Denro of Japan and operational assistance from **Daito Kogyo of Japan.** This plant is expected to commence operations by the first quarter of 1989

Simultaneously the expansion and modernisation of the existing galvanizing line is being undertaken with technical know-how from **Stein-Heurtey of France** and **Ajax Magnethermic of U.K.** This would lower the investment cost per tonne of the Galvanizing plant and result in substantial savings in operational costs In addition, a new range of coated steel sheets with diverse applications would be introduced

Nippon Denro Ispat is indeed a successful synthesis of the best available advanced technologies to bring to the country innovative products conforming to international standards.

ISPAT

NIPPON DENRO ISPAT LIMITED

Park Plaza', 71 Park Street,
Calcutta 700 016

We're the first. We are the future.

PRESSMAN

Tourism at what cost?

Goa is all set to become another Sri Lanka, Thailand or Malaysia. Following the pattern in the three countries, the pearl of the Indian seas has been selected for boosting international five-star tourism. While all this is laudable—India will earn a considerable amount in foreign exchange—fears are being expressed that tourism in Goa will thrive at the cost of the region's ecological system.



The miles of white sand, beaches, quaint village dwellings and scrub vegetation will inevitably have to make way to meet the demands of the tourism industry. The white, clean beaches, not easily available in the rest of the world, are a prime source of attraction for international as well as domestic tourists. As many of Goa's ecology groups point out, what is being overlooked is the fact that Goan villagers, who understand the local ecosystem, have taken all measures to preserve its integrity. The government would do well to preserve Goa's ecological heritage while laying out the infrastructure and red carpet to the dollar-rich foreigners.

Brotherhood

Trekking is not for adventure alone. It could help in national integration too. Ten trekkers from various states in India recently undertook a five-day walk across the Himalayas as part of the Great Nehru Trail Adventure Programme. Their aim: to promote national integration through adventure. Being a part of the Jawaharlal Nehru centenary celebrations, the trek covered a distance of 93 km through seven districts of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. The programme was exciting not just for the trekkers alone. The village youth in all the seven districts were involved in providing boarding and lodging to the trekkers. While the Sunil Dutts and the Chandra Shekhars have hogged the limelight with their political *padyatras*, these unsung trekkers worked quietly to bring urban and rural India closer.

Drenched heroines

It is apparently not the Shabana Azmis or the Smita Patils who leave a mark on the Western audience by their excellent performances. It is the likes of Mandakini and Sonam who seem to create ripples. According



to *The Washington Post*, the "drenched Indian heroine" is perhaps the key to the functioning of the film industry in India!

The paper dismisses Indian films as a "formula that works a million times a month year after year", in which good will naturally triumph over evil and the hero will get his girl. Since there are no variations, significant changes are unlikely in the near future. It's time the largest producer of feature films in the world took notice of this report and changed its box-office success formula to earn greater credibility in film circles abroad.

No takers

The reputation of India's international carrier seems to be at stake. Thanks to the unprofessional attitude of its engineering staff, almost 80 trips had to be cancelled in less than a month's time recently. With an estimated loss of Rs 7 crores in this short period, the prospects of A-I do not seem to be very bright. The A-I engineers blame the management for poor planning and rescheduling of aircraft.

Be that as it may, it remains to be seen how A-I makes a success of its new winter schedule beginning this month, the ad campaign of its 'Snoozers' flights not withstanding.

Plugging in

It takes only a little bit of enterprise to make the best of the electronic era. Recently, residents of Khambalia town in Gujarat were stunned to see a local politician appear on their television sets, when they were actually waiting for a Hindi film. The leader, wearing a *dhoti* and a Gandhi cap, even delivered a 15-minute lecture—or rather a story of self-aggrandisement—and appealed to the viewers to vote for him in the municipality elections.



The candidate hit upon the idea of wooing the voters by making use of a dish antenna and a pre-recorded video cassette of his speech. Interestingly, this candidate emerged triumphant in the civic polls, while his rivals cursed themselves for not cashing in on the TV and video boom.

THIS INDIA

- GUWAHATI: A bull used to meandering into the Food Corporation godown and feasting on the wheat inside, recently sauntered over to the head clerk's desk and devoured some important papers. Among them was a bank draft of Rs 34,200 for 170 quintals of wheat—*The Times of India* (D.J. Patro, Bhubaneswar)

- RAIPUR: Vijay Soni, a resident of Bhilai who wanted his wife to go through an *agni pariksha*, is now behind bars. Apparently, Vijay had gone out of Bhilai for a week. After his return, when he heard reports that unknown persons had visited his wife, he doused her in kerosene. While his wife resisted his attempts to immolate her, bystanders informed the police—*The Telegraph* (P.C. Sinha, Calcutta)

- TIRUCHI: A temple priest was not allowed to perform his daily *puja* at the local temple because he had been abroad. After his return to the country from California, USA, the temple authorities reportedly objected to his resuming duty, as he had got 'polluted' by crossing the sea. The priest went to Rameswaram, had a holy dip in the sea, and has now taken up his duties—*Indian Express* (C.S. Loganathan, Coimbatore)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

Illustrations Debashis Deb

SUNDAY WEEK

BEGINNING 13 NOVEMBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) You have a very bright week ahead of you There will be progress on all fronts, provided you make use of every opportunity that comes your way Those in service will win the praise of seniors There are chances of windfall gains through a lottery A secret association will prove helpful
Good dates: 13, 16 and 19
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: South



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) This will be a week of good fortune A very good time to undertake risky ventures, so forge ahead with your plans There might be some changes in your personal life, you may have to change your place of residence Your good fortune may induce you to be extravagant, but check such a tendency
Good dates: 14, 15 and 16
Lucky numbers: 1, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North-east



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) A very good week financially You will get several opportunities to increase your income However, it would be better for you to consult your elders before taking any decisions Check extravagance Avoid quarrels with loved ones. Take care of your health Although the time is auspicious for marriage, you are advised to exercise caution.
Good dates: 15, 17 and 19
Lucky numbers: 4, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (21 June—20 July) This will be a good week provided you rely on your intuitions. An ideal time for making progress in your career, so forge ahead with your plans Watch out for sudden bursts of temper, which can ruin the good work that you have been putting in You might have to undertake a journey towards the end of the week Your work will keep you busy.
Good dates: 14, 16 and 18
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: South-west



LEO (21 July—20 August) A week for love and romance Those in love can start thinking about marriage Those yet to find the right person will not have to wait for long For those in service, a promotion is in the offing However, avoid arguments with your employer. Do not neglect your health. Avoid borrowing money
Good dates: 17, 18 and 19
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 6
Favourable direction: North-west



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) Your health might cause anxiety during the course of the week, so be careful The domestic front will remain peaceful. It will be a hectic week of socialising Friends and relatives will visit you regularly Avoid gambling and do not be impulsive Those in the judiciary will make steady progress
Good dates: 13, 14 and 17
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: East



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) This week relatives will prove particularly helpful They will assist you in your work and see that you succeed at the end of it all A word of caution much as a relative might help you, a newly acquired friendship might result in incalculable losses So, take the advice of elders instead of that of new friends. Do not take anything for granted
Good dates: 15, 16 and 17
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: West



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) This is a week of steady and occasionally rapid progress A promotion is not altogether impossible. Financially, this is a bright week too You are likely to gain either through property or insurance policies. A very good time for romance, but you will have to depend on your ability to be patient and understanding
Good dates: 14, 15 and 18
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: South



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) Courage, fortitude and faith will help you solve most of your problems this week. Those in service are likely to receive transfer orders However, wait for a letter before you take an important decision. This is a good week for romance So go right ahead if you have any marriage plans.
Good dates: 16, 17 and 18
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: South-east



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) This, unfortunately, is not a very good week for you If you are in service you must be extra cautious not to displease your employer. Businessmen are advised to pay attention to the minutest of details You would do well to seek the advice of friends and relatives Take care of your health
Good dates: 16, 18 and 19
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) This may turn out to be a fairly good week provided you take the necessary precautions Be on your guard, friends are out to deceive you Do not take any important decisions This is not a good week for romance either, so do not be in a hurry to develop a new friendship with someone of the opposite sex
Good dates: 14, 17 and 18
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 4
Favourable direction: West



PISCES (21 February—20 March) A pleasant week lies ahead of you A beautiful, new friendship will develop and may ultimately lead to romance. Young people will have a hectic time, there will be parties and invitations. The financial front does not appear to be particularly bright. Do not worry about legal matters. A letter at the end of the week will bring you good news.
Good dates: 13, 15 and 18
Lucky numbers: 2, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South

Star Partners: Taurus-Leo

The laziness and stubbornness of the Taurus man may put off the vibrant Leo woman Moreover, he can be inordinately jealous. The Leo woman should be patient with the Taurus man, and he, being basically loving, will soon mend his ways.

A face in the crowd

There were many delighted faces at the Congress(I)'s headquarters in Madras on 31 October. The state unit of the party had 'learnt' that Rajiv Gandhi had asked TNPCC(I) chief G.K. Moopanar to lead the Harijan march into Nathdwara Temple in Rajasthan, which took place the following day (1 November). The PCC(I) general secretary, Tindivanam Ramamurthy, even circulated a handout to the media boasting that this was not only a great honour for the state party president but also the entire state unit.

Come 1 November, and their spirits had dampened considerably. For it was the Rajasthan chief minister, Shiv Charan Mathur, who led the march, Moopanar relegated to being just another face in the crowd. And to make things worse, the *Indian Express* published a picture of the march in which Moopanar's face was encircled to show that he was way back in the crowd.

The embarrassment of it all wasn't the only thing that worried Moopanar and the state unit. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) has been sparing no effort lately to make out that the Congress(I) is opposed to the interests of the Harijans. With the elections in the state scheduled for January, it would have done the party's standing with the Harijans a world of good if Moopanar was accorded a place in the front.

Thackeray's tirade

Some words of wisdom from the Shiv Sena's acerbic supremo, Bal Thackeray. His target: chief minister Pawar. The occasion: *The Times of India*'s symposium to celebrate its 150 years. The subject for discussion: 'Bombay in the next 150 years'.

"Why should he (Pawar) have funny ideas about bringing money from abroad for setting up casinos? Let Ratan Khatri (the *matka* king) run the casinos. What is a government lottery after all but a form of gambling? Better, let some retired or current (*sic*) politician run the casinos because they know how to gamble."



Thackeray: vitriolic

Studied silence

Gujarat chief minister Amarsinh Chaudhary may have overcome attempts to have him replaced but he is still very sensitive about displeasing some of his detractors, particularly Union minister (and former CM of the state) Madhavsinh Solanki. How else does one explain his marked silence over an incident involving a woman journalist, once a minister in Solanki's Cabinet and still very close to him?

Recently, a group of angry women led by the 'lady' in question entered the house of the Gandhinagar correspondent of a Gujarati evening, Kishore Anjaria, beat him up and threatened his family. Apparently, what enraged the women was Anjaria's frequent dispatches alleging that a cooperative bank run by them was disbursing loans in an irregular fashion; Solanki's lady-friend is the chairperson of the bank. Despite this controversial episode being highlighted in the local newspapers, Chaudhary has shrugged off from commenting on it.

In focus

Guess which political figure in Bihar has been the focus of the maximum number of photographers on, on a particular occasion? The honour goes not to Shatrughan Sinha, but state human resources development minister, Nagendra Jha.

Recently, when Jha was



K.M. Kishen

Jha: centre of attention

inaugurating the National Workshop and Conference on Photography, organised by the India International Photographic Council, 400 cameras were simultaneously trained on him. As photographers from India and neighbouring countries vied to shoot the minister from an interesting angle, Jha basked in the attention.

At another function organised by his department, Jha sat on a raised platform handing out appointment letters to schoolteachers like a maharaja distributing *tagirs*. The teachers, who had been selected on the basis of merit, were forced to go to the dais when their names were called out and accept the letters with folded hands. Naturally, they felt insulted.■



Moopanar: image-conscious

D.E. NIZAMUDDIN

Liberalisation, *glasnost* and foul-up

Mani Shankar Aiyar is back in favour. One reason for the irrepressible foreign service officer's comeback is thought to be Aiyar's recently developed line in self-deprecating humour —apparently, humility (when coupled with wit) goes down well with the PM.

A current Aiyarism:

"In this government, it is all a question of language. If Monty (Montek Singh Ahluwalia) does something, it's called 'liberalisation'. If Gopi (G.K. Arora) does it, then it's called '*glasnost*'. And if I do it, then it's called a 'foul-up'."







Aiyar, Ahluwalia and Arora: a matter of language

Trouble-shooter

If there's one Congressman who can talk the language of the farmers, it is Rajesh Pilot, the Union minister of state for surface transport. Recently he played a key role in negotiating with Tikait and company to end their agitation on the lawns of the Boat Club. Despite the overtures, the messiah of the farmers refused to participate in discussions with the government. It was only after he met Pilot that there was some headway. In fact, Tikait was all praise for Pilot: *"Tuhi ek hai jo maari baat bolta hai, tu maara kaam karwa dega* (You only can get our work done)."



Jagdish Yadav

Pilot: appealing to the farmers

The Nehrus

Is it time for all the Nehrus to come together? Arun Nehru seems to think so. According to Fatty there have been endless overtures from Race Course Road. This, however, seems unlikely in the light of Rajiv's sneering reference to him in this week's cover story.

Much more likely is a reconciliation with Menaka, the lady who likes beards. While Rajiv avoids confirming that Akbar 'Dumpy' Ahmed, the other Mrs Gandhi's chief sidekick, has been negotiating with N.D. Tiwari for re-entry into the Congress, he does not deny it either.

The argument is as follows: the Congress is losing the women and the Muslims in UP. A touching reconciliation with Menaka will help win back the female voters while Dumpy will get the Muslim vote.

Trading places

Reports that high-flying socialite Uma Gajapathi Raju (wife of the Telugu Desam MP) is set to replace Mohammed Yunus as the Trade Fair Authority of India (TFAI) chief have sparked off endless discussions among its employees. All talk at the Authority, which Yunus has long run like a private empire, revolves around whether and when the comely lady—who has established her own equation with the Prime Minister—will take over.

However, some of them feel that the reports would have been more credible had they come sometime back. Ms Gajapathi Raju, who as director had her own office in TFAI's premises, was a very visible presence until a few days ago. More visible, they say, than the enormous sign outside her office declaring that cigarette smoking is injurious to health. But lately, the sign has disappeared and with it the socialite and her paraphernalia.

But given her standing with the Prime Minister, no one is prepared to rule out the possibility of her taking over. Says an employee: "Perhaps, she has moved out temporarily to move back into a bigger office." Only time and the Prime Minister can tell.

The new ONIDA.
Nothing can touch it...except the glance of envy.

When admiration takes on the colour of envy and hands tighten around objects that can be hurled, may be once again there's a new ONIDA on the horizon.

Yes, the new ONIDA is here with the bewitching 'Cube' look! Magic of technology captured within a fully moulded, exquisite cabinet, and an exotic black tube...Devilish good looks, with features slightly beyond the reach of the times.. Yes, it has everything poised at your fingertips waiting for action

But before you unleash it all, don't forget, Envy waits at the wings. So, heed this old word of wisdom Love thy neighbour, but guard thy ONIDA.

ONIDA. Neighbour's envy. Owner's pride.



Savings Account

(Saves on price, fuel, maintenance bills, spare part costs, service charges...)



bajaj auto ltd

You just can't beat a Bajaj

JYOTI BASU: A REPUTATION UNDER SIEGE

SUNDAY

THE THIRD MAN

A Credit Card from the First Private Sector Bank with International Tie-up



STATUS SYMBOL
BUYING POWER
SAFETY
CASH WITHDRAWALS FOR EMERGENCIES AT ANY BRANCH
ACCESS TO OVER 7,000 ESTABLISHMENTS INCLUDING LUXURY RESTAURANTS, HOTELS, AIRLINES ETC. IN INDIA & NEPAL.

COURTESY PRINCE'S RESTAURANT

Central Card from Vysya Bank
A Credit to your life style

THE VYSYA BANK LTD
Head Office: Avenue Road, Bangalore - 560 002
Admn. Office: 47, St. Marks Road, Bangalore - 560 001
Chairman: Ramesh Gelli

COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP/VB/025

CONTENTS

VOLUME 15□ISSUE 51□RS 6 00

SUNDAY

AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

20—26 NOVEMBER 1988

COVER STORY **25**

WHO KILLED INDIRA GANDHI?

Four years after the assassination, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) now feels that it has cracked the conspiracy

INDEPTH **14**

RAJIV AND THE HINDUJAS: JUST GOOD FRIENDS?

The Swedish prosecutor confirms that *The Hindu's* Bofors documents are genuine But Rajiv Gandhi seems to be shielding the Hindujas.

SPECIAL REPORT **34**

IS JYOTI BASU CORRUPT?



The West Bengal chief minister is suddenly swamped by a plethora of corruption charges.

PROFILE **70**

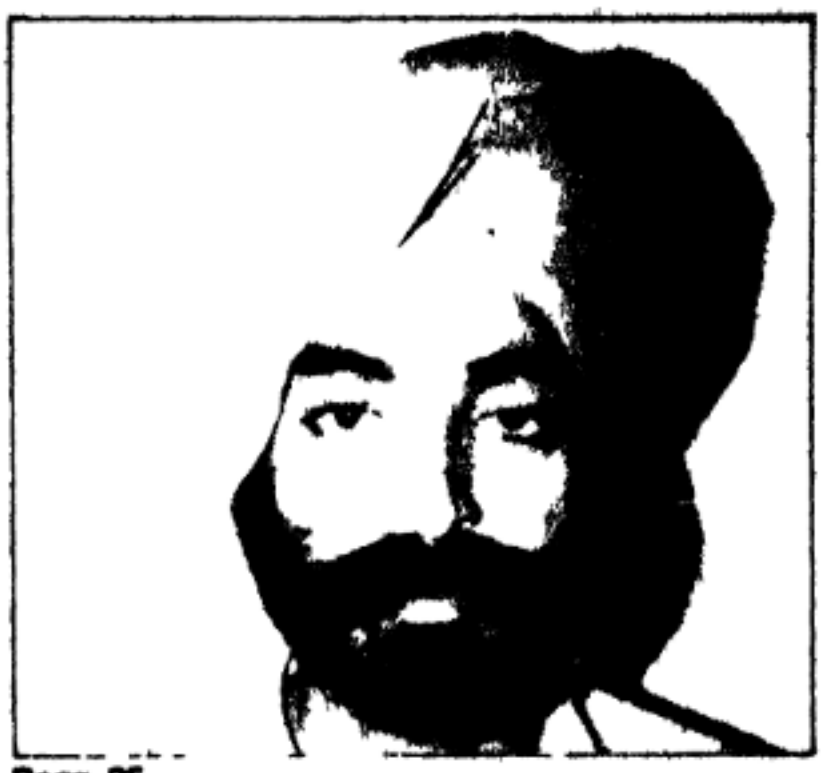
RETURN OF THE SUPERCOP

Mohan Katre, director, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), gets an extension—yes, again.

PERSONALITY **16**

BATTLING THE ODDS

Punjab Governor Siddharth Shankar Ray enjoys every minute of it.



Page 25



Page 74

COMMENT

Letters 4
Sight and Sound 11
Byline M.J. Akbar 6
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 10
Business Diary 68

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Random Notes 93
Delhi Diary 94

Cover transparency: Shashi Sahai

Printed and published by Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bijit Kumar Bhaya and typeset by Vir Sanghvi from 6/8 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001

Air exchange for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura ex-Guwahati. Kindly indicate above except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Barapeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Golaghat, North Lakhimpur and Silchar Postmaster, Assam 788004

PLACES **41**

CALCUTTA REVISITED



After staying away for 13 years, Raghubir Singh returns to photograph the city of joy

DESIGN **74**

TRENDY TRADITIONS

The Samode festival celebrates Anokhee's 20-year-old success story

MEDIA **72**

ON THE BOFORS TRAIL

Chitra Subramaniam, *The Hindu's* intrepid reporter, has delivered all the scoops

BOOK EXTRACT **80**

CLEAN SWEEP IGNATIUS

A short story by Jeffrey Archer about a finance minister who is determined to end corruption and unearth Swiss accounts

BUSINESS **64**

THE RUSH FOR READYMADES

A keen battle is in the offing in the men's garments market.

FOOD **87**

BREAK BREAD IN BOMBAY

Proeschel and Merani tell you where to eat in the city

Spotlight 76
Khaas Baat 78
Sundayweek 90
Odds and Trends 91



Evergreen Rekha

Rekha indeed deserved to be on the cover of your magazine because she is the only heroine in Indian cinema who has managed to remain at the top for almost two decades. Her success lies in the fact that she has proved her worth in both commercial films as well as in art cinema. In her interview the actress states that she is even willing to play Amitabh Bachchan's mother. Now, which other actress will have the courage to come up with such a bold statement?

The present breed of bare-all, dare-all heroines could well learn a lesson or two from her. It is time this brilliant actress begins to accept regional films in order to become the undisputed queen of Indian cinema.

Nanda Dulal Roy Chowdhury, Kharagpur (West Bengal)

■ She is undoubtedly a beautiful and talented actress. While none can question her greatness, what one fails to understand is your magazine's decision to devote so many pages to her. Surely there are any number of film magazines to do justice to Rekha?

S. Hussain, Dibrugarh (Assam)

■ Two decades in the film industry and still going strong. It is certainly no mean achievement. My congratulations to Rekha, the evergreen heroine. She has indeed come a long way from the overweight actress in *Saawan Bhaadon* to the svelte beauty in *Khoon Bhari Maang*. Three cheers to her!

Dhananjay Patro, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

■ Did your magazine run out of ideas for a cover story? I have been reading SUNDAY for the last six years and am dismayed to find that it is gradually turning into a film magazine. We are certainly not interested in knowing whether she has remained at the top for 15 years or is willing to play Amitabh Bachchan's mother. Please refrain from putting out such cover stories in future.

Kanti Guha, Kanchrapara (West Bengal)

■ Normally a heroine can never last for more than five to seven years at the top. But Gemini Ganesan's daughter has proved the industry pundits wrong by reigning supreme. Even Sridevi poses no challenge to Rekha's position. Her roles in *Khubsoorat, Ghar, Muqaddar Ka Sikandar, Umrao Jaan, Mr Natwarlal, Khoon Bhari Maang* and *Biwi Ho To Aisi* have proved again and again that she is an actress beyond compare. Of course, Amitabh Bachchan has been responsible for her transition from the irresponsible heroine of her early films to a national award winner. Her only failure has been in her domestic life.

G. Krishnamoorthy, Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

■ Actress Rekha is indeed a great survivor. She has slugged it out for more than 15 years in the dog-eat-dog world of the Bombay film industry. She is the only actress who can carry a film entirely on her own. The fact that films like *Khoon Bhari Maang* and *Biwi Ho To Aisi* have succeeded proves beyond doubt that Rekha is still the darling of millions in India. She has a unique blend of talent and beauty which is rare among today's actresses. Ravishing Rekha on the SUNDAY cover just knocked my breath away!

K. Chidanand Kumar, Bangalore (Karnataka)



Rekha: talent and glamour

Just a peasant

The article on Devi Lal was inspiring *(Portrait of a peasant as politician,* 18—24 September). Even in older western democracies a peasant has never been able to reach great heights in his political career.

Hard work, tenacity of purpose and a love for rural life stand out in the personality of Devi Lal. Despite his affluence and prosperity, he has devoted his time and energy for society's cause. In this way he has risen to the ranks of great leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru.

Dr N.P. Kalyanam, Madras (Tamil Nadu)



Devi Lal: megalomaniac

■ The Haryana chief minister is miffed because he is not regarded as a national leader, while some others who lost in the 1984 elections are considered as such. According to Devi Lal, Indira Gandhi should not be considered a national leader because she lost the 1977 elections. The word megalomania has been aptly used for the peasant leader. He seems to be helping Rajiv Gandhi by his frequent outbursts and false allegations. Alas, Devi Lal has remained a peasant.

B.N. Sinha, Ranchi (Bihar)

A sham democracy

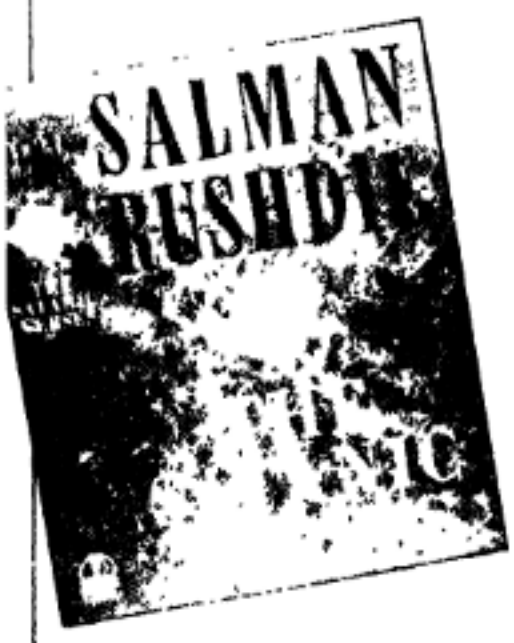
Apropos the report *(Verse or worse?* 16—22 October), the government by banning Salman Rushdie's book, has struck a blow to Indian democracy. The ban is yet another instance of the government's reluctance to confront the fundamentalists. The excuses that have been offered by the government in support of the ban are hardly credible. Syed Shahabuddin would have done well to read the book before criticising it. In most civilised countries, governments allow the erudites to go through such books before banning them. A writer should always be given a chance to defend his work. Only then should the fate of a book be decided.

The Indian government in this case has allowed only a section of the Indian com-

munity to express its views. What most people have failed to realise is that the work is a mere work of fiction and has nothing to do with Islam and its Prophet. By banning the book, the government has done great injustice to a writer of Rushdie's repute.

Mithu Mukherjee, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ Salman Rushdie appears to be a very naive writer. He has chosen a provocative theme for his latest novel. If at all Rushdie had wanted to make a dent in the Islamic religion, he has failed miserably. Our religion is scientific and rational. It has historical references and logical inferences to support it. Moreov-



er, Islam is not a religion of sheer beliefs, dogmas or rituals. It is a complete code of life. According to Rushdie, the Prophet could not distinguish between the devil and the angel. This inference is totally wrong. It was a novel experience for the Prophet who was a human being, and was very much awed when he met the angel for the first time. This natural reaction of the Prophet itself speaks volumes about the credibility of his prophethood. The author of *The Satanic Verses* has failed to understand this.

Waheed H. Hashmi, Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

■ The ban on Salman Rushdie's book seems to be working more against the government than on the author. Thanks to the government's inept handling of the situation, the book has aroused a greater interest among the people than it would otherwise have.

M.S. Kaushal, Ranchi (Bihar)

Lord save the people

It 4,000 people are killed every year in Bihar, and 500-odd women raped, it is only because our politicians are busy punishing honest bureaucrats, while allowing their followers to loot the poor *(Muzzling the bureaucracy*, 16- -22 October). Only Lord Krishna can now save the people.

Panna Lall Mundhra, Calcutta (West Bengal)

A puppet medium

The way Doordarshan handled the Olympic coverage left no doubt about the general feeling that it is nothing but a propaganda machine for the party at the Centre *(The medium is the mess*, 16- -22 October). While 120 countries telecast almost five hours of the world's biggest spectacle, we had to be content with an hour of badly put together highlights and live telecasts of the hockey matches, in which the Indian team was invariably humbled.

Lack of funds cannot be used as an excuse by the government, since Doordarshan is making crores. Each



Rajiv Gandhi: over-publicity

time Rajiv Gandhi goes abroad, lakhs of rupees in foreign exchange are spent in telecasting excerpts of his visits. Who is interested in seeing the PM and his wife sipping tea with the Gorbachevs or Rajiv Gandhi being hugged by Fidel Castro?

Amit Bagaria, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ Doordarshan has become a puppet in the hands of the Congress(I). The party is using the television as a pamphlet to spread its political message. As a result we are getting an overdose of ruling party affairs than hard news.

Rajib Das, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

Olympian disappointment

I fully endorse the views of the columnist *(Byline*, 9—15 October). India's dismal performance at the Seoul Olympics has once again disappointed sports lovers in our country. What was really shocking was the performance of P.T. Usha, our so-called sprint queen. The performance of Indians in every sport left much to be desired. What are the factors responsible for India's dismal performance? It is time our sports bodies and organisations sat up and took notice.

Shashank Shekhar, Meerut (Uttar Pradesh)

Not so lethal

The report made good reading *(To be or not to be*, 16—22 October). If the Jan Morcha is to pursue national unity and integration, then its front-ranking leaders must resolve their differences and a new party with a new name formed.



(From left) Arun Nehru, V.P. Singh and Arif Mohammad Khan

The Jan Morcha is no threat to the party at the Centre though the Opposition leaders appear to think so. What is needed is the inclusion of the BJP, the RSS and the Shiv Sena to make the party a strong one. V.P. Singh and Devi Lal cannot make a dent in the party at the Centre.

K.V. Rajagopalan, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

Misguiding the PM

The cover story was interesting *(The gang of four*, 9—15 October). The gang seems to have made Rajiv Gandhi take the country along the wrong path. None of the decisions of the group are based on the popular sentiments of the party

Arjun Parthasarathy, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager(U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta 700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

The charge of the lie brigade

November 4, Patna. This was obviously billed to be the great denouement. For more than a year now Vishwanath Pratap Singh has been building a national movement against one man, Rajiv Gandhi, on the premise that he is corrupt, that he has taken money in the Bofors deal. Just about everyone has investigated the charge: those hostile to the government, those friendly to the government, and of course even those within the government (not just ministers, or ex-ministers who joined the Joint Parliamentary Committee, but also agencies like the CBI). No one has found any proof that Rajiv Gandhi is personally involved, but that of course has not prevented V.P. Singh from making this specific charge from every platform. In fact, the corruption charge against Rajiv Gandhi has been both the essence and the sum total of V.P. Singh's politics. No one else is corrupt as far as he is concerned: not Arun Nehru, not N.T. Rama Rao, not Devi Lal—not even any other Congressman. He does not rail against the Congress party. In fact, for a long time his whole game was to take over the Congress, not to defeat it: it was only when he failed to persuade Congressmen to defect in large enough numbers to make him a credible leader that he wrapped up the Jan Morcha and decided to become an Opposition stalwart on the shoulders of Devi Lal (whose sons, incidentally, have converted Haryana into a pocket borough—but obviously Mr Singh cannot afford to find anything corrupt in Om Prakash Chauthala's misdeeds). V.P. Singh has nothing to offer in terms of policies or solutions to critical problems like Punjab. In fact, he has nothing to offer even on comparatively minor problems like the ban on the Salman Rushdie book. He prefers prevarication or silence when questioned about anything at press conferences. Witness his performance when asked about the ban on *The Satanic Verses*. He would not support the ban, and neither would he oppose it. But there is of course one subject on which a historic eloquence seeps out. Not corruption. Just Rajiv Gandhi's corruption. But even his closest comrades had begun to realise that after a while this random firing in the air begins to pall; you have to produce some specific evidence. Of course, V.P. Singh has been promising to do just this ever since he declared his war; we have all been waiting for the tomorrow when the dramatic proof will come pouring out exposing Rajiv Gandhi as another Marcos, and forcing him out of office to the thunderous cheers of a grateful nation. And thus to 4 November in Patna. There, at long last, the much-promised proof was to be told to the nation.

For once the government and Congress party reacted with force and speed. Four senior ministers issued a statement exposing the easily apparent inaccuracies in V. P. Singh's allegations

V.P. Singh has also become a bit of a dramatic actor. There was no shortage of histrionics while making his "revelation". He took out his pocket computer, and waving it, announced dramatically that all the evidence to nail Rajiv Gandhi was lying inside that computer. Then he made public his charge. Rajiv Gandhi, he declared, had a Swiss bank account of his own, a personal account. And he told the world the number of this account: PU 99921. This account, he said, was in the codename Lotus. See the connection? Rajiv means lotus in Sanskrit, which is why Rajiv Gandhi kept his secret account in that name. As much as Rs 8 crores had been paid from the Bofors kickbacks, he said, into this account of the Prime Minister of India.



Obviously, there can be no more serious a charge than this. If this is true, then Rajiv Gandhi has no business staying in office for a single minute more. V.P. Singh also realised the import of his allegation. He said that if he was proved wrong, he would take *sanyas*, and retire from politics.

Two days later, in Lucknow, V.P. Singh repeated the charge. But there were already some corrections in his version of the Prime Minister's alleged Swiss bank account number. Now the number was not PU 99921 but TU 99921. No matter. Maybe that famous personal pocket computer had betrayed him a teeny weeny bit. But now there was more to the charge that Rs 8 crores had been passed into this account. V.P. Singh produced three invoices to "prove" that money had been paid into this account number.

And that is when everyone began to take a close look at V.P. Singh's allegations.

And discovered them to be bogus.

First, the account number was not in the name of Lotus, but of Svenska, one of the three companies to which Bofors had paid money. Second, the invoices did not show the sum of Rs 8 crores being passed into the account, but a far less impressive Rs 12 lakhs. Third,these "startling" documents were pretty stale—they had been published by *The Hindu* in its last big story on the subject. There was absolutely nothing new in them. Fourth, no one had ever connected these documents to Rajiv Gandhi for the good reason that there was no connection, neither of evidence nor of logic. Finally, this company Svenska had entered into an agreement with Bofors for a commission on all arms contracts with India in October 1978. As readers will recall, Rajiv Gandhi was not the Prime Minister of India in October 1978. Morarji Desai was the Prime Minister, and the Janata was in power. So Svenska's account number in a Swiss bank could hardly be a front for Rajiv Gandhi.

For once the government and the Congress party reacted with force and speed. Four senior ministers of the Union government, P.V. Narasimha Rao, S.B. Chavan, K.C. Pant and P. Shiv Shankar, issued a statement exposing the easily apparent inaccuracies in V.P. Singh's allegations, and daring him to either prove his charge that the Prime Minister had a Swiss bank account or keep his promise and retire from politics. Everyone understood how high the stakes were. Obviously,if it could be proved that Rajiv Gandhi had a Swiss bank account, then he would have to resign. But they dared V.P. Singh to do just that. This challenge was followed by other senior ministers and Congress leaders: Buta Singh, Vasant Sathe, *et al.* Obviously they were encouraged by their knowledge that they had finally caught out V.P. Singh; that he was saying something so obviously false that there was no chance of him being able to meet this challenge. Till the moment of writing at least V.P. Singh has provided no answer. Naturally, he has been spouting steam, indulging in his livid prose. But there has been no answer to the challenge. But of course he will not say that he has no answer. He says he will provide more evidence. But it is all the more shocking that he is willing to withhold evidence if he has it. For, as far as I and, I believe, most other Indians are concerned, if anyone can prove that Rajiv Gandhi has a Swiss bank account,then Rajiv Gandhi should be asked to leave office forthwith, this very moment. This is betrayal. Why should V.P. Singh allow Rajiv Gandhi to stay even an extra moment in office if he has proof of the Prime Minister's Swiss bank account? What is he now so quiet about after all those dramatic accusations in Patna and Lucknow?

Or, is it that V.P. Singh was only dressing up a lie in histrionics and hoping to bluff the nation into believing him? On his part Rajiv Gandhi has said as categorically as can be said that he has no foreign bank account, in Switzerland or anywhere else. That is simple enough and straight enough as a reply. Will V.P. Singh now prove what he alleged so that we can know once and for all who is right. If he is right, Rajiv Gandhi must go. If V.P. Singh is wrong,he must leave us in peace and let us get on with the job of creating a better nation. V.P. Singh can of course see no other problems, but for the rest of us there are—including the most severe one of all, the demand for 'Khalistan'.

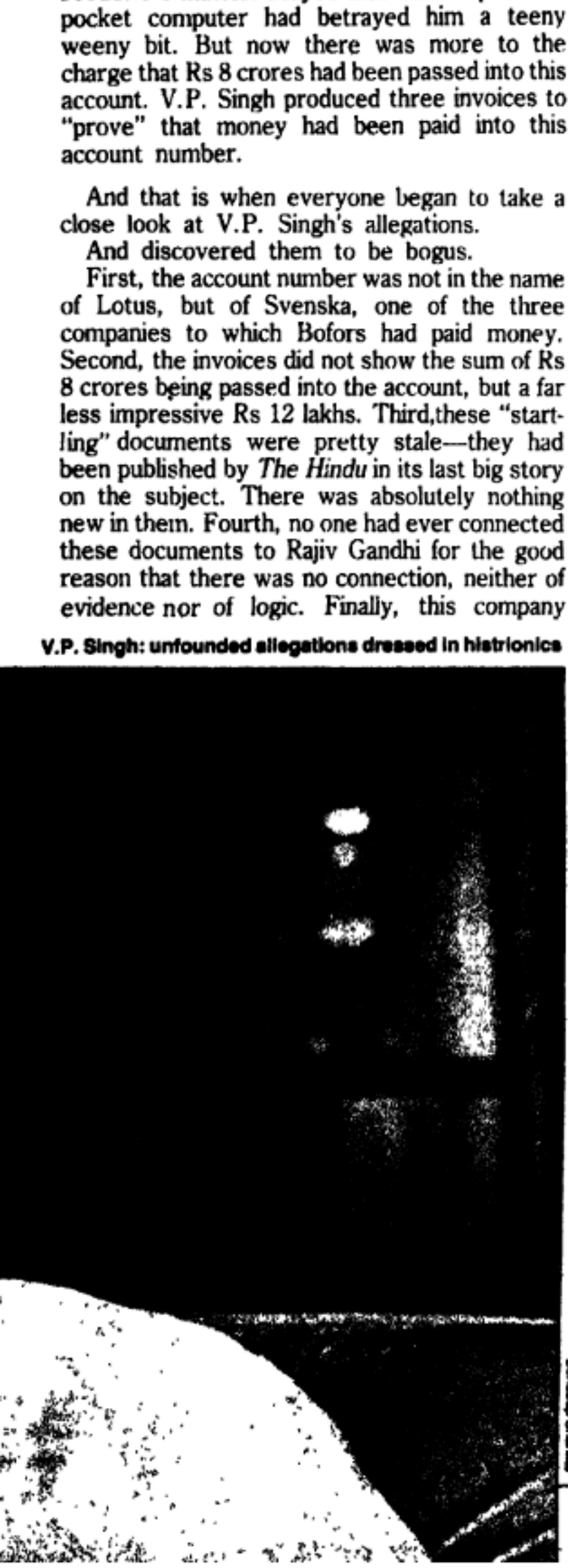
And there we find that V.P. Singh's dearest comrade in the crusade, Ram Jethmalani,has in a seminar in Punjab accepted that we must grant an "autonomous" 'Khalistan' within India. Elements like Ram Jethmalani will destroy India. But more on that next week. ◙

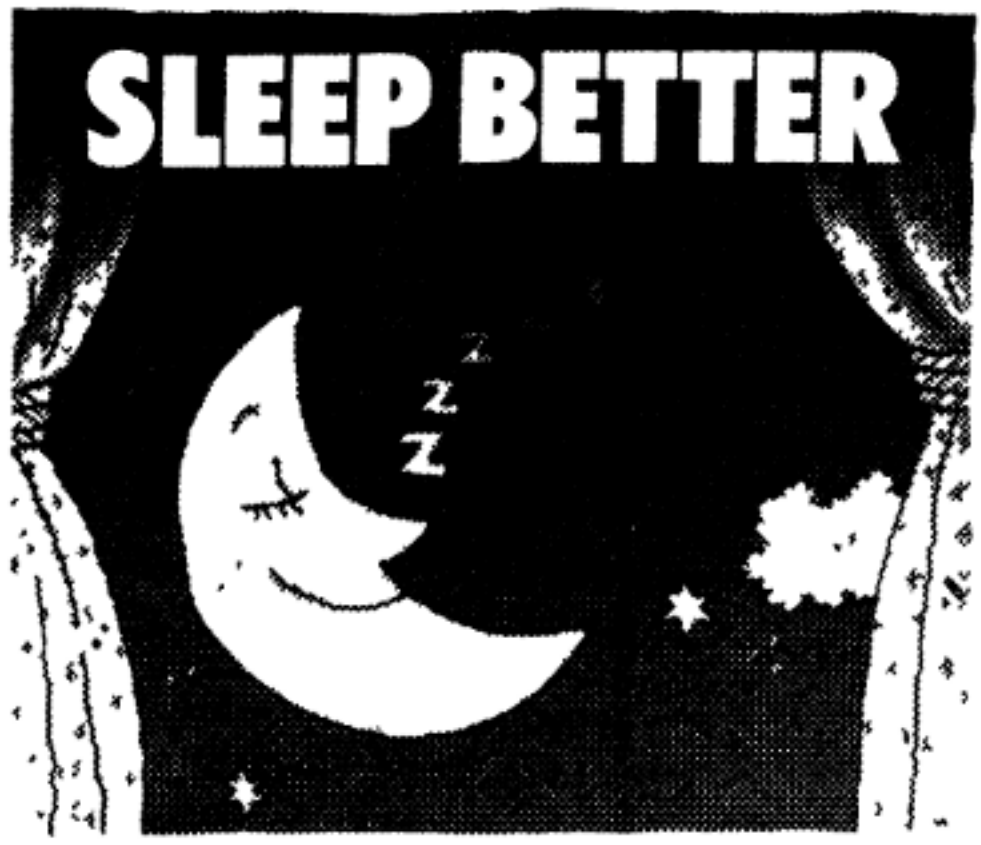
V.P. Singh has become a bit of a dramatic actor. There was no shortage of histrionics while making his "revelation" .He took out his personal computer, and waving it, announced dramatically that all the evidence to nail Rajiv Gandhi was lying inside

If V. P. Singh is right (that the Prime Minister is corrupt), Rajiv Gandhi must go. If V.P. Singh is wrong, then he must leave us in peace and let us get on with the job of creating a better nation. V. P. Singh can see no other problems, but for the rest of us there are—including the most severe one of all, the demand for 'Khalistan'

Sondeep Shankar

V.P. Singh: unfounded allegations dressed in histrionics







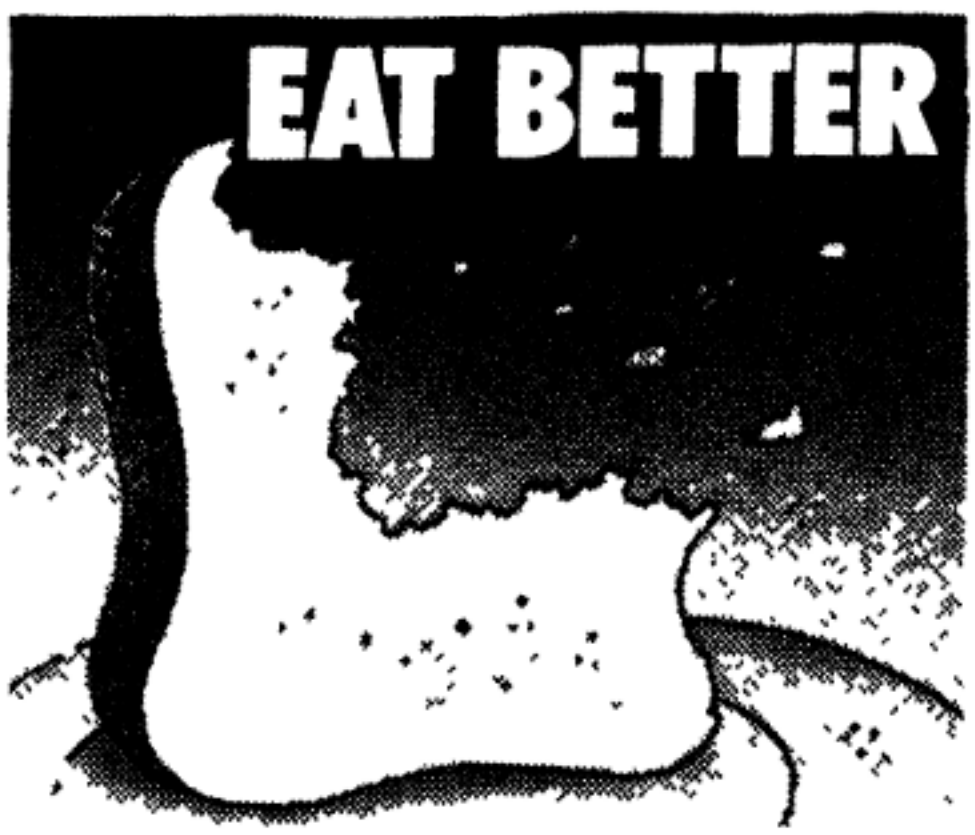


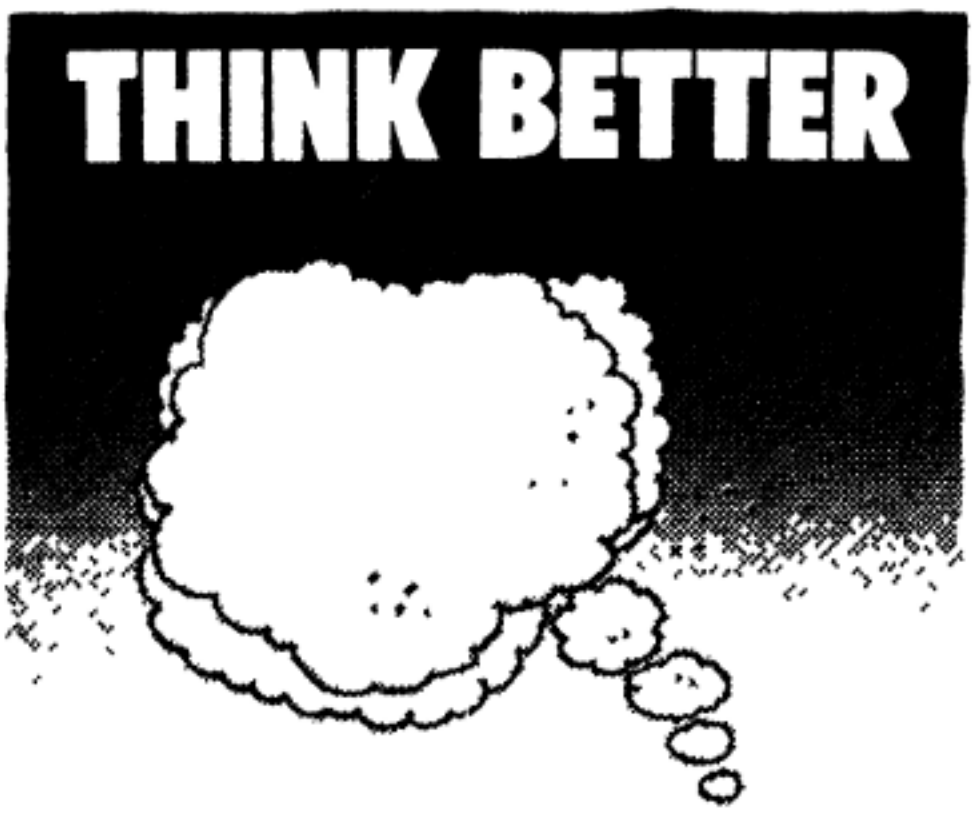




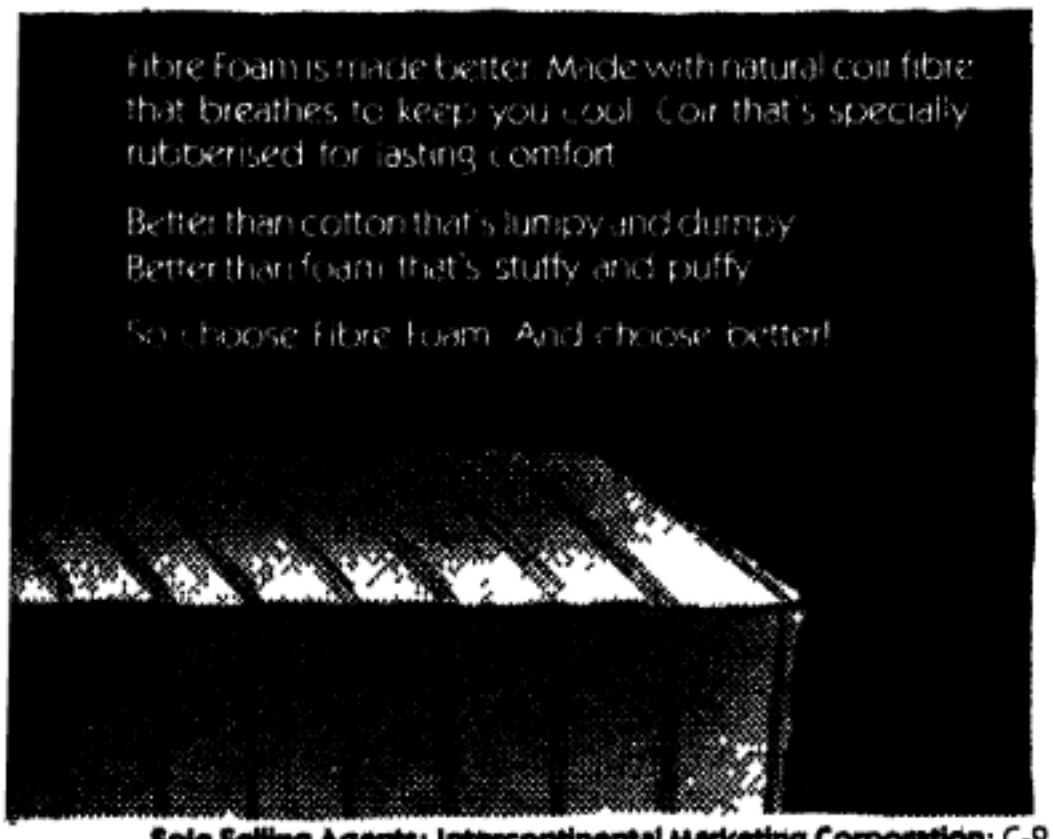
Fibre Foam Private Limited **Factories** Ballapatam **Cannanore** 670 010 Kerala Phone 78330 78408 **Nasik** 61963
Sales Offices. Bombay. 921966 9872025 **Calcutta** 207095 201871 **Guwahati** 27109 **Madras** 90837 21347 **New Delhi:** 352104 352422













Sole Selling Agents: Intercontinental Marketing Corporation: C-9 Community Centre, Safdarjung Development Area, **New Delhi** 110 016 Phone 651268 653908 **Ahmedabad:** 77749 76449 **Bangalore** 364049 363706 **Calicut:** 69715 **Cochin:** 359855 364119 **Madras:** 90837 255 78 **Secunderabad:** 77035 823539 **Trivandrum:** 65437 **Visakhapatnam:** 53468

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Thinking about India



I am trying to locate the earliest English accounts about India. I could not go further back than John Mandeville writing in 1360 AD. I have no idea from where he got his information when he wrote: "In India are many divers countries and it is called India because of a water that runs through the land which men call Inde. In that water men find eels thirty-foot long. And folk that dwell near that water are ill-coloured, yellow and green...Men of India are not of that condition that they pass not commonly out of their own land, for they dwell under a planet that is called Saturn."

I have several old maps of India which though remarkably close to the coastline as it exists, are quite undecipherable about the hinterland. Some have descriptions of the natives which are a mixture of fable and prejudice. One by Ortelius printed in 1570 has a river running from Lahore emptying into the Gulf of Cambay; another starting from somewhere near Siberia runs past Delhi to drain into the Arabian Sea near Goa. Neither the Ganga nor the Brahmaputra exist. But later maps by Bleauw and Speed (17th and 18th centuries) depict the Ganga as the country's most important feature dividing it into two parts, *Intra-Gangem* and *Extra-Gangem*. Till the 19th century there is little in the writings of the English which shows any intimate knowledge of Indian character. Thomas de Quincey writing in 1824 still regards us a composite people with only our addiction to superstition as a common factor: "The nations of India discover a domineering taste for fooleries of that class which run into the barbaresque. Their religion is made up of fooleries."

It is surprising that with a few exceptions like E.M. Forster and Edward Thompson most Englishmen had nothing kind to say about India or Indians. Americans on the other hand not being loaded with the White Man's burden found both enchanting. To wit Mark Twain's *More Tramps Abroad* published in 1897:

> "This is indeed India! The land of dreams and romance, of fabulous wealth and fabulous poverty, of splendour and rags, of palaces and hotels, of famine and pestilence, of genii and giants and Aladdin lamps, of tigers and elephants, the cobra and the jungle, the country of a hundred nations and a hundred tongues, of a thousand religions and two million gods, cradle of the human race, birthplace of human speech, mother of history, grandmother of legend, great-grandmother of tradition, whose yesterdays bear date with the mouldering antiquities of the rest the nations—of the one country under the sun that is endowed with an imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant, for lettered and ignorant, wise and fool, rich and poor, bond and free, the one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the globe combined."

I am not sure whether or not Winston Churchill did or did not like India. In his *My Early Life* (1930) he leaves us with the cryptic remark: "One voyage to India is enough: the others are repletion."

It is surprising that with a few exceptions most Englishmen had nothing kind to say about India or Indians. Americans on the other hand not being loaded with the White Man's burden found both enchanting

The princely ways of yore



MISALLIANCE

Chandra Shekhar was trying to impress on H.N. Bahuguna the need to join hands to defeat the Congress. The argument got very heated and Bahuguna exploded: "Impossible! it is like trying to mate a horse with donkey."

"Why are you making me out to be a horse?" asked Chandra Shekhar.

(Contributed by Shashank Shekhar, Meerut)

HEAD IN THE UNITED STATES

An American Red Indian went into a bar in Chicago and ordered himself a drink. A white American sitting next to him on the stool asked him, "And how do you like our city?"

"Fine, replied the Red Indian. "And how do you like our country?"



R.K. Laxman *The Times of India*

Mahatma Gandhi used the truth as a political weapon; the Raja of Manda (V.P. Singh) is using half-truths as a political bludgeon.

K.N. SINGH, *AICC(I) general secretary*

He (Rajiv Gandhi) is playing hide and seek with the people.

V.P. SINGH, *Jan Morcha leader*

As a crusader for clean politics, he (V.P. Singh) must give a full account of his own glass house before he throws stones at others.

K.K. TEWARI, *minister of state for external affairs*

When a friendly neighbour asks for help you cannot sit back and watch them being slaughtered.

RAJIV GANDHI, *on India's involvement in the Maldives*

It is the Indian army that saved the day.

An American tourist in Male

When I listened to Mr Pitroda with all his talk of pushing buttons, I thought I was already in the 21st century. It was only later when I went to the toilet that I realized we must be in the 19th century.

BAL THACKERAY, *Shiv Sena leader*

I dare them to debate the issue with me on television. Let them have their say, we will have ours.

BENAZIR BHUTTO, *speaking at a rally in Rawalpindi, on Pakistan's controversial nuclear programme*

Who decides on the ban? What are the qualifications of that person? What criteria does he apply?

SOLI SORABJEE, *eminent jurist, on the manner in which Salman Rushdie's Satanic Verses was banned*

I will take action after receiving the opinion I sought for. If any person is found to be corrupt, he will not be spared.

PRAFULLA MAHANTA, *Assam chief minister, on why no action was being taken against senior forestry officials charged with embezzlement*

I did not know that apartheid or something like that exists. I never mix in politics because I don't know.

MOTHER TERESA, *speaking in Khayelitsha, South Africa, on the occasion of founding a home for the destitute*

Yes, yes, of course I'm retiring. But, and this is a strong but, if I am ever offered an English language film, I'll definitely do it... I've been telling my financiers, the Hindujas, let's take on the world. But they aren't willing to take the plunge, not yet.

MANMOHAN DESAI *on his retirement*



Millions of vehicle owners all over the country get off to a flying start Everyday With MICO.

MICO spark plugs incorporate the latest international technology from Bosch, West Germany – pioneers and leaders in spark plug technology

An excellent example of this is the MICO Super – India s first bi-metal electrode spark plug

MICO spark plugs are available in every part of the country

So when you fit a spark plug, stick to proven quality Buy MICO And ride on confidently!

MICO

LICENCE BOSCH

MICO makes a matching spark plug for *every* Indian vehicle.

The Raja's fast one

The Opposition botches another opportunity on Bofors

There's now little doubt that the government is participating in a cover-up of the Bofors affair. Sadly, it is getting away with this because the Opposition is resorting to lies when the truth would serve its purpose better.

The latest instance of this was the allegation levelled by Vishwanath Pratap Singh in Patna last week that he had proof of Rajiv Gandhi's Swiss bank account. Moreover, declared the Raja, he would even reveal the account number. It was, he said, 99921 in the Swiss Bank Corporation, Geneva. Should these charges turn out to be false, he announced, he would never again visit Patna.

Later, Singh's supporters backed up this sensational allegation by releasing documents that were said to support it. Unfortunately, once the documents were made available, it became clear that the Raja's disclosure was not so sensational, after all. All he had done was dig up some old documents relating to the Bofors deal that had appeared in *The Hindu* and passed them off as his own revelations.



Once the documents were made available, it became clear that the Raja's disclosure was not so sensational. All he had done was recycle some old documents relating to the Bofors deal that had appeared in *The Hindu*

The documents themselves were fairly damaging to the government's original stand on Bofors, because they proved that the company had continued to pay commissions to Pitco and Svenska much after they had claimed that all payments had stopped. But they did not link Rajiv to the deal. And certainly, there was no evidence at all that either the Svenska or Pitco account was his.

Nevertheless, the Raja's fulminations set off another round of name-calling. Madhu Dandavate and K.P. Unnikrishnan issued statements demanding that Rajiv reply to the charges. Ajit Singh called for his resignation. And Ram Vilas Paswan, general secretary of the National Front, said that V.P. Singh's 'revelations' conclusively proved Rajiv's guilt.

The Congress, pleased perhaps that the Raja had made charges that were so easy to refute, launched a two-pronged defence. At a more respectable level, four ministers—Buta Singh, K.C. Pant, S.B. Chavan and P. Chidambaram—issued a press statement, pointing out that all the Raja had done was recycle *The Hindu* documents and add his own brand of irresponsibility to them. At a less respectable level, the K.K. Tewaris and Kalpnath Rais were sent to put the boot in. Tewari asked Singh to come clean on his own assets, "which on a conservative estimate will cross the Rs 100-crore mark". And Rai accused him of destabilising a democratically-elected government. Somewhat surprisingly, even Vasant Sathe joined the hatchetmen; alleging that Singh's relatives had millions in Swiss banks.

By the end of the week, when Rajiv had laughingly dismissed the Raja's allegations in Bangalore, V.P. Singh's supporters moved to change the focus of charges from Rajiv's own bank accounts to the government's evasions on Bofors. The *Indian Express* front-paged an article by Arun Shourie, pointing out that Rajiv had kept shifting his stand on middlemen, and the Raja himself suddenly tried a new tack by claiming that he was only repeating *The Hindu's* charges. "I want to express my gratitude to *The Hindu* group of newspapers in this matter," he said in a written statement.

By then, it was probably too late. The entire subject had been obscured by the Raja's ill-founded hysteria and Congress(I) MPs had been able to cloud the issue with equally irresponsible counter-allegations.

Why had Singh levelled such an absurd charge? One view—favoured by Congressmen—is that he wanted to create a stir during the Parliament session and an old set of documents served his purpose equally well. A less cynical explanation is that the Raja really doesn't understand Bofors.

In any event, it was another botched opportunity.

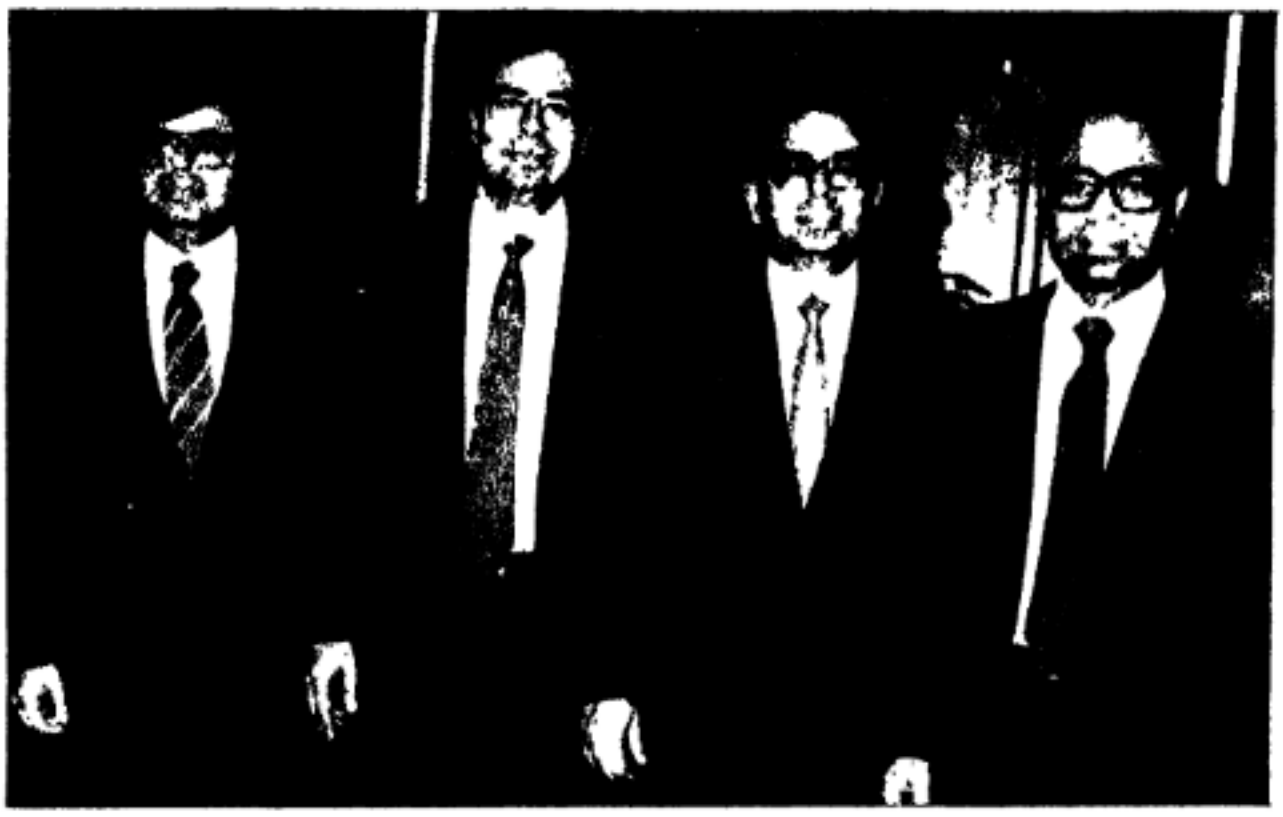
Even the one blunder made by Rajiv while responding to the Raja's rhetoric was buried in the charges and counter-charges. Asked about the Svenska payments by newsmen, he retorted: "We've never denied that commissions were paid." In fact, the government has spent 18 months denying exactly that—it prefers the 'winding-up charges' story—and the next day, official spokesmen rushed around claiming the Prime Minister had been misquoted. As for V.P. Singh's fabrications: no explanations were forthcoming.

Vir Sanghvi/New Delhi

Shifting stands and all round confusion

The Swedish prosecutor confirms that The Hindu's *documents are genuine. But will the government act?*

It should have been the grand denouement. At the end of last month, the Swedish public prosecutor replied to the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) request for authentication of the *The Hindu* documents. The papers, he telexed CBI director Mohan Katre, matched those he had seized from Bofors himself. Therefore, they were genuine.



The Hinduja brothers: who did they split the commission with?

The Hindu documents had proved the following:

- Bofors had lied about winding-up charges: commissions were paid.
- Win Chadha was involved with Svenska which received Rs 36 crores in a Swiss bank account.
- The Hindujas were the owners of Pitco and had been Bofors' agents since 1979.

The Swedish prosecutor's message should therefore have marked the launch of a grand clean-up operation in which Bofors was asked to pay back the Rs 64 crores, Chadha was prosecuted and the Hindujas investigated.

In fact, nothing happened.

Instead, a few days after the prosecutor had confirmed that the documents were genuine, Rajiv Gandhi made the following points to SUNDAY:

- The government had "not got enough evidence to actually start a case against...Win Chadha, Anatronics".
- That he felt that India had no option but to go along with Bofors because of cost and security considerations.
- When pressed, he admitted: "There's the option of asking for the money back. That's still open." But he did not elaborate, and there's no evidence that India has ever told Bofors that it is considering this course.
- That the Hinduja documents "are said by the Swedish bank to have some defects on them...there are some doubts about their authenticity".

None of this, unfortunately, suggests that any kind of crackdown is imminent.

The Swedish prosecutor's message should serve to put the seal on the controversy over *The Hindu* documents. When the first set of papers—establishing the Hinduja link—was printed on the first day of the Congress session in Madras, the government chose to ignore it. Rajiv told reporters that as the Hindujas did not hold Indian passports, there was nothing the authorities could do.

At the time, the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) investigating Bofors was still in session and should have considered *The Hindu's* evidence. Instead, the JPC pretended that it did not exist. B. Shankaranand, the committee's chairman, told the press: "Frankly speaking, I've not had the time to read *The Hindu*. I've been very busy."

For their part, the Hindujas said the documents were forgeries, a line that was echoed by the government's official spokesmen. Then, after *The Hindu* printed more documents, the defence was dropped.

The Hindu has published three sets of documents linking the Hindujas to Bofors, and more specifically to Pitco (later called Moresco/Moineao)—one of the three front companies that received the commissions.

- The first set of documents are two remittance advices from Bofors addressed to Pitco c/o Sangam Ltd, New Zealand House, Haymarket, London SW1 and to Pitco, c/o G.P. Hinduja. The Hindujas claimed these were forgeries on the grounds that banks usually remitted funds to other banks, not to office addresses. (They also provided proof that Pitco was not owned by Sangam—which, of course, nobody had suggested: all that was claimed was that it used Sangam as a postal address.)
- The second document is a print-out from Bofors' computer, listing agents and their addresses. This lists Pitco's address as c/o Sangam. The Hindujas have not questioned its authenticity publicly.
- The third document is a letter from G.P. Hinduja to Martin Ardbo and Hans Ekblom of Bofors, thanking them for sending him flowers on his birthday. This establishes that—contrary to the family's earlier denials—the Hindujas knew the top management of Bofors.
- Then there is Ardbo's diary, seized by

the Swedish police and not published by anyone but portions of which have been leaked to the press. This makes references to GPH who keeps advising him on strategy regarding the Indian deal. GPH is clearly G.P. Hinduja and even Ram Jethmalani, a Hinduja friend of long-standing, concedes that the diary is genuine.

Assuming for a moment that Rajiv is right about the Swedish bank's objections to the remittance advices (in fact, the Swedish bank has raised no such objections in writing), that still leaves the matter of the print-out, which even the Swedish prosecutor says is genuine.

Unfortunately, the Government of India either does not accept this reasoning or is unwilling to proceed further.

There are other problems with the statements made about Bofors by Rajiv Gandhi in last week's SUNDAY interview. Rajiv claimed that if the money "was paid for some genuine work that was done for Bofors, then we cannot question it". When SUNDAY pointed out that there could be no 'genuine work' in relation to the Indian contract because the government's agreement with Bofors categorically excluded all agents regardless of how 'genuine' their services might be, he replied that he meant "genuine work gathering information against the French weapon, for example. That is industrial espionage. You can't grudge them that."

This is an extraordinary statement as even Bofors does not advance the 'genuine work/industrial espionage' hypothesis. According to the arms giant, it entered into three contracts with agents and when the Indian government asked for agents to be excluded, it terminated them. The payments, it says, were "winding-up charges" in lieu of commissions.

The debate is over the issue of these 'winding-up charges'. *The Hindu* documents suggest that the entire winding-up charges theory is rubbish—that Bofors lied to the government and paid commissions anyway.

For the Prime Minister of India to now suggest that these were legitimate payments "for genuine work" which "we can't grudge them" is remarkable. If Rajiv means what he says, then this is an entirely new justification for pay-offs.

Even Bofors, in its statements to the press and its testimony to the JPC has never ever taken the line that there was 'genuine work' for which payments could legitimately have been made despite the government's refusal to allow agents.

Shortly after the scandal broke, Rajiv told newsmen, in the course of a casual conversation, that Bofors had offered to tell him the names of the agents orally but that he had refused. This was a remarkable revelation because it meant that India had missed a perfect opportunity to learn the truth. Shortly afterwards, the government's media managers went around telling newsmen—off the record—that Rajiv had got it wrong and that no such offer was made. And by the time the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) investigating the deal got to work, no mention was made of this offer.

Now, in his SUNDAY interview, Rajiv seems to confirm that there was some suggestion of an oral disclosure:

> "What happened was that a gentleman from Bofors had come here who was not a top-level official. And he had said that he does not have the authority to say more than what he has said. This was long before they came and deposed before the JPC and gave us everything that they gave. And there was some impression that he might say something if he was allowed to meet at a political level, which meant either Arun (Singh) or me. And we had to take a decision whether he would or would not say something. Because if he did meet and did not say anything, then it could be interpreted to mean that we told him to shut up. So the danger of that was very high. So we took a decision that we would not deal with that level. When we really wanted the information, we put the pressure at the top level. The man went back."

In effect, this amounts to saying that Bofors sent a man over who would not reveal the names of the agents to civil servants but might well have divulged them to Arun Singh. But that Rajiv vetoed the idea of such a meeting on the strange grounds that had no names been revealed, "it could be interpreted to mean that we told him to shut up".

Instead, the government chose to operate through the official channels: a decision that ensured that Bofors would only give evasive or formal replies.

In retrospect, this may have been a major blunder.

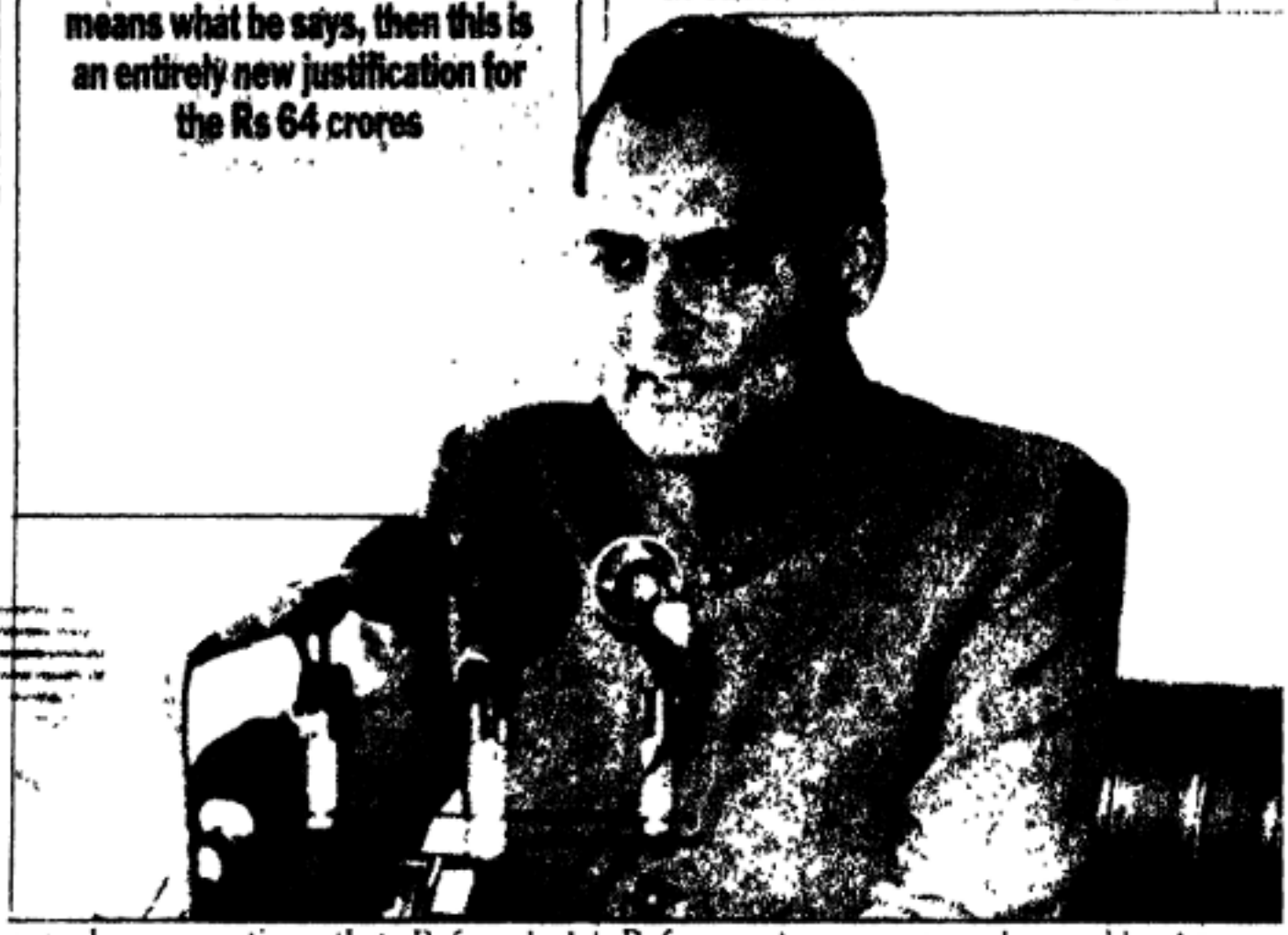
All of this leads inexorably to two conclusions. One, that the government does not have a clear strategy on how to handle Bofors. And two, that *The Hindu* revelations will not be followed up.

Now that the Swedish prosecutor has confirmed the authenticity of *The Hindu* documents, there can be no doubt that the Hindujas received part of the Bofors kickbacks. What remains to be established is whether they kept the money for themselves or split it with those in a position of power.

Unfortunately, unless the Government of India shows more enthusiasm for finding the truth, the country will never know what happened.

Vir Sanghvi

For the Prime Minister of India to now suggest that these were legitimate payments "for genuine work" which "we can't grudge them" is remarkable. If Rajiv means what he says, then this is an entirely new justification for the Rs 64 crores



Battling the odds

Punjab Governor S.S. Ray enjoys every minute of it

"I am on the hottest seat in the country!" exclaims the 68-year-old Governor of Punjab, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, comfortably ensconced in the big chair normally occupied by the state's chief minister. Neither the office of the Punjab Governor nor the chief minister's vacant room in this terrorist-ridden, fractious state constitutes the most inspiring of environments. But Ray, like the legendary *fakirs* of yore, has the odd capacity to be relaxed in the most discomfiting of situations. Otherwise he would not grin while proudly declaring: "My life is on the line."

That is Ray all over. Even in his September years, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, barrister, ex-chief minister and one-time Naxalite killer, has not wearied of playing the good guy out to get the bad guys. His enthusiasm is at its highest when the game is in real earnest. He has the capacity to smile while issuing grim orders. As the longest-serving Punjab Governor in recent times, the opportunities to exercise his abilities have been vast and varied. And he is enjoying every moment of it.

From all indications, Ray is poised to set a record of sorts in Punjab. He has already completed more than two and a half years in his present position and looks as if he will continue for many more months. His enemies, and there are quite a few, had of late inspired rumours about him falling into disfavour. It was alleged that he had helped draft the controversial Defamation Bill and that he was unnecessarily meddling in Punjab politics. When Ray went on a month's leave from the end of October this year, there was talk in Delhi that he had been asked to go on leave prior to his formal exit from Punjab.

Speculation about Ray's exit intensified following the swearing-in of the Himachal Pradesh Governor, Vice Admiral R.K.S. Gandhi, as the interim Punjab Governor in Ray's absence. There were further reports of Ray suddenly exhibiting a renewed interest in West Bengal Congress(I) affairs.

Just when most West Bengal Congress(I) leaders were nervously anticipating Ray's transfer back to their state, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi scotched all rumours by categorically stating: "He is very clearly the Governor and will remain so." The Prime Minister's pronouncement on 2 November in Calcutta, while reassuring state Congressmen, dismayed a small group of central Cabinet ministers who are bitterly opposed to Ray, his flamboyance and continued access to Rajiv Gandhi. Union home minister, Buta Singh, for instance, is known to dislike Ray and has been trying to dislodge him from Chandigarh. Ray, on his part, has successfully fended Buta Singh's attempts to interfere in Punjab affairs and has proved to be a survivor, outmanoeuvring rivals while maintaining his irrepressible grin.

If Ray is pulled out of Punjab, it will be with a promotion, perhaps even to the Union Council of Ministers. Palace gossip has it that Ray is a favourite of the Prime Minister. In the two and a half years he has been Governor, Ray has been able to impress Rajiv Gandhi with his obvious administrative skills, his bluntness of purpose and a certain old world gentlemanly charm. The former Bengal chief minister, experienced as he is in sensing palace plots and jealousies, has also been shrewd enough to prove that he calls the shots in his domain. When the Prime Minister agreed to tour Punjab in September this year, Ray made sure the whole affair was his exclusive show. Not only did he organise every little detail of the trip but also

On April Fool's Day, the Centre announced that Ray would move into the Punjab Governor's office. The announcement was not a joke, surprising though it may have been to Congressmen. Ever since, Ray has struggled to vindicate that decision



stuck to Rajiv Gandhi's side throughout, even though it entailed dragging around his 68-year-old frame to keep pace with his youthful boss.

The Prime Minister's Punjab tour might not have been a great success according to the media, but Ray, with his barrister's ability to present the gloomiest case positively, seems to have convinced Rajiv Gandhi that it was a smasher. "I frankly did not expect such a lot of people at Rajiv Gandhi's meetings," he says. "But people came and listened to him."

This, Ray believes, is evidence of a change in the Punjab situation. "The people were not bowled over by Rajiv Gandhi's visit but neither were they averse to it," he argues. Ray has been claiming for some months now that Punjab is undergoing a gradual, qualitative transformation. "The mood is different today," he insists. "In 1986, when I first tried to enter the Harmandir Sahib, I was literally hounded out. Now I can travel freely all over the state."

In a more modest vein, Ray admits that the credit for the changes in Punjab is not entirely the administration's. "Terrorists helped us enormously by making the people disgusted with



Ray (left) with Rajiv Gandhi:
Impressing the PM

them." Apparently, as much as 75 to 80 per cent of the people being killed in Punjab are Sikhs. The state administration feels that the ordinary Sikh is becoming indifferent to the idea of Khalistan and that only a handful of terrorists today believe that they are fighting for the 'Panth'.

A corollary of this argument is that both the terrorists and the Akalis are losing touch with popular sentiment. "This was proved during Operation Black Thunder," Ray points out. "Everybody, most of all the Akalis, declared that another attempt to storm the Golden Temple would spark off a popular uprising. I was confident that nobody would protest against the arrest of terrorists within the temple." Ray's confidence was bolstered by reports of killings of innocent women and children, and evidence of increased terrorists' demands for money from ordinary Sikhs. The terrorists within the Temple, on the other hand, were convinced that people would come to their support if the security forces tried to flush them out, and instead of making a run for it, stayed put.

The government, on its part, planned Black Thunder scrupulously. The Prime Minister personally oversaw the operation and held at least eight meetings to work out the minutest of details. The army was kept out and the actual job of clearing out the Temple was handled by armed policemen. The operation was 'clean' and highly successful. There was not a murmur of popular protest when Prakash Singh Badal, S.S. Barnala, Baba Joginder Singh and other Akali leaders were arrested for threatening to march to Amritsar from Chandigarh.

Badal's further attempts to arouse the Sikh masses by issuing an inflammatory letter from inside his prison also had no effect. The letter, smuggled out of jail, declared: "Having failed on all fronts, the government chose to tyrannise the Sikhs so that they may have electoral gains in the country. The recent pre-conditional threat from the government to the SGPC is a challenge to the self-respect, dignity and the basic concepts of Sikh life and also their right to administer their own religious affairs...Any attempt by the government to devalue the SGPC in any manner would be resisted by the Sikhs with all their might and they will not be found wanting in making sacrifices for the preservation of this institution..."

As it turned out, Badal remained in jail and the Sikhs showed not the slightest inclination to make any sacrifices for the arrested terrorists. And as far as Ray was concerned, he had proved his point. To further highlight his achievements, the Punjab Governor recently prepared a paper showing how much more effective the administration had been during President's Rule. During the period of Barnala's rule (October 1985 to May 1987), 136 terrorists had been killed and 2,784 arrested; in contrast, during Ray's rule (May 1987 to end-August 1988), 508 terrorists were killed and 5,199 arrested.

When it was pointed out that the number of innocent persons killed had shot up to an alarming 2,133 during President's Rule compared to 816 during Barnala's tenure, Ray came up with an ingenious explanation. "Blaming murders on terrorists is a lazy course and requires no investigation by the police," explains Ray, "and I refuse to believe that ordinary murders have stopped." He says that the police, after further investigating each killing in detail, now realise that the majority of them are the result of personal feuds, land disputes, inter-group rivalries, money matters and sex crimes. This explanation might sound a little thin in the face of daily evidence of terrorists gunning down innocent people, but Ray has obviously got away with it.



Punjab Governor
S.S. Ray: a survivor

Rajesh Kumar

However specious some of his arguments might sound, Ray's record in Punjab is considered impressive—his slight successes the result of a lot of hard work. And many, including the Congress(I) leadership, believe that the Punjab problem cannot be solved by dramatic moves and that what is required is a capacity to chip away. Ray has been doing so by constantly touring the state, meeting ordinary people and attending to myriad administrative details. No wonder then that he has survived the longest in the Punjab Raj Bhavan

Ever since Chenna Reddy resigned from the Punjab governorship in early 1983, Governors have been moving in and out of Chandigarh. Reddy's successor, A P Sharma, survived for just about eight months and was replaced in October 1983 by B.D. Pande. Immediately after Operation Bluestar, in June 1984, Pande was shunted out and K.T. Satarawala brought in. Next in line was Arjun Singh, who got the job in March 1985 and a brief to prepare the grounds for the Punjab Accord. But Singh was out in six months and in came Shankar Dayal Sharma in October 1985. On April Fool's Day, the Centre announced that Siddhartha Shankar Ray would move into the Punjab Governor's office. The announcement was not a joke, surprising though it might have been to Congressmen throughout the country, and ever since, Ray has struggled to vindicate that decision.

In every way, the gubernatorial appointment was just the break Ray had been yearning for. He had run away from politics and the Congress(I) in 1977, just before the West Bengal Assembly elections. The subsequent drubbing the Congress(I) received at the hands of the Left Front was attributed to Ray's authoritarian rule during 1972-77. Ray was said to have advised Mrs Indira Gandhi to impose the Emergency and in his own state ruthlessly crushed all opposition with brute police power. Earlier, during 1971—the period of President's Rule in Bengal—Ray, as Union minister in charge of Bengal affairs, masterminded an effective, but grisly, strategy to annihilate the radical Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) members, better known as the Naxalites. Consequently, Ray's tenure witnessed the mass killings of suspected Naxalites. Reports of police torture caused local and international human rights organisations to condemn Ray's repressive regime and by the time the Emergency was lifted, voters in Bengal were desperate to get rid of Ray.



Operation Black Thunder: Ray was sure it would succeed

Ray says that the police, after investigating each killing in detail, now realise that the majority were the result of sex crimes, money matters, land disputes, etc. This explanation might sound a little thin in the face of daily evidence of terrorists gunning down innocent people

Ray never gave them the chance and ducked the electoral test. During the next few years, he condemned the Emergency, Mrs Gandhi and the coterie around Sanjay Gandhi. He tried unsuccessfully to contest the post of Congress(I) president and ultimately went back to his lucrative legal practice.

After Mrs Gandhi's assassination, he unsuccessfully tried to get a Congress(I) ticket. He contested as an Independent from the Darjeeling constituency, and lost. The Congress(I) gave him a chance two years later to contest as a party candidate from the Bolpur seat. And the result of that poll proved that Ray had no future in state politics—he lost by a shocking one lakh votes.

Rajiv Gandhi, nevertheless, persisted in trying to create a slot for Ray in Bengal politics. But party bosses in Bengal would have none of it. Ghani Khan, Pranab Mukherjee and a host of other leaders buried their differences and jointly resisted Ray's re-entry. Rajiv Gandhi was equally adamant. He saw in Ray a competent Congressman—an impression Ray himself had created by regularly despatching letters of advice on diverse issues to the Prime Minister. In one of these notes, Ray confided to a few partymen, he offered some suggestions on easing the Punjab crisis.

Ray also made it known that he and his family had a special relationship with the Sikh community in Calcutta. Way back in the early Thirties, Ray's father had won a historic case for the Sikh community; and their family, right from the days of his maternal grandfather Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, had been involved with the affairs of the Bura Sikh Sangat in Calcutta. In a way, Ray himself created his own opening. And Rajiv Gandhi complied by appointing him Punjab Governor.

Ray, at the age of 68 and with a chequered political career behind him, understands the virtue of fealty. Nowadays, he makes it a point to stress that his successes in Punjab are due to "the Prime Minister's help at each and every step". Having been out in the cold and having worked his way back to favour, Ray is taking no chances. At the same time, Ray is not the kind of person to deny his ambitions. Childless, relatively affluent and without any responsibilities left to bear, Ray's only cross is his career. He is fated to carry it through adversity. Lucky that he has the singular ability to grin even when the going is at its worst.

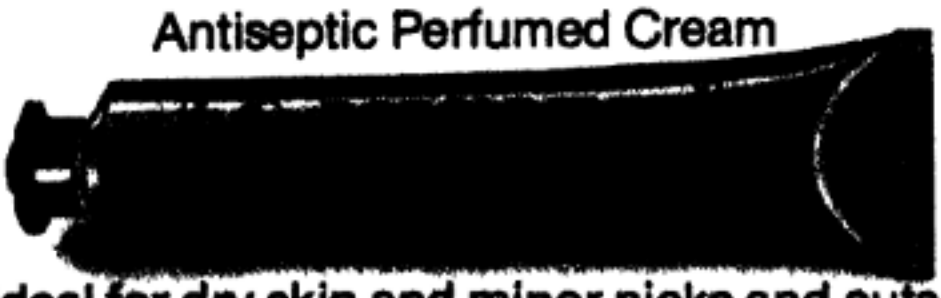
Indrani Banerjie

In a world full of surprises



...thank goodness you can count on
Boroline

Antiseptic Perfumed Cream



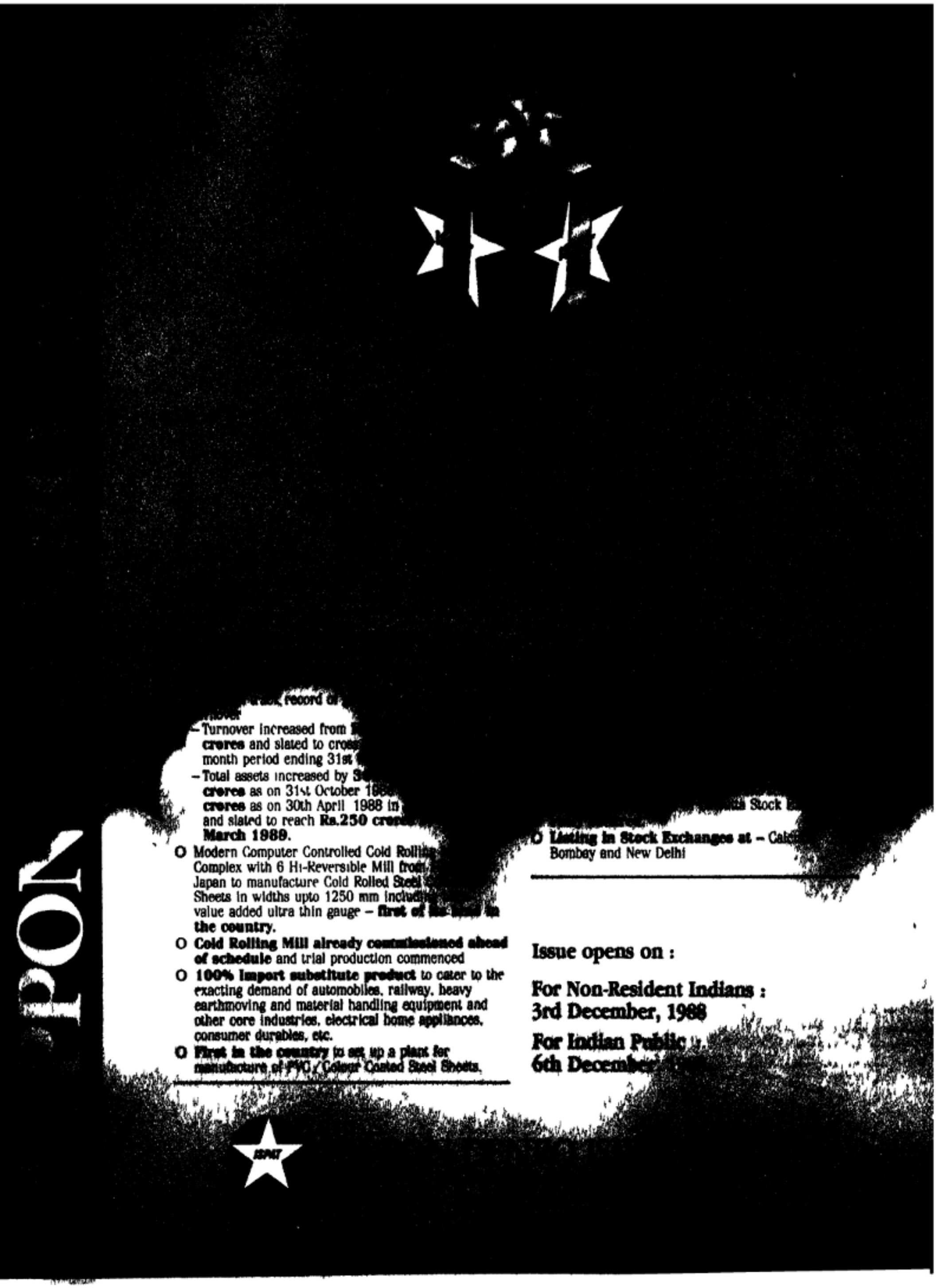
Ideal for dry skin and minor nicks and cuts

A friend of the family for 60 years

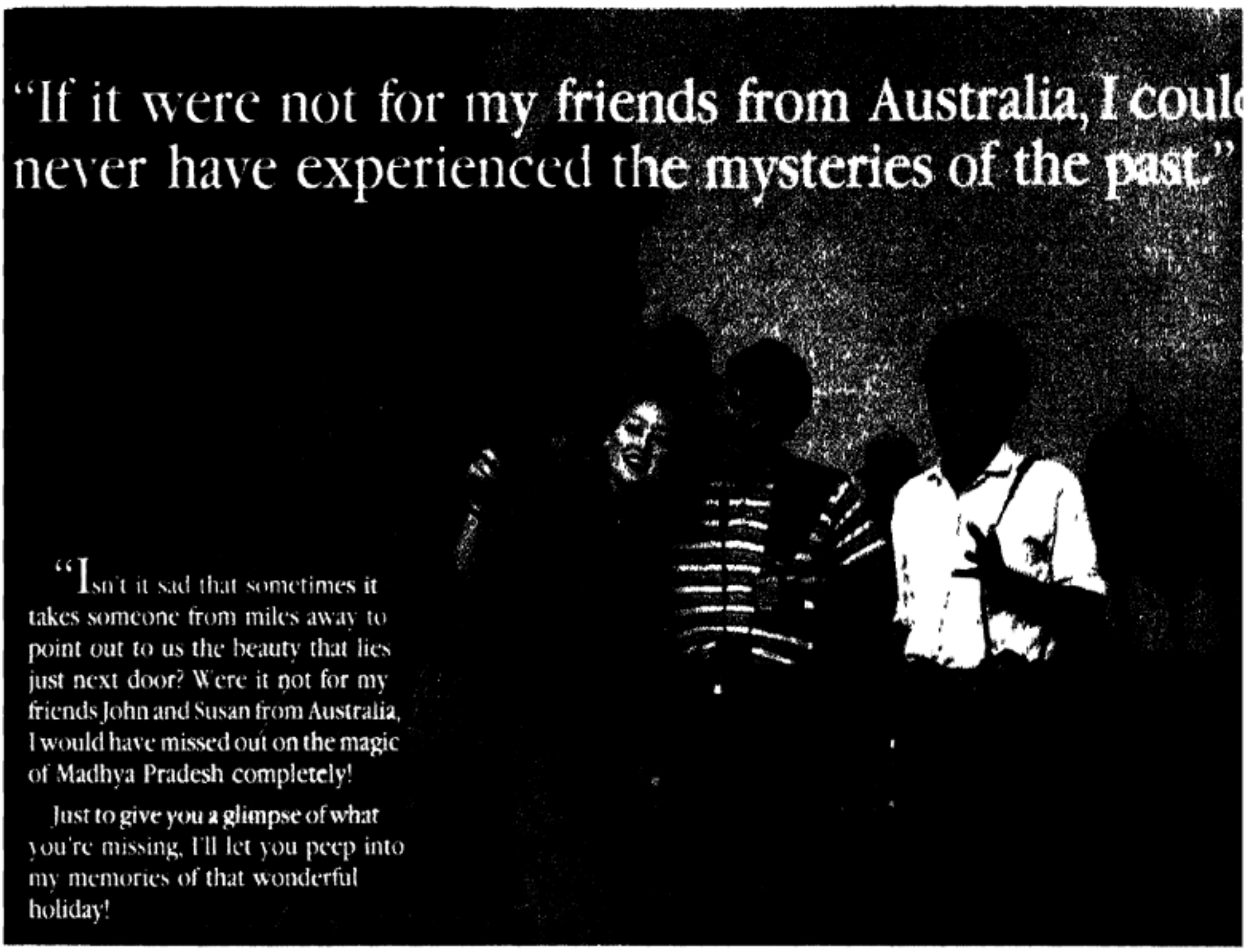
G D Pharmaceuticals
Calcutta 700053

Boroline is not a cosmetic

Response 1038


record
– Turnover increased from
crores and slated to cross
month period ending 31st
– Total assets increased by
crores as on 31st October
crores as on 30th April 1988 in
and slated to reach Rs.250 cro
March 1989.
O Modern Computer Controlled Cold Rolli
Complex with 6 Hi-Reversible Mill fro
Japan to manufacture Cold Rolled Steel
Sheets in widths upto 1250 mm includi
value added ultra thin gauge – first of
the country.
O Cold Rolling Mill already commissioned ahead of schedule and trial production commenced
O 100% import substitute product to cater to the exacting demand of automobiles, railway, heavy earthmoving and material handling equipment and other core industries, electrical home appliances, consumer durables, etc.
O First in the country to set up a plant for manufacture of PVC / Colour Coated Steel Sheets.
Stock
O Listing in Stock Exchanges at – Calc
Bombay and New Delhi
Issue opens on :
For Non-Resident Indians :
3rd December, 1988
For Indian Public
6th December
IPO
ISPAT

"If it were not for my friends from Australia, I could never have experienced the mysteries of the past."



"Isn't it sad that sometimes it takes someone from miles away to point out to us the beauty that lies just next door? Were it not for my friends John and Susan from Australia, I would have missed out on the magic of Madhya Pradesh completely!

Just to give you a glimpse of what you're missing, I'll let you peep into my memories of that wonderful holiday!

"When John and Susan suggested a holiday in Madhya Pradesh, I was surprised! But I was still more surprised when I discovered all that Madhya Pradesh had to offer. Monuments. Temples. Sanctuaries. Even a hill station! In Madhya Pradesh I have had the most fascinating experience.

Right from day one, new wonders unfolded. **Mandu**—the 'City of Joy' with its tragic love story of Roopmati and Baz Bahadur.

And **Orchha**, the well preserved medieval city which made the 20th century seem light years away.

History came alive at **Gwalior** too, with its massive fort chronicling the rise and fall of dynasties.

At **Khajuraho**, the mastery of the craftsmen who translated mere stone into beauty and grace left us spellbound.

John and Susan couldn't wait to meet a tiger face to face. They did at **Kanha and Bandhavgarh**. We also met deer, bison, nilgai and colourful birds.

At **Sanchi**, one could almost hear the peace. I had great fun explaining the Jataka Tales depicted on the Stupa gates to John and Susan.

And the prehistoric rock paintings at **Bhimbetka** have been executed by different artists of several different civilisations over several centuries!

The confluence of faith, devotion and prayer at **Ujjain, Omkareshwar and Maheshwar** overwhelmed us.

Back in **Bhopal**, we saw the lakes, museums, safari park, and of course, the Bharat Bhavan.



Everywhere we went, lovely log huts, tourist bungalows and prompt transport awaited us—and we didn't even overstep our budget!

But there's lots I haven't seen yet. **Pachmarhi**—the verdant hill station. **Marble Rocks, Amarkantak** and **Chitrakoot**. The exquisite chhatries at **Shivpuri**. And to think that I might never have discovered Madhya Pradesh but for John and Susan!

Thank you John. Thank you Susan.
And most of all, thank you Madhya Pradesh!
I'm proud to have met you."

Come to Madhya Pradesh... It's surprising a lot of people like you.

For more information and bookings, get in touch with Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. **NEW DELHI**: 204-205, IInd Floor, Hotel Kanishka Shopping Plaza, 19 Ashok Road, New Delhi-110 001. Tel: 3321187, 3327264. Telex: 031-63417 MPT-IN. **BOMBAY**: 74 World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade, Colaba, Bombay-400 005. Tel: 217603, 214860, 219191 (ext. 299). **CALCUTTA**: Chitrakoot Building, Room No. 7, 6th Floor, 230 A, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Road, Calcutta-700 020. Tel: 448543. Telex: 021-4296 AVN-IN. **BHOPAL**: Gangotri, T.T. Nagar, Bhopal-462 003. Tel: 63552, 65154, 66383, 68563, 64388, 66342. Telex: 0705-279 TOUR-IN





Because husbands dream in black and white and wives dream in colour.

He was interested in quality and long term value.

She felt Pampadour blue went well with the lampshade.

He wanted it to go with his budget.

She wanted a range to match her furnishings.

He was calculating costs.

She was insisting on an easy-to-clean surface.

He wanted the furniture well protected.

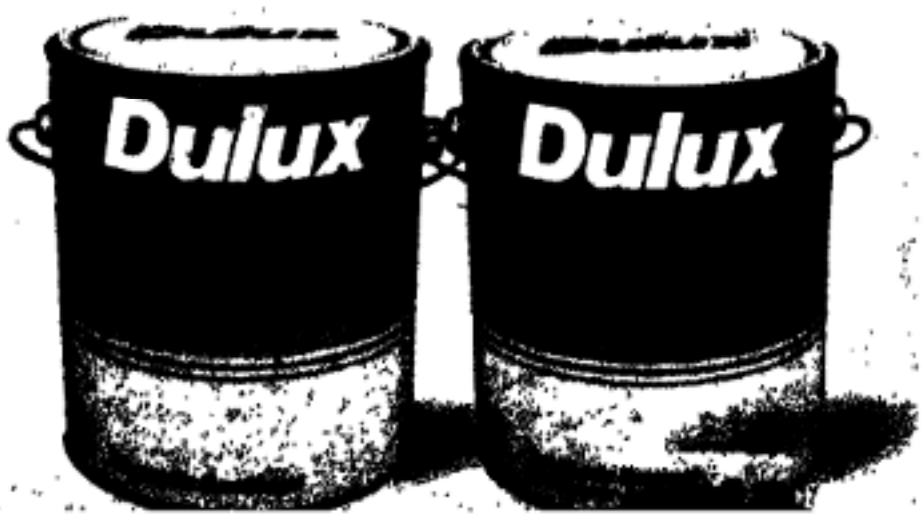
She wanted a smooth finish and a wet glossy look.

His decision, he knew, was made.

Her choice, she knew, was right.

Dulux it would be for their home.

Because the best decisions in life are taken together.



ICI **Dulux**

World Class



Vibrant variety of furnishing fabrics from NTC

NTC with a turnover of Rs. 1000 crores and 124 mills,
is one of the largest textile groups in the world.
Producing a wide variety of fabrics, both in cottons and blends.
Durable and economical. Fabrics which are reaching out
to world markets.

NATIONAL TEXTILES

Great Fabrics Great Prices

Cracking the conspiracy



With the arrest of Attinder Pal Singh, the investigators say that they now know the inside story of the assassination

31 October, 1984; 9.05 am. Indira Gandhi walks past the bougainvillaea at 1, Safdarjung Road, rushing to her office complex to meet actor Peter Ustinov and a television team. Beant Singh, a Delhi police sub-inspector who has been a trusted member of her security guard steps forward. He raises his service revolver and as she begins to acknowledge his presence, squeezes off five shots. A second later, Satwant Singh, another security guard aims his SAF carbine and fires 25 machine carbine bullets into her frail body. Indira Gandhi collapses in a pool of blood. She will die a few minutes later on the way to hospital.

Beant and Satwant give themselves up quietly. They are taken by members of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to their guard-house. They stay there for half an hour during which time several senior police officers come to see them. Then, inexplicably, the ITBP men open fire: Beant, the first assassin, is killed. Satwant is critically wounded. Nobody will say why the ITBP officers bumped off the assassins.

It's been four years now and it still feels like yesterday. Who can forget the bloody end of an era? The murder and mayhem that followed? And the shocking realisation that, in the end, it was her own securitymen that did it?

But if the memories still linger, so, too, do the mysteries. At 4.30 p.m. on the evening of 31 October, 1984, when the government finally admitted to the world that Indira Gandhi was dead, its spokesmen suggested that there had been three assassins. They offered no explanation for the killing of Beant Singh and there were dark rumours that it was a Jack Ruby- Lee Harvey Oswald situation.

The motive, at least, seemed clear enough. Sikhs all over the world were upset about the assault on the Golden Temple and this was vengeance. But

whose vengeance? Had the two (three?) police officers acted alone? Had they been part of a larger conspiracy? Who had plotted the details of the assassination? And that final typically subcontinental question: was there a foreign hand?

All major assassinations engender conspiracy theories and most governments spend years trying to disprove these theories and reassure their people that the killers were acting alone. But this time, there was a difference. It was the Government of India itself that believed that there was a conspiracy. Politicians talked of a vast global plot. Rajiv Gandhi told SUNDAY that the motive had not been revenge but the creation of the instability, caused by the riots, that would inevitably follow the assassination. Who would want to create this instability? Khalistanis? Pakistanis? The CIA? The KGB?

The government would not say. But it quickly set up a one-man commission headed by Justice M.P. Thakkar to investigate the murder. And in case Thakkar got it wrong, it also established a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under S. Anantram, a retired Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, to bring the guilty to book.

suggested that the SIT had been fabricating evidence.

So what really happened? Was there a conspiracy? And if so, who planned it?

The investigators now say that they've finally cracked it. They know who planned the assassination. They know how they did it. They know who was behind it. And at long last, all the pieces fit.

This amazing breakthrough has been achieved after the arrest of Attinder Pal Singh, one of the most wanted Sikh terrorists, in Patiala on 4 October, 1988 by the Punjab police. Over the last month, Attinder Pal has been kept in the lock-up at Rajpura, an obscure police station in Patiala district. One of the guardrooms has been hastily converted into a makeshift interrogation chamber and it is in this small, dark space that officials from the Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Central Bureau of Intelligence (CBI) and Punjab police have been questioning him.

Attinder Pal limps into this chamber (his injuries have obviously been inflicted while he is in custody) several times a day and, apparently, sings like a canary to his inquisitors. As one police officer says, a little disdainfully, "Once you get



Prof. Dalip Singh (left) and Prof. Jagmohan Singh: links in the chain

Except, of course, it hasn't worked out that way. Forty-eight months after the murder, the confusion has compounded. Now, it seems there were only two assassins after all. But who was behind them? The SIT said Balbir Singh, another Delhi police sub-inspector and Kehar Singh, an assistant in the directorate-general of supplies and disposals, were also involved. Both denied it and a few months ago, the Supreme Court threw out the case against Balbir and most of these terrorists in custody, it is very easy to crack them."

The story Attinder Pal has told the interrogators has startled them. Says a member of the SIT: "The Indira Gandhi assassination was something minor for him. He was the brain behind the entire Pakistan operation and had planned most of the major terrorist attacks from there."

Here, at last, is the missing link in the assassination jigsaw.

Who's who in the

Beant Singh:
The first assassin killed by Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) men on 3 October, 1984.

Satwant Singh:
Beant's protégé. He fired 25 bullets. Now under sentence of death.





Kehar Singh:
Beant's uncle. The police say he was part of the conspiracy. Under sentence of death.



Balbir Singh:
Another of Mrs Gandhi's guards. Supposed to be the link between Attinder Pal and Beant, but acquitted by the Supreme Court.



Gurbux Singh:
A Delhi businessman. Admits he wanted to kill Mrs Gandhi but denies involvement in this conspiracy.

The authorities have long suspected that one of the key figures in the conspiracy was Simranjeet Singh Mann, a former IPS officer, who had links with Bhindranwale and who resigned from the service following Operation Bluestar. Mann was arrested in December 1984, while trying to cross into Nepal and is currently India's best guarded prisoner in Bhagalpur jail. He has consistently denied tht he knows any of those accused of Mrs Gandhi's murder and the government has failed to produce any proof to the contrary. Despite this, Rajiv has consistently refused to order his

assassination

Amarjit Singh:
One of Mrs Gandhi's security guards. Said that Beant tried to involve him in the assassination but he refused. Died mysteriously in May 1988.



Virender Singh:
An associate of Gurbux's.



Attinder Pal Singh:
A former AISSF office-bearer, he is alleged to have planned the murder and fled to Pakistan. Now under arrest in Patiala.



Simranjeet Singh Mann:
In Bhagalpur jail. Was a Bhindranwale admirer in the IPS who resigned after Bluestar. Alleged to have conspired with Attinder Pal.

release—though there are always rumours that he is on the verge of doing so—even after the Akalis have made his continued incarceration an issue.

Now, the results of Attinder Pal's interrogation suggest that perhaps Mann is not just the political scapegoat he is sometimes made out to be. Attinder Pal says he met Mann in Bombay where he was the deputy inspector general of police. Central Industrial Security Force, much before Operation Bluestar. At the time, Attinder Pal was a senior vice president of the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) and needed Mann's help for the Gurmath camps he was organising. The man who brought them together was Jagmohan 'Tony' Singh, a lecturer at Bombay's Jai Hind College.

After Bluestar, Attinder Pal returned to the Maharashtra capital to meet Mann. By then, the police officer had resigned and gone underground. He was filled with anger over Operation Bluestar and asked if he could accompany Attinder Pal to Punjab. He was dissuaded from this course and decided to work against the government from his hideout. He urged Sikh leaders and constables to agitate and gave Inderjit Singh, a policeman from Ropar, a letter addressed to the Punjab police force, asking it to rise up against the government. (The SIT has the letter).

Mann and Attinder Pal also planned actual terrorist operations. They conceived the action in which the Bhakra Canal was breached with bomb blasts on 15 August, 1984. But such bomb attacks were small time compared to what the duo was really after.

In early August, Mann became obsessed with a grand hijacking scheme. An aircraft would be commandeered shortly after it took off from Palam and then forced to make a kamikaze dive into Parliament House. If they got the timing right and managed to do it when Mrs Gandhi was addressing the session then they would have a many-sided triumph: a hijacking, a crash, a suicide mission, the destruction of a landmark, the death of hundreds, and most important, the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

The scheme was crazy, of course, and suicide missions are few and far between in the ranks of the Khalistanis. But there were two elements to it that were worth pursuing independently: a hijacking and the assassination.

First, came the hijacking. Attinder Pal Singh travelled from Delhi to Ropar to meet Inderjit Singh. Inderjit hired seven young men-- of whom only one, Rajinder Singh Rane who had helped bomb the Bhakra Canal, had a militant background--and sent them to Delhi. On 29 August, they hijacked an Indian Airlines aircraft and flew it first to Karachi and then to Dubai, where they were overpowered.

The Dubai government sent the hijackers back to India and if the investigators had interrogated them carefully or probed deeper (Rajinder Singh was already wanted in the Bhakra Canal case), then they would have rumbled Attinder Pal and Mann. In fact, they did no such thing.

The authorities ignored other leads. Harjinder Singh Narula, a militant, turned up at the New Delhi office of the *Indian Express* and announced that Attinder Pal had masterminded the hijack. Next, Attinder Pal himself gave an interview to Calcutta's *The Telegraph*, explaining the *modus operandi* of the hijack. This, too, was overlooked by the police. By then, enough people knew about Attinder Pal's friendship with

The story Attinder Pal told the interrogators startled them. Says a member of the SIT: "The Indira Gandhi assassination was something minor for him. He was the brain behind the entire Pakistan operation and had planned most of the major terrorist attacks from there"



Ritu Saini

Mann for the authorities to have made some obvious connections. But nobody paid any attention.

Attinder Pal and Mann continued to meet all over the country. They conspired in Madhya Pradesh, they plotted in Calcutta and they hassed in Bombay. They even planned to kill Mrs Gandhi in Nagpur in September and Attinder Pal attempted to procure a gun with a telescopic sight. As it turned out, the weapon took long to arrive and the plan was dropped.

At what stage did Attinder Pal and Mann get involved with the Delhi group that actually killed Indira Gandhi? Mann says he never visited Delhi between Bluestar and the assassination. But Attinder Pal made several trips to the capital. He has told his interrogators that he met Balbir Singh at his home thrice between June and August 1984. He has admitted, also, that he had three other meetings with the clique of Delhi businessmen (Gurbux Singh and Virender Singh) who the SIT originally main-

The third man

Attinder Pal Singh's career in crime

He started out as a mere press operator for the *Hitavada* in Nagpur but by the end he fancied himself as a Saffron Pimpernel. While the SIT is only concerned with Attinder Pal Singh's actions in 1984 when he conspired with Simranjeet Singh Mann, the other security services are much more interested in his actions after October 1984 when he crossed over to Pakistan.

Attinder Pal joined the AISSF in 1971, when he attended his first Gurmath camp but did not become a camp commander till 1978 when Bhindranwale was on the rise. In 1983, he rose to be a senior vice president of AISSF and took over as president once the incumbent, Bhai Amrik Singh was killed during Operation Bluestar. It was in this capacity that he planned the Bhakra bombing, the Indian Airlines hijacking and—apparently—the Indira Gandhi assassination.

He did not, however, become a super-terrorist till he arrived in Lahore and fought another AISSF leader, Gurjit Singh, for leadership of the extremists. He took over 350 members of various terrorist groups, then hiding in Pakistan, trained them to cause chaos in Punjab and still found time to knock off books of secessionist poetry and the Constitution of Khalistan.

Among Attinder Pal's operations was one that involved planting severed heads of cattle in the temples of Punjab in 1985. After Attinder Pal informed his Pakistani controllers that no Sikh would participate in such a venture, three Pakistanis were sent across the border to do the job.

In 1986, Attinder Pal returned to India to supervise his operations and the following year, he launched the Khalistan Liberation Organisation (KLO). Throughout 1988, the KLO had many successes. On 19 February, it planted bombs in the courts at Patiala, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Amritsar killing 13 and injuring 86 people. In August, the KLO caused two bomb explosions in Ajnala; on Janmashtami it struck fatally in Vrajpura; a week later it packed explosives in a vegetable oil tin in Delhi's Dhaula Kuan; on 7 September, a KLO bomb went off in the police lines in Chandigarh; on 12 September, another exploded on the Ghaziabad border. And more deaths were planned. These included the murders of S.S. Ray and Ribeiro and a mass slaughter of MPs following a bomb explosion in Parliament.

The security services claim that Attinder Pal was helped in many of his operations by finances collected by some Bombay Sikhs. They say that after Bluestar, the Bombay group paid the equivalent of $150,000 for a single consignment of explosives. After Attinder Pal's arrest, three of these Sikhs were picked up—Paramjit Singh, Jagmohan Singh and Dalip Singh. All proclaim that they are innocent.

Attinder Pal was captured on 4 October, after interrogation of captured terrorists had yielded his whereabouts. His arrest confirmed what the police had long believed: that extremists are easy to nab once they become domesticated. Attinder Pal had got married in April 1988 and soon got his wife, Kawaljeet Kaur, pregnant. Till late September, she thought her husband was called Raghubir Singh. Less than two weeks after she found out that he was the Attinder Pal Singh who had planned the Gandhi murder, it was all over. The Punjab police had locked him up and all but thrown away the key.

The foreign hand

There's no sign of it

The Indian subcontinent likes to hold foreigners responsible for the deaths of its leaders: witness the Pakistani hysteria following General Zia's plane crash. Similarly, everybody from the CIA to the Pakistani secret service was blamed for Mrs Gandhi's assassination.

In fact, there's no evidence of a foreign hand in the Indira Gandhi murder. Justice Thakkar, who headed the commission investigating the killing, is a bit of a spy buff. (The report he co-authored with Justice Natarajan on Fairfax has a chapter on the dastardly CIA that reads like Russy Karanjia on Benzedrine.) So, it is hardly surprising that the final chapter of his report should direct the SIT to see if it could find proof of a CIA link.

The SIT took Thakkar seriously enough to spend large sums (up to Rs 70 lakhs, according to one estimate) scouring the globe looking for people who might have killed Indira Gandhi. They checked on every notable overseas Sikh extremist and interrogated relatives of Indian conspirators, but nothing turned up.

However, with the arrest of Attinder Pal, there's a chance that the SIT might go for the Pakistan-did-it theory. It can't be denied that Attinder Pal was very in with the Pakistanis, spent many months in Lahore, worked for Pakistani Field Intelligence and wrote lots of letters to General Zia. Unfortunately for the xenophobes, Attinder Pal first crossed over to Pakistan ten days before the assassination in October 1984. As the SIT's theory is that he planned it all before he left the country, the Pakistan connection is going to be difficult to establish.

tained were involved in the conspiracy. Also present at these meetings were Balbir and Dalip Singh, a Reserve Bank clerk who was a prosecution witness in the Indira Gandhi murder trial.

The SIT's theory all along has been that Balbir, a garrulous security guard at the Prime Minister's house, talked Beant Singh into assassinating Indira Gandhi and that Beant involved the young and impressionable Satwant. This view was endorsed by Amarjit Singh, another Delhi police sub-inspector who later turned approver. Last year, Amarjit told SUNDAY that Balbir had made no secret of his wish to murder Mrs Gandhi and had even stated that if he was given Rs 16 lakhs and airfare for his family, then he would explode a remote-controlled explosive device in the Prime Minister's house. Amarjit added that on 15 August, 1984, he heard Beant and Balbir deliberating about how "to get Madam". And that three days before the assassination, when he told Beant that he would not get involved with the conspiracy, the assassin called him a *buzdil* (coward) and said that he had found a new boy (Satwant) who would help him, instead.

If all of this is true, then it is fairly easy to see how Attinder Pal set in motion the events that led to the murder. As he had done with the 29 August hijacking, he did not dirty his own hands but used a cut-out (front man)—as he had used Inderjit for the hijack—who found the actual hit-men. And just as he took care not to be in Delhi when the aircraft was hijacked, he left the capital a week to ten days before the assassination, went first to Punjab and then, crossed the Pakistan border from Mamdot.

Obviously, he feared that his name would come up during the investigations that followed the assassination because he remained in Pakistan for two years, never risking returning to India.

Some parts of the story that the police have pieced together from Attinder Pal Singh's interrogation can be verified. There seems little doubt that Attinder Pal and Balbir met at Gurbux Singh's house in Delhi. Nor can it be denied that Gurbux hated Mrs Gandhi and wanted to kill her—he has admitted as much before. And Attinder Pal's terrorist role has never been in dispute.

The problem is with the cut-out. What the police have at the moment are two different groups. On the one hand, there are Satwant and Beant who did the actual shooting. And on the other are Mann, Attinder Pal, Balbir, Gurbux, *et al*. To prove that both these groups were part of one big conspiracy, the SIT must demonstrate that Attinder Pal and his associates put Balbir up to motivating Satwant and Beant. The authorities say that's easy. They offer as evidence:

- the interrogation of Attinder Pal.
- the fact that Attinder Pal met Balbir.
- Balbir's oft-expressed hatred of Indira Gandhi.
- Amarjit Singh's testimony that he saw Balbir inciting Beant.

Unfortunately, the SIT faces a major

Attinder Pal and Mann continued to meet all over the country. They conspired in Madhya Pradesh, they plotted in Calcutta and they liaised in Bombay. They even planned to kill Mrs Gandhi in Nagpur in September and Attinder Pal attempted to procure a gun with telescopic sights. As it turned out, the weapon took long to arrive and the plan was dropped

Who killed Beant?

It was stupidity, not conspiracy

Was Beant Singh killed to shut him up? In the aftermath of the assassination, nobody could understand why the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) should have murdered the man who talked Satwant into assassinating the Prime Minister.

Even now, the only explanation that seems to fit the known facts is: stupidity. Immediately after the murder, both assassins dropped their weapons and surrendered quietly. According to one version, Beant even said: "We've done what we had to. Now you do what you have to."

The two men were taken to the ITBP guardroom, where they were kept for 30 minutes, guarded all the time by armed ITBP personnel. No less than ten senior police officers entered the guardroom during this period and saw the assassins, but not one suggested that they should be handcuffed or tied.

What happened next has never been officially confirmed but, apparently, the agitated ITBP guards began berating the assassins, tugging at Beant's beard, pushing their turbans around, etc. The killers reacted to this provocation by lunging at the ITBP men who promptly opened fire.

This is not as improbable as it sounds. On 2 October, 1986, the security services totally missed an assassin hidden in the bushes at Rajghat who fired at the Prime Minister. When Rajiv pointed out to his minders that he was being shot at, they finally found the gunman. Then, inexplicably, they began to beat him up and would have killed him had Buta Singh not intervened.

That's the way India's policemen work.





Gurbux Singh (left) and Virender Singh; (inset) Dalip Singh: part of a different conspiracy?

The acquittal of Balbir

It doesn't pay to fabricate evidence

The biggest problem facing the Special Investigating Team (SIT) is that Balbir Singh, the man named by Attinder Pal Singh as being his cut-out (front man) in the conspiracy, has been acquitted by the Supreme Court despite his original conviction having been upheld by the Delhi High Court.

Balbir Singh was originally implicated by Amarjit Singh, who in turn had been implicated by Satwant. The surviving assassin told his interrogators that Amarjit, a member of the PM's security staff, knew about the conspiracy. When he was arrested, Amarjit said that yes, he did know, but had not been involved—it was Balbir, another of Mrs Gandhi's securitymen, who had instigated Beant Singh.

The police picked up Balbir and then—they claim—released him. They arrested him again at the Najafgarh bus stop on 3 December, 1984, and produced him before a magistrate. They told the magistrate that he had been absconding and they had recovered a note from his pocket which contained a calender of the events that led to the assassination. In this note, he mentioned the dates on which he had met the other 'conspirators' and against one date had scrawled: "felt like killing".

This, said the prosecution, was a virtual confession and positive proof of his guilt.

In fact, the prosecution was lying through its teeth. Balbir had never been released. The whole story of his re-arrest was a lie. And why would an absconding murderer carry a confession around in his pocket? The defence hammered away at this inconsistency and finally convinced the Supreme Court that the prosecution version was flawed. Consequently, Balbir was let off.

What really happened? According to sources, Balbir confessed to his role in the conspiracy and agreed to make a confessional statement to a magistrate. Some officers went through the details of the confession with him line by line and told him to make notes of the dates on which he first thought of killing Mrs Gandhi and of the days when he linked up with the others. Once he had done this, they handed him over to the Delhi police and told them to produce him before a magistrate.

When the police searched him, they found the note and assumed in their dim-witted way that they had cracked the case. They promptly fabricated the re-arrest, made out that they had captured a missing assassin with the proof actually on his person and told these lies to the magistrate. Naturally, the truth eventually came out and the case collapsed.

Balbir accepts this version with the qualification that he hadn't confessed at all, but had merely written down on the paper what the SIT wanted him to say.



The Rajpura police station: interrogations in progress

obstacle. Only a few months ago, the Supreme Court overturned Balbir's conviction in the Indira Gandhi murder case and set him free. In effect, the country's highest court has ruled that he is innocent of any involvement in the assassination.

So, if the cut-out has been declared innocent, then can the two conspiracies be connected? Already many of those involved in this affair have taken the line that the two were totally independent plots. Last year Gurbux Singh told SUNDAY: "All I said was if I got a chance, I would have killed her and was collecting explosives for this. But this does not mean that I killed her on 31 October." And just after his acquittal, Balbir Singh made it clear that he would oppose any suggestion of a conspiracy though the SIT was keen on finding one because: "the assassination of a Prime Minister of a country by a mere sub-inspector and a constable does not look very credible."

The police are faced with two different groups: Satwant and Beant who did the actual shooting and Mann, Attinder Pal, Balbir, Gurbux, *et al*. To prove that both these groups were part of one big conspiracy, the SIT must demonstrate that Attinder Pal and his associates put Balbir up to motivating Satwant and Beant

The SIT is therefore faced with a dilemma. Almost from the time he started the investigation, Anantram has tried to establish Attinder Pal and Mann's involvement. Now that he's finally got Attinder Pal in custody and can substantiate his suspicions, he is stuck with the Supreme Court's acquittal of Balbir. One view within the SIT is that even if it is, now, not possible to link the two groups of plotters because the cut-out has been freed, Mann and Attinder Pal should be prosecuted anyway on the grounds that they participated in a second conspiracy. This is the line the SIT has taken in response to a petition filed by a Supreme Court lawyer, which argues that Satwant and Kehar's executions should be put off till Attinder Pal's role is fully investigated. Says D.S. Gakhar, the DIG of the SIT: "Attinder Pal has no relation with this case. This investigation relates to an independent and larger conspiracy where different people are involved."

On the other hand, another view has it that the whole conspiracy should be seen together and Balbir's involvement re-examined. Balbir himself recently admitted to SUNDAY that he feared he might be implicated in a fresh case.

For Anantram and the SIT, the capture and confession of Attinder Pal Singh are welcome breaks. Over the last four years, the SIT has become something of a national joke as its case against Satwant, Kehar and Balbir has been shown to be full of holes. Prosecution witnesses have suddenly turned hostile, post-mortem reports have been faked, a



The Thakkar Commission report

There's nothing worth waiting for in it

Much of the mystery surrounding the Indira Gandhi assassination has to do with the report of the Thakkar Commission set up to investigate the murder. Justice M.P. Thakkar examined 220 witnesses and then wrote a two-part report which the government promptly suppressed. Even President Zail Singh was refused a copy.

Unfortunately, those expecting sensational revelations are likely to be disappointed. SUNDAY's sources say that Thakkar passed the buck of doing the actual investigating to the SIT and busied himself with finding out why the assassination occurred. To some of us, this might seem like one question that is not terribly difficult to answer, but Thakkar was obsessively concerned with the state of Mrs Gandhi's security.

He came down heavily on all the police officers in charge of VVIP security, including the additional commissioner H.D. Pillai and the deputy commissioner H.R. Gupta. R.N. Kao, Mrs Gandhi's trusted intelligence supremo, also got it in the neck for the security failure. One whole chapter deals with the censures (for bad conduct) collected by many of Mrs Gandhi's guards and concludes that several of them were virtually criminal elements.

Supreme Court judge has told them they are not 'worth your salt' as investigators, and a vital piece of evidence against Balbir Singh is widely perceived as a fabrication.

Attinder Pal's confession suggests that the team had the right suspicions but lacked the investigative ability to document them. Instead, it fell back on the time-honoured Indian police techniques of intimidation and fabrication. We know, now, that the assassination was not—as is sometimes claimed—the work of two religious fanatics who happened to be members of Mrs Gandhi's security staff but was, in fact, planned by an established terrorist group. And we know, also, that those early fears of Pakistani and CIA involvement were just so much nonsense.

What happens next depends on the government. Attinder Pal is the security services' biggest catch in years. The Indira Gandhi assassination was just one of his early operations. Since then, he has operated from Pakistan and masterminded innumerable terrorist attacks. The intelligence agencies hope that he will blow entire terrorist networks. But whether he will be tried for the murder of Indira Gandhi remains to be seen.

We now know that the assassination was not—as is sometimes claimed—the work of two religious fanatics who happened to be members of Mrs. Gandhi's security staff but was, in fact, planned by an established terrorist group. And we also know that those early fears of Pakistani and CIA involvement were just so much nonsense.

The missing witnesses

Someone is killing them off

One of the most striking aspects of the Kennedy assassination is the manner in which many of the major witnesses either died or disappeared within a decade. In the case of the Indira Gandhi assassination, it's not just Beant who was murdered.

- In May 1988, Amarjit Singh, the single most important witness and the man whose evidence showed how Balbir had involved Beant who had enlisted Satwant, was found dead. The official cause of death: opium overdose. Needless to say, nobody believes this, not even Balbir, who says: "I don't think he died a natural death."
- Before that, Rattan Singh, an important suspect, turned up dead by the banks of the river Sutlej. He had been killed by the Punjab police. They said he had been part of an AISSF party they had fired at.
- The whereabouts of Gurdial Singh, the other security guard on duty at the time Mrs Gandhi was assassinated, are not known. He is, for all practical purposes, missing.
- Satwant and Kehar, of course, will die in a few weeks, victims of the hangman's noose.

Mann's case is different. For many educated Sikhs, he is a symbol of the community's victimisation at the hands of an uncaring regime. Few of his supporters believe that he had any terrorist links at all—and even fewer will believe the SIT's claim that Attinder Pal has implicated him in the assassination. Because he has become so important to the Sikhs, there is a chance that the government will not proceed any further with the allegations against him.

On the other hand, there are those who believe that the law must take its own course, regardless of political considerations. In fact, one particularly cynical view has it that in an election year, nothing could do the regime as much good as a well-publicised trial in which it was proved that Indira Gandhi had been riddled with bullets on the orders of Sikh terrorist leaders.

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi* and *Rajpura*

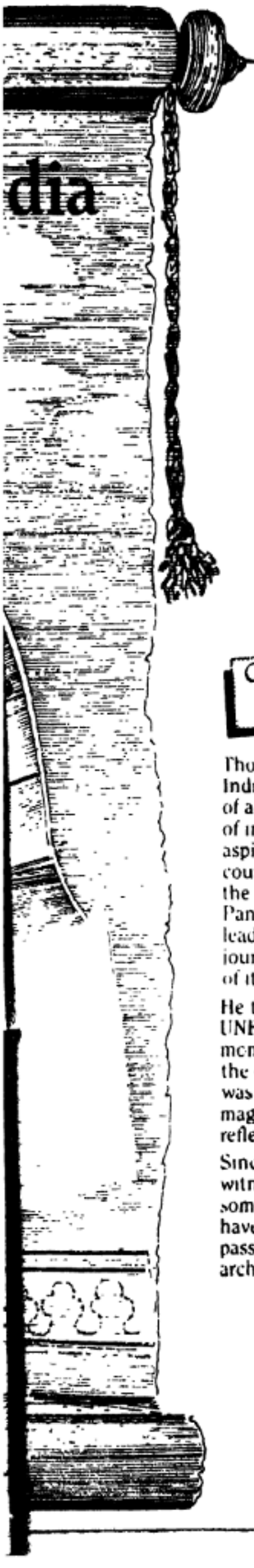
The Discovery of I
with the Ashol



'... And I was on a great voyage of discovery, and the land and the people lay spread out before me. India with all her infinite charm and variety began to grow upon me more and more.'



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
CENTENARY



Discover the finest expression of Indian hospitality.

Yesterday

Those were the years when India was caught in the magic of a new spirit. The early years of independence. All the aspirations and hopes of the country were centred around the silvery figure of one man, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Its leader, and its guide in its journey towards the fulfilment of its dreams.

He thought of holding the UNESCO Conference in India. A moment of pride and glory. So the concept of the Ashok Hotel was initiated by him. On a magnitude and scale that could reflect the grandeur of India.

Since then the Ashok has witnessed much of history. And some of the greatest names who have shaped our times have passed through its resplendent arch.

Today

Today the Ashok is a metaphor for magnificence in a hotel. Walk the spacious marble lobby with handsome granite pillars speckled with joy. And feel the flourish of a great deluxe hotel leaning over to capture your heart. Like a home with a touch of splendour.

Eat like a Pakhtoon within the rugged fortress of Frontier. Relish the famed Mughlai delicacies at the Durbar. Savour the French fare like a discerning Count at Burgundy. Cross the border to China Town. Delight in a dish at the Tokyo restaurant. Or nibble quick at the 24-hour Samovar.

The warmth of the Ashok envelops you. And gives you a sense of belonging, a feeling of integrity.

Tomorrow

Over the years the grand classic of the Ashok has been refined, perfected and made more comfortable. Technological advancement has opened up myriad new possibilities of looking after the needs of the guest better. Computerised inter-hotel reservations through Ashok Network and Ashok Internet. A comprehensive business centre with all the facilities that a business traveller seeks. State-of-the-art equipment and techniques to make a successful convention or exhibition.

The Ashok is in touch with the times. With a clear vision of the future. Constantly updating its facilities to suit the needs of today and adapting them to the requirements that tomorrow will pose.

The Ashok Group

India Tourism Development Corporation

Ashok Hotel
New Delhi

A reputation under siege

Jyoti Basu's lily-white image is marred by three major scandals



Jyoti Basu: facing corruption charges

Last month's quiz: Who is the most honest chief minister in the country?

This month's quiz: Who is the most honest chief minister in the country?

Don't be surprised if nine out of the ten people who replied Jyoti Basu to the first question answer the second differently. For, suddenly, and most unexpectedly, West Bengal's Marxist chief minister is faced with a plethora of corruption charges.

If the disclosures about his and his government's alleged profiteering have been met with shock and disbelief, it is because Basu has enjoyed an enviable distinction for personal integrity. A reputation so solid that even his detractors in the Opposition—who have described him variously as authoritarian, fascist, Stalinist and revisionist—have rarely dared to question his probity. In a sense, his clothes—spotless white *dhotis* and *kurtas*—seemed to make the man. But after 46 years of public life, which includes three successive terms as chief minister, the spots are beginning to show.

Over the last couple of months, Basu and his Left Front government have been implicated in three major scandals. First, it was the Bengal Lamp issue, where he was charged with promoting the interests of a firm with which his son was associated—a tangle that nearly led to a major government crisis. Even as this controversy was raging, he was accused of favouring another company with a contract to renovate Banga Bhavan, the state government's guest house in New Delhi. The latest snarl—and in some ways the most sensational—came to light only early this month. Basu's government was blamed for handing out an unnecessarily large sum of compensation to the erstwhile British owners of the now nationalised Calcutta Tramways Company (CTC). The unseemly haste with which the government finalised the terms of payment, having bypassed procedural norms, has led to the suspicion that kickbacks were involved.

In a sense, Jyoti Basu's clothes—spotless white *dhotis* and *kurtas*—seemed to make the man. But after 46 years of public life, which includes three successive terms as chief minister, the spots are beginning to show

All in all, at the beginning of this month, Basu's lily-white reputation was under siege.

The tram scam is by far the most complex of the three. To understand it requires going back to 1967, when the first United Front ministry took over the administration of the UK-registered Calcutta Tramways Company—owned by both British and Indian shareholders. No compensation was paid as the properties and assets of the CTC were to remain with the shareholders. Eight years later, in 1973, the company proposed to the Union government that its assets be acquired by the state government in return for a suitable compensation.

An understanding was reached between the CTC and the Centre fixing the compensation amount at Rs 218 lakhs (£1,150,000), of which half was to be repatriated to Britain and the rest to be kept in India. The Centre then instructed the CTC to finalise the agreement after negotiating with the state government.

But the talks didn't make any headway. In 1976, the West Bengal government (headed by Congressman S.S. Ray) passed an Act nationalising the CTC. The Act laid down that the state government would deposit the amount agreed upon earlier (Rs 218 lakhs) in the City Civil Court, which was empowered to disburse the money among claimants.

The 1976 Act was an improvement over the 1974 agreement in as much as the entire compensation amount was to be retained in the country for distribution among the shareholders and credi-

tors. Nothing was to be paid to the company directly. This led the CTC to complain that the Act did not conform to the understanding it had reached with the Centre. In turn, the Centre suggested that the Left Front government, which was by then (1977) in power, amend the Act in order to honour the previous understanding. But the state government did no such thing. On the contrary, it argued that Rs 86 lakhs of the compensation amount was payable to it as taxes and so on.

With no agreement in sight, the CTC management filed a writ petition in early 1980 contesting the validity of the 1976 Act. Significantly, the company enlisted a Calcutta-based businessman, Saroj Poddar, to fight the case. Poddar is a CPI(M) sympathiser and a nephew of Anandilal Poddar, who is a close friend of Jyoti Basu's. Saroj is also the son-in-law of industrialist K.K. Birla—another good friend of Basu's.

The late advocate-general (AG) of West Bengal, S.K. Acharyya—a self-confessed Marxist—appeared on behalf of the state. During the hearing, he pleaded that both the contending parties wanted an out-of-court settlement and permission for this was granted. After discussing the matter with the CTC, Acharyya sent a settlement proposal to chief minister Jyoti Basu. The terms demanded by the company were startling. It wanted roughly twice the amount decided upon in 1974; Rs 218 lakhs to be paid as compensation to the company, a further Rs 134 lakhs as interest on this amount and another Rs 70 lakhs to account for the change in the exchange rate. What was even more startling, was that Acharyya noted that the company's claims "appeared to be justified". However, he recommended that only the Rs 218 lakhs be paid to the company at once and the rest be decided upon later.

The chief minister forwarded the proposal to the transport ministry, where it was shot down by the bureaucrats. Two reasons were advanced. First, that since there was no formal agreement between the CTC and either the Union or state government, there was no question of the Act having violated the 1974 understanding. Second—and far more importantly—the department pointed out that amounts recommended as interest charges and on account of exchange rate differences (totalling over Rs 2 crores) was not even claimed by the CTC in court!

Acharyya then modified the proposal but even this fell foul of the transport department. In due course, in July 1980, the AG came up with a third proposal: that the state government be allowed to withdraw the Rs 218 lakhs from the City Civil Court; pay half of this to the CTC, which it could repatriate; and retain the balance pending settlement of claims. On 8 July, the proposal reached the transport minister, who approved it at once. The file reached chief minister Basu the same day and he too promptly okayed it. In a week, the proposal also had the approval of the law minister. The government was clearly in a hurry.

For reasons that are not clear, the file remained with the transport minister for a few months. In April the following year, the issue took another curious little twist. The personal assistant to the transport minister, D.K. Marik—who was by status a clerk—sent a draft agreement to the AG with a covering note stating that he was directed by the transport minister to do so. It was not the same as the one approved by the government and when presented before the court by Acharyya, it was accepted the same day. The settlement stipulated that out of the Rs 218 lakhs, Rs 86 lakhs will be paid to the company for repatriation, another Rs 86 lakhs to the state government against its claims and Rs 46 lakhs will be kept in a Calcutta bank for use by the CTC in any manner it wished. All that the Indian shareholders got was a bank guarantee from the company to the state government for a mere Rs 20 lakhs.

Clearly, the Indian shareholders were done in at the end. But the manner in which the settlement was reached raises a number of questions. For one, how could Marik—a mere clerk—be authorised to send the draft agreement when the rules prescribe that nobody below the rank of joint secretary may do so? Why was the finance ministry bypassed in reaching the settlement? Why wasn't the final settlement proposal vetted by the Cabinet? Why was the settlement figure so much higher than that agreed on in 1974? Why did Acharyya recommend settlement proposals that were weighted so heavily in favour of the company? And, lastly, why the need to reach an out-of-court settlement when the 1976 Act clearly did not violate any formal agreement?

Only the answer to the last question has been forthcoming. The present transport minister, Shyamal Chakravarty, has claimed recently that the government went through with an out-of-court settlement as this was one of the pre-conditions laid down by the World Bank for granting a Rs 52 crore loan to the Calcutta Urban Transport Project (CUTP).



Calcutta tram: was the compensation paid to nationalise the service too generous?

How much did Basu know of the goings-on? That he approved and signed Acharyya's third settlement proposal is established. Basu was unavailable for comment when SUNDAY requested an interview. All he has said on the matter is: "I have nothing to say. All this is a calculated affair to malign my government." Perhaps. But this still leaves the question open of how far the chief minister was briefed on a settlement that violated government procedure and a state Act. That he was completely in the dark over an issue that involved some Rs 4 crores is somewhat far-fetched. Says Gyan Singh Sohanpal, Congress minister for transport when the Act was passed: "Jyoti Basu had no

business to go in for an out-of-court settlement which clearly violates the 1976 Act. Somebody must have made money."

That Marik's letter and details of the tram scam were leaked to the press soon after the Bengal Lamp and Banga Bhavan controversies surfaced made it all the more embarrassing for the government. If the suspicion over the CTC issue was that the government/party received money in return for a generous compensation, in the Bengal Lamp case, the chief minister was directly charged--with nepotism.

It came to light in the following manner. In June this year, Tapan Roy, the managing director of Bengal Lamp Works Limited, a medium-scale joint sector unit, wrote a letter to the former minister of public works, Jatin Chakraborty. Roy requested the minister, a member of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), one of the Left Front's minor constituents, that the PWD hitherto order all bulbs and fluorescent tubes from the company as it was incurring losses. Chakraborty wrote back saying that he had discussed the matter with the chief minister and instructed the PWD to order at least 53 per cent of its requirement from Bengal Lamp. When this exchange of letters came to Jyoti Basu's notice, he sent a stiffly worded note to Chakraborty that he had not issued "any directive for giving preference to Bengal Lamp". And that all he had done was to ask that "their prayer, along with other manufacturers", be considered.

Apparently, Chakraborty understood what had transpired very differently and was unwilling to pass up recording his version on paper. On 26 August, he made a startling notation in the file.

He recalled that sometime in 1978, "when Shri Chandan Basu (Jyoti Basu's son) was working in Bengal Lamp Works Ltd, he brought Shri Tapan Roy, managing director of the company, to see me. The latter requested that the state government should purchase all lamps from his company. I accordingly discussed this matter with the chief minister who was pleased to state—if my memory serves me right—that to the maximum extent possible we should purchase our lamps from that company, but nothing to this effect should be recorded in any file..." Although Chakraborty has not said as much publicly, the implications of this note are clear. First, that

A communist and a parliamentarian

Jyoti Basu sometimes appears more of the second than the first

Had Karl Marx been alive today, he would doubtless, have been pleased by the spread of communism. But he would probably have had to concede that not everything had gone according to plan. It wasn't the industrial societies of Germany and England that first went communist but backward Russia followed by agricultural China. And even in Eastern Europe, Marx's conception of revolution never really took off.

India's communists have preferred ballots to bullets and met with some success. Nobody embodies this approach better than Jyoti Basu, the patrician chief minister of West Bengal.

A product of Calcutta's St Xavier's Jyotibabu received his final grooming at London's Grav's Inn, and joined the Communist Party of India via the Communist Party of Great Britain. A typical Bengali *bhadralok* rather than a fire-eating communist, Basu is more suited to parliamentary politics. In fact, in private conversation, he often admits, "Revolution, don't talk about it. Maybe my grandchildren will never see it." Unlike many others of his generation, he realised early that politics could provide a career for him, and single-mindedly devoted himself to his chosen profession where he has climbed to the top. The longest surviving chief minister in the country, Basu, at 75, is the darling of the Bengali middle class, notwithstanding recent charges of corruption which have somewhat embarrassed him.

Like a true upper class Bengali, Basu stayed away from politics in the Thirties when others his age were going to jail for participating in the freedom movement. His father, Nishikanto Basu (an eminent physician trained in the USA), sent him to England to try for the ICS. Having failed to qualify in the civil service examination, Basu opted to become a barrister-at-law. In England, he came in touch with Krishna Menon and others through the Indian Majlis, and in the early Forties returned to India a communist.

Perhaps, due to his background, he did not have to start from scratch and was inducted as a leader into the trade union movement. In 1946, he along with two other communists—Rupchand Roy and Ratanlal Brahmin—was elected to the Legislative Assembly of undivided Bengal. After the Partition of 1947, he became the focal point of the two-member communist group (Rupchand Roy had opted to stay back in East Pakistan) in the state Assembly. Since then he has never looked back.

The CPI(M) knows that Basu is the vote-catcher for the party—no other party leader has his charisma and credibility. And as long as he rakes in the votes, the party will stand by him

In 1949, he married for the second time and by 1952 became a member of the politburo of the undivided Communist Party of India. The local bourgeois press took a liking to him. In Basu they found a man who did not hesitate to criticise Dr B.C. Roy, the legendary Congress chief minister of West Bengal and a friend of his father's.

After the food movement of 1966, the Leftists succeeded in creating a division in the state Congress: Ajoy Mukherjee, with a large chunk of his supporters, formed the Bangla Congress. In the 1967 Assembly elections, Congress lost the majority and Ajoy Mukherjee formed the first United Front ministry with Basu as his deputy. They came back to power for the second time in 1969. But this, however, proved to be a disaster. The consolidation of the Left was completed during 1972-77 when the Congress ministry led by Siddhartha Shankar Ray was in power. In the 1977 Lok Sabha elections, the Left, aligned with the Janata Party, led by P.C. Sen, to return to the political arena; and in the subsequent Assembly elections, the CPI(M) emerged

Jyoti Basu favoured a firm that his son was associated with and second, that he wanted it to be kept a secret.

When this noting was scooped by the Bengali daily *Anandabazar Patrika*, all hell broke loose. The CPI(M) charged Chakraborty with fabricating the contents of the note to malign Basu and the party. It made three demands: that Chakraborty apologise for the notation, that he withdraw it and, lastly, that he resign from the Cabinet. Meanwhile, the RSP fell in line behind Chakraborty and received support from another Front partner—the Forward Bloc (FB). Chakraborty agreed to apologise for writing the note but refused to accede the other two demands. In the end a major government crisis was narrowly averted when the minister resigned at the request of his party. The note, however,

There are those who believe that Jatin Chakraborty leaked on instructions from his party. Relations between the CPI(M) and the RSP have been strained for a while. But since the *panchayat* polls this year they have turned very bitter

is still in the files.

Bengal Lamp was not the only issue over which Chakraborty embarrassed the government. Even as the controversy was raging, Chakraborty dropped another bombshell—once again, the target was the chief minister. On 14 October, he wrote a personal letter to Basu in which he claimed that Bengal Lamp was not the only issue in which he obliged the chief minister in the matter of awarding contracts. He recalled that, in 1979, the contract to renovate the state government's guest house in New Delhi (Banga Bhavan) was transferred to D.P. Kumar and Company at the request of Basu. The firm is owned by a relative of Basu's close confidant. The contract which had been earlier awarded to Mackintosh Burn Company, was for a sum of Rs 85 lakhs and the renovation should have been complete in 1982. However, work is still on and will cost the government Rs 5 crores. Moreover, Ashok Mitra, then finance minister, objected strongly to the contract being awarded to D.P. Kumar in violation of all tender rules. Once again, this letter of Chakraborty was leaked to the press—this time to the Calcutta based English daily *The Telegraph*.

as the single largest party. By that time the Bangla Congress had been disbanded, and the CPI(M) came to power along with smaller parties as the Left Front.

In the last 11 years of Left Front rule, the CPI(M) has gobbled up, many of its partners in power, like the Biplabi Bangla Congress (a splinter group of the Bangla Congress), the Marxist Forward Bloc, the Bolshevik Party and two factions of the Socialists. The three other Left parties—the CPI, the RSP and the Forward Bloc—which are still in the Front, are under pressure to conform to CPI(M) rules.

The CPI(M) owes its spectacular growth to Jyoti Basu. As of now, he is both the goverament and the party, and nobody, either in the party or the government has the courage to question his supremacy. The party secretary, Saroj Mukherjee, swears by Jyotibabu, and the younger leaders in the party and the government—Biman Bose, Buddhadev Bhattacharyya and Asim Dasgupta—try to remain in his good books.

A family man, Basu, no doubt, has a soft corner for his son, Chandan, and close relatives like Jayanta Roy, his brother-in-law, Manjula Roy, his sister-in-law, and nephew, Amal Dutta, who is also a CPI(M) MP. However, family ties have of late been a source of embarrassment. Chandan's business links with industrialist Jit Paul and his role in getting bulk orders for Bengal Lamp, where he was a junior executive, have raised eyebrows. The inclusion of Jayanta Roy on the board of various state undertakings has been questioned in party forums. The out-of-turn contract given to a Calcutta-based Marwari industrialist for the supply of road rollers to the state government, the release of prime government land in Salt Lake to party sympathisers, the appointment of a close relative to contact NRIs for investments in the state have led to allegations of nepotism against Basu recently.

But then, nothing succeeds like success. And the CPI(M) knows that Basu is the vote-catcher for the party—no other party leader has his charisma or credibility. And as long as he rakes in the votes, the party will stand by him.

To determine what his major contributions to West Bengal have been, a state he has ruled for 11 years, is somewhat difficult. He has improved the chronic power crisis and constructed Asia's largest stadium in Salt Lake. Besides, the CPI(M) controls all the *zilla parishads* where *panchayats* look after funding of rural development. But as far as the industrial scene is concerned, the condition is bleak. Factories have put up shutters and thousands of workers have lost employment. But then, as a *bhadralok*, Basu has tried to maintain law and order, and his party has become identified with Bengali ethnicity. And therein lies the contradiction of Basu's Marxist rule in West Bengal.

Tarun Ganguly

Jatin Chakraborty ; (inset) photocopy of the controversial note : embarrassing Basu



FROM

RAJ & RAJ

The name people trust



A comfortable choice of Executive Chairs to help you relax while you work

The latest models, crafted from the finest stainless steel and upholstered with the best foam leather. In a range of dignified colours.
A truly exclusive range, at prices to suit every budget.

RAJ & RAJ
(FURNITURE) PVT. LTD.
7, Camac Street (Azimganj House),
Calcutta-700017. Phone : 44-3392, 43-5221

iaa 3571

Understandably, the CPI(M) is very concerned about the source of the leaks. And, naturally, suspicion has fallen on Chakraborty himself. Also suspect is his trusted PWD secretary, who has since resigned—the flamboyant, articulate and powerful S.M. Murshed. Both have denied the allegation.

On the face of it, Chakraborty had a more plausible motive to leak. Recently, he has felt personally slighted over two government decisions. The first took away charge of the state housing board from the public works ministry. And the second transferred the job of laying roads from the PWD to the *zilla parishads*. Chakraborty felt that the decisions were part of a plan to curb his powers.

However, his motives need not have been only personal. There are those who believe that Chakraborty leaked on instructions from his party (the RSP). Relations between the CPI(M) and its Front partner have been strained for quite a while. But since the *panchayat* polls in March this year, they have turned very bitter. For one, the RSP (and other minor constituents) was unhappy over the manner in which the tickets were distributed. The RSP felt that the CPI(M) was trying to extend its influence at the cost of the other Front partners. That CPI(M)-controlled *panchayats* have been receiving more funds than those held by others has been another point of contention. The insecurity of the minor Front partners has become amplified with younger members of the CPI(M) publicly claiming that the Front has outlived its utility and that the party should go it alone.

Another view attributes the leaks to a divided state bureaucracy. This theory paints Murshed as an ambitious civil servant with an overriding ambition to become chief secretary. (It is well known that Murshed has serious differences with the present incumbent, Rathin Sengupta, and that the two head factions within the state bureaucracy.) And that when he realised that his ambition would never be fulfilled, he decided to spill the beans.

There are those in the state civil service who believe that Murshed was unable to come to terms with his diminished status. He was once very close to Basu and during the second United Front government was appointed joint secretary of the home ministry, superceding many others. Basu, who was in charge of home then, was instrumental in fixing the appointment. Murshed served Basu well. During the time that Basu was locked in a battle with the then chief minister, Ajoy Mukherjee, Murshed personally drafted the former's angry letters to the latter. Ironically, his decline began after Basu was elected chief minister for the first time in 1977. As power secretary, Murshed fell out with finance minister Ashok Mitra over the despatch of a team of experts from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce to the Santaldih power plant. In Basu's absence, Mitra was deputed to look after power and Murshed took the decision to send the team without consulting him. Mitra recalled the team and had an angry exchange of words with Murshed.

Things were never the same for Murshed after this. After being shifted to the transport department as director-general, he was moved once again to the PWD as secretary, where he became close to Jatin Chakraborty. Murshed admits that he drafted the Bengal Lamp note that caused the sensation. But he told SUNDAY that he only toned down and edited a longer and stronger note written by the former PWD minister. To be fair, Murshed has more than just denied that he leaked. He challenges: "If the journalist concerned got the documents related to the Bengal Lamp and tramways issues from me, then I discharge him from the ethical obligation of not disclosing his source. He is at complete liberty to disclose the identity of the person if I was that person."



Another view attributes the leaks to a divided state bureaucracy. The theory paints S.M. Murshed as an ambitious civil servant who heads a faction in the state bureaucracy. And that when Murshed's ambition was thwarted, he decided to spill the beans

S.M. Murshed: strong denial

The three scandals draw attention to a question which has never been satisfactorily answered: where does the CPI(M) raise its funds from? The official line is that the party collects its money mainly through *chandas* (small donations from the people) and subscription from the cadres. When asked how this suffices to fight elections, CPI(M) members invariably resort to the argument that the party spends much less on electioneering than, say, the Congress. But this clearly doesn't wash. For example, the CPI(M) contested about 200 Assembly seats in the last West Bengal election and about 30 Lok Sabha seats from the state. At a very conservative Rs 2 lakhs per Assembly seat and Rs 20 lakhs per Lok Sabha seat, the money the party needed to fight the election would have been in the order of Rs 8 crores. Although this is an estimate for West Bengal alone, it strains the imagination to believe that such an amount could have come from *chandas* and subscriptions.

Clearly, the bulk of the CPI(M)'s funds, as those of other parties, have to come from somewhere else. One view—and a cynical one—is that the party accepts hefty payoffs in return for favours to big industry. Congressmen in West Bengal view Basu's friendship with some of the state's industrialists with a great deal of suspicion. Basu is close to a number of businessmen such as B.M. Khaitan, K.K. Birla, R.P. Goenka, Rajen Poddar, the Todi brothers and some multinational houses like Brittania and Hindustan Lever.

If the party does collect its funds from industry, then it stands to reason that most of it must come from West Bengal. True, the Marxists are in power in Kerala too, but the state is virtually bereft of industry. According to estimates 80 per cent or more of the CPI(M)'s funds are generated in Bengal. Says Saugata Roy, state Congress MLA and former Union minister: "The CPI(M) is totally dependent on Jyoti Basu for funds."

How much the three scams are related to the search for party funds is a question worth exploring. No one—not even his most bitter critics—has ever alleged that Basu has taken money for himself. But scandals involving a government have a way of gravely undermining the image of the man who heads it. And Basu will have this very much on his mind in the days to come.

Rajiv Bagchi and Mukund Padmanabhan/*Calcutta*

Monthly Income Unit Scheme with Extra Bonus *plus* Growth(11)



Bring prosperity into your home

Who all can benefit
- All individuals, including minors
- Trusts, Registered Societies and Co operative Societies

Now you can invest in multiples of Rs.100/-
- The face value of Units is Rs 10/
- the minimum investment is Rs 1,000/ and in multiples of Rs 100/ thereafter
- There is no upper limit to the investment

Tax concessions
- The exemption for Units (under section 80L of the Income Tax Act, 1961) -upto Rs 10,000/-
- For individuals there is no tax deduction at source

Now an added facility
- You can now send a bank draft for the amount of your investment -- minus the bank draft commission, to the nearest UTI office This facility is available in places where UTI has no office
- This is in addition to the existing facility of submitting your application to the designated bank

Benefit under MISG(11)

12% p.a paid every month in advance

+2% minimum appreciation in capital on maturity

+ Bonus Dividend in 4th year

Those joining on or before the 15th are eligible for the full month's dividend

Paid in ADVANCE
60 monthly post-dated dividend warrants for all five years sent in advance along with the certificate! The warrants are payable at par in designated banks

Duration of the scheme
- This is a 5 year scheme However, option of full encashment at par is available after 3 years

Pledging facility
- Though transfers are not allowed, it is possible to pledge the Units with the bank for the purpose of obtaining a loan

Application forms available at

All UTI offices, Chief Representatives, Agents, and select Hindustan Petroleum pumps

All branches of Canara Bank in the Southern Region
All branches of UCO Bank in the Eastern Region
All branches of Central Bank in the Northern and Western Regions

Mail the following coupon to

Bombay, Post Bag 11410, Tel 9663767/6201995
Calcutta, Post Bag 60 Tel 909391
Madras, Post Bag 5063, Tel 587433/580938
New Delhi, Post Bag 5, Tel 3318636

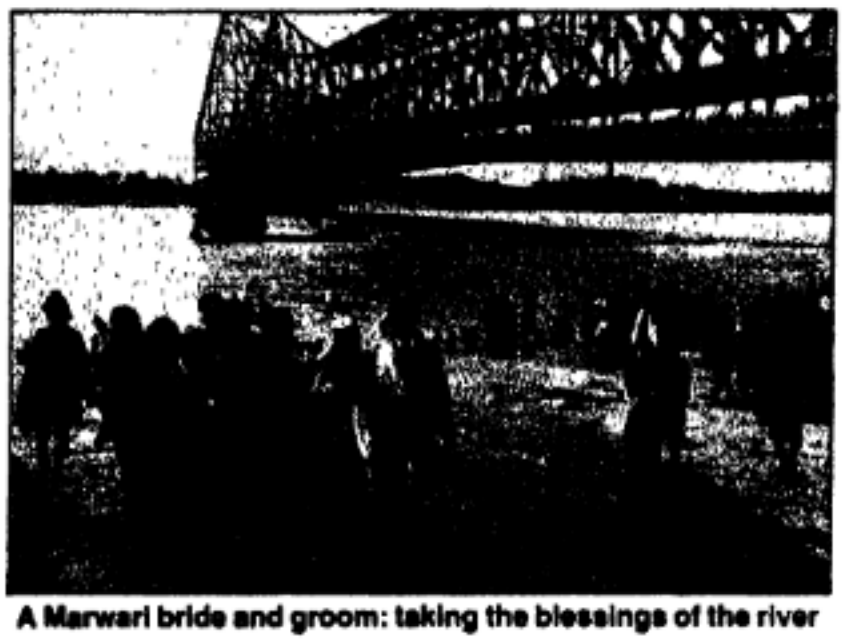
Please send me the FREE MISG(11) 88 brochure
Name
Address
Pin

ADRGIT/JTI-134 88 A

MISG(11)-
It's like a monthly pay-check.

Open from Nov. 1 to Dec. 31, 1988

UNIT TRUST OF INDIA
(A Public Sector Financial Institution)



A Marwari bride and groom: taking the blessings of the river

CALCUTTA REVISITED

Thirteen years after his classic work Raghubir Singh returns to photograph the city of joy



Monsoon in Calcutta: it doesn't rain but pours

I have been intrigued by Calcutta, ever since I first visited it in 1961. My fir



Why did I do a second book on Calcutta? I could have simply reprinted the 1975 work. After all, it had had its measure of success. But then, success is not the reason why one does a book, in the first place, unless you only have an eye to the market.

One should do a book because the subject or the place intrigues one. It hooks you. It throws up a package of visual problems that are going to take hard work and patience to overcome. In doing so, you enlarge your *oeuvre*.

I have been intrigued by Calcutta, ever since I first visited it in 1961. My first drive across the Howrah bridge and over the Hooghly is still freshly etched in my mind. I have lost count of the times I have subsequently retraced that route Yet, the bridge never fails to excite me each time, and any time of day or night. For me the bridge is also a metaphor, for the many other parts of Calcutta that have captivated me.

But to be captivated by Calcutta doesn't mean that you know how to photograph it. My earlier photographs were almost all in the documentary and journalistic vein. The emphasis was on *doing Calcutta*, not on the photographs themselves. Above all, there was a failure of form.

All of this became clear to me within two years of the publication of the earlier work. So over the years I had been toying with the idea of photographing again in Calcutta and publishing a new album. Slowly, from the early 1980s, I



rive across the Howrah bridge is still etched in my mind



(Clockwise from left) Kali Puja at the Marble Palace: invoking the goddess; the Kali Temple complex: religion, the great leveller; Aparna Sen: talent and beauty; a Marwari wedding reception: celebrations in the park







began to do so. This time I had no plans and no formulas. I simply walked the streets, visited homes, studios, theatres and cafes. My approach was intuitive. I wanted to stumble on to things.

When I began editing the photographs, small sets began to emerge: on architecture, on the interiors of old houses, on the lanes, on the intense life of the streets, on the artistic world and on the middle class. I began to expand these sets and look for more complex possibilities. I had now begun to learn

The photographer cannot usurp the writer's territory—analysis. Yet, the p

how to photograph Calcutta.

Photographing Calcutta's streets and playing tennis have close parallels. You anticipate, you react by reflex, you position yourself by intuition. Your opponent is the scoundrel time. There are those times and quite frequently too when you net the ball. But you persist in going for that ace. You have trained yourself for that winner.

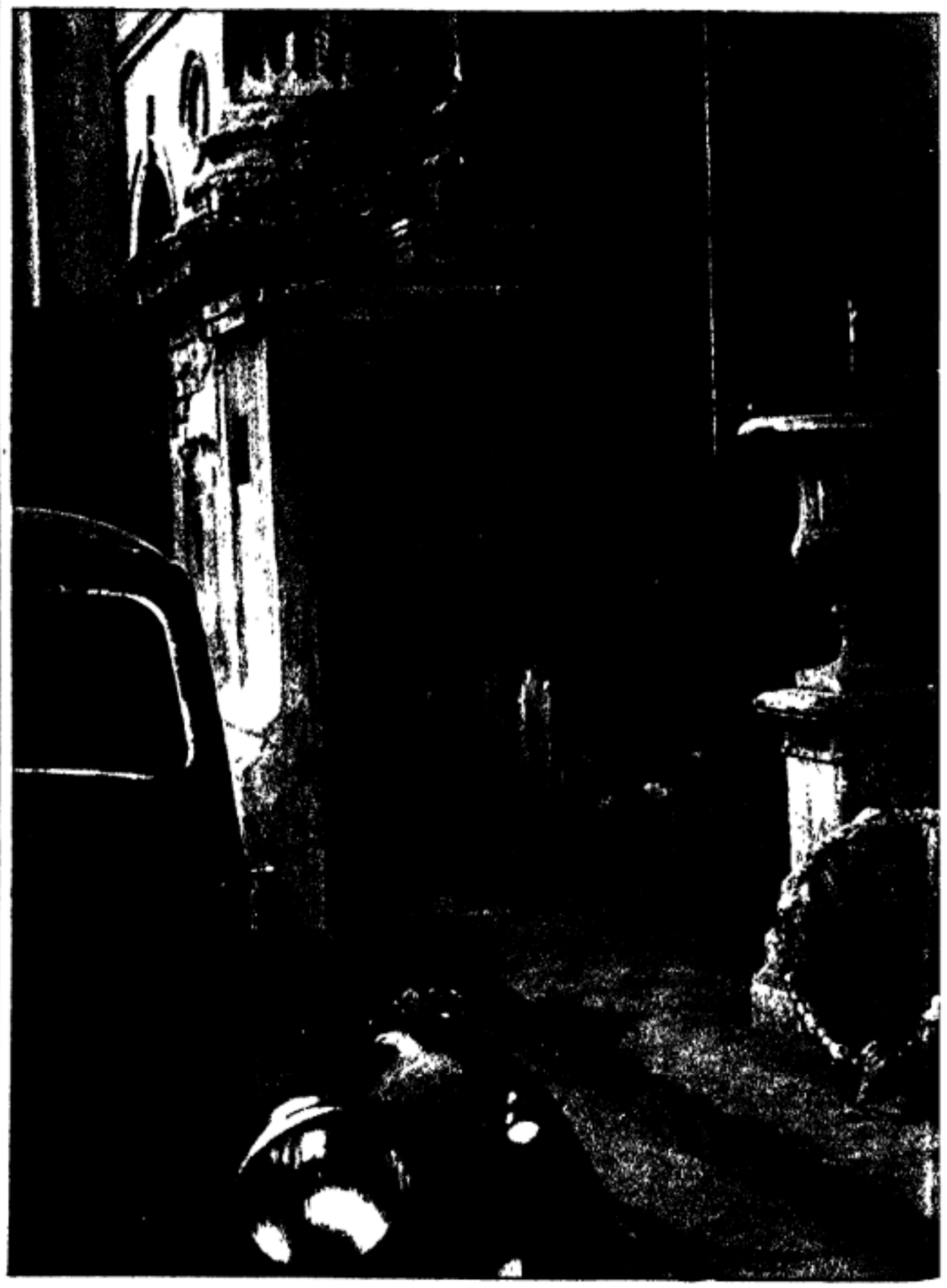
Soon I discovered I had discarded the moral baggage of journalism and the sociological stance. I was no longer worried about whether something was being done about Calcutta or whether it was indeed a dying city. In the context of











the dumb camera and the dumb photograph, these issues are irrelevant. The photograph asks no questions and provides no answers. The photographer cannot usurp the writer's territory—analysis. His own turf is the dumb visual world.

Yet, the photographer can infuse his photographs with psychological intimacy, he can look deep into the faces of people, he can add atmosphere, he can add punch with patina and complex detail. And whether he is photographing

VIEW FROM THIS SIDE



tographer can add atmosphere and complex detail





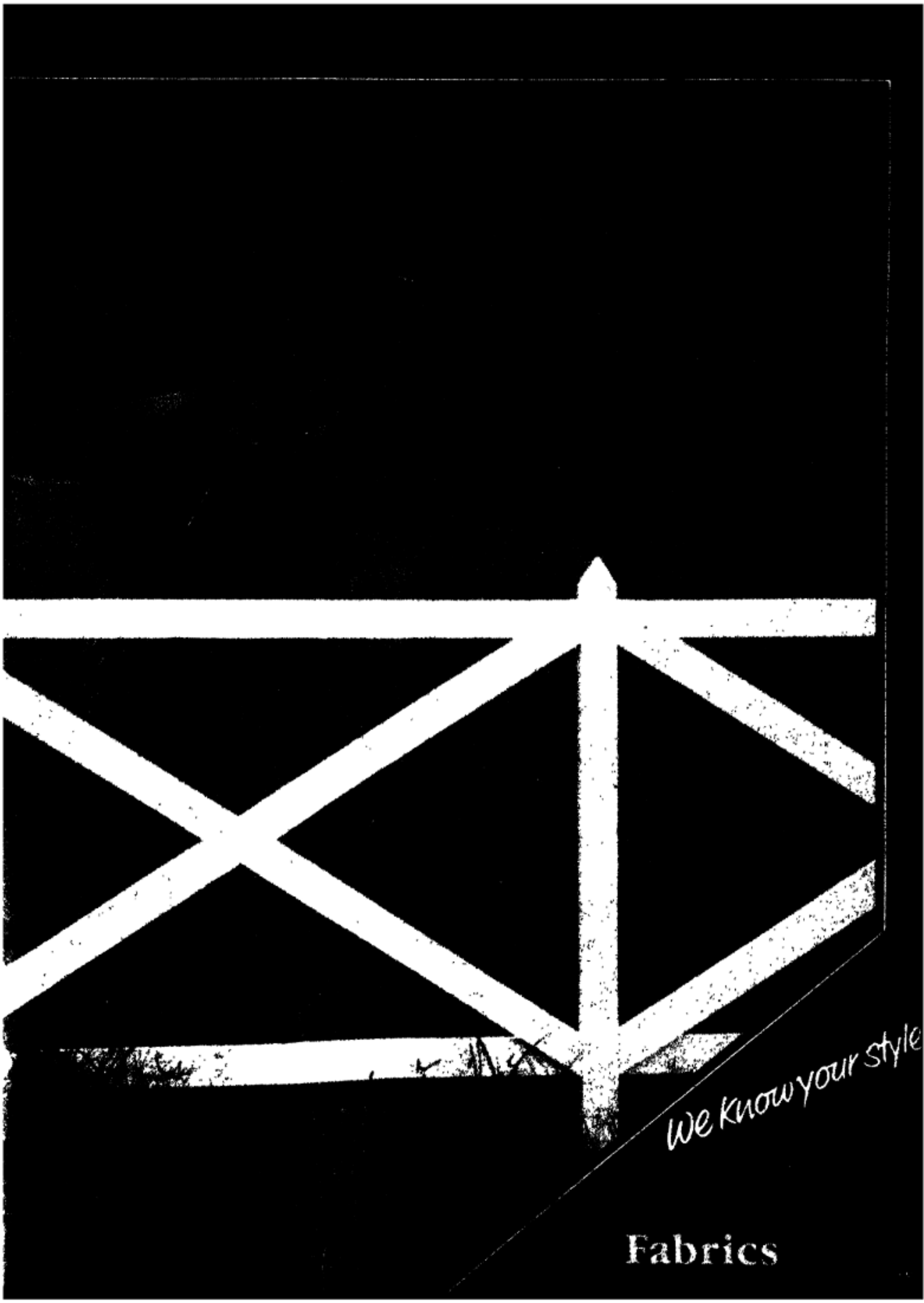


(Clockwise from top left) A traffic snarl: order of the day; women of the Sen household worship the *tulsi*: a tradition lives on; Dr Mihir Mitra's drawing room: classy decor; Subhas Chandra Bose's statue: an unusual frame; a porter naps: taking a well-deserved rest; in Kumartuli: the sacred and the profane

Continued on Page 50

It takes a lot more to ruffle you




We Know your style
Fabrics

A VISION CO
IN BHILAI

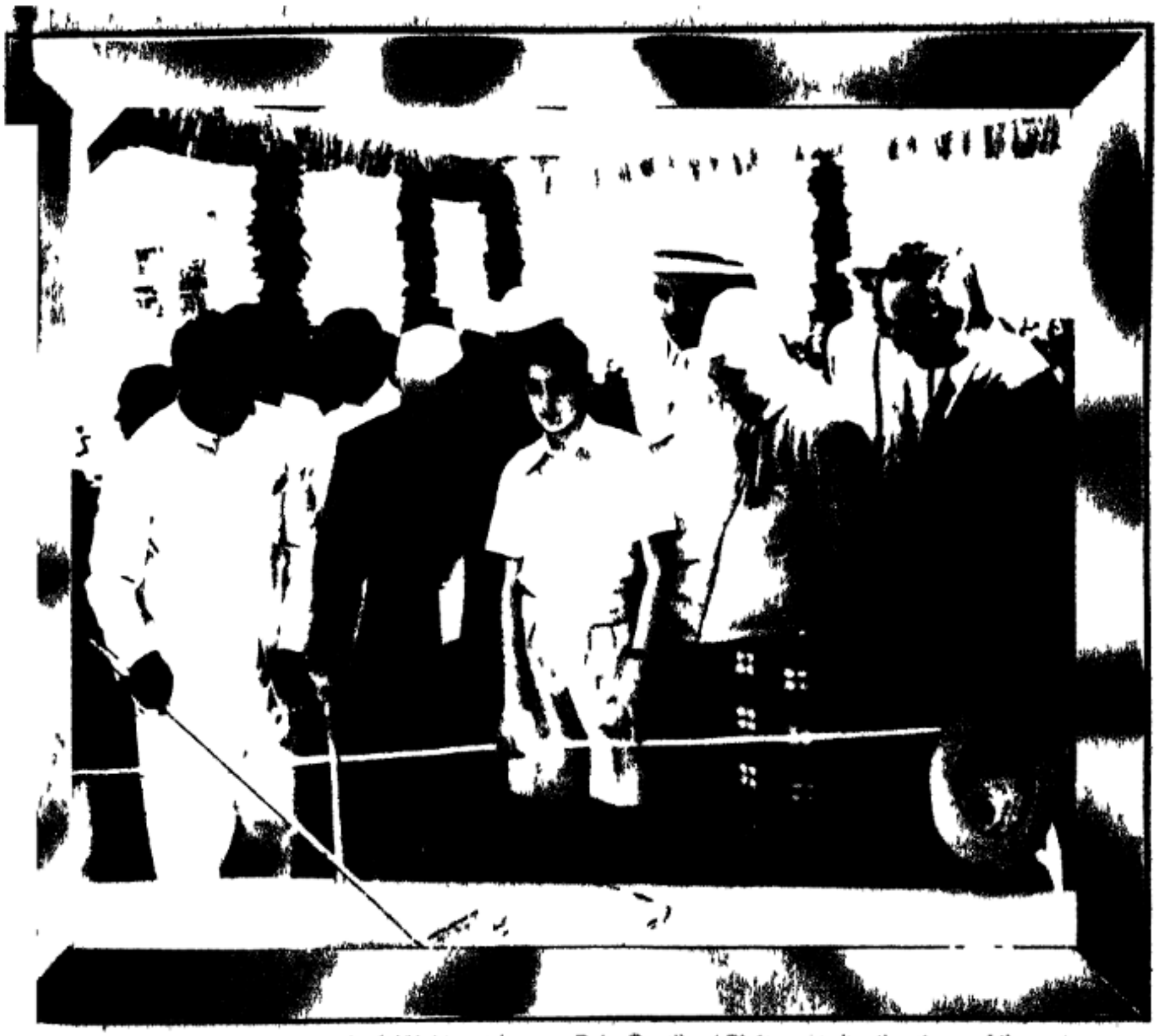
THREE GENERATIONS OF COMMITMENT TO STEEL

A pledge was made in Steel in 1953. It started as a vision, transformed into reality and renewed as a mission.

A bold step was taken in the fifties to set up three integrated steel plants at Rourkela, Bhilai and Durgapur in one stroke—unparalleled in the history of any nation. They grew under heavy odds—nurtured by Mrs.Indira Gandhi—and have come to complete fruition at Bhilai , where the four million tonne expansion project stands dedicated to the nation.This coincides with the heralding of the Nehru Birth Centenary celebrations. It was on 27th October —28 years ago — that Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the Rail and Structural Mill of Bhilai. From one million tonnes then to four million tonnes now.

The mission has been renewed in the third generation. A bolder step has been taken to rejuvenate the public sector steel industry by modernising the four integrated steel plants at Durgapur, Rourkela, Burnpur and Bokaro and setting up a giant steel plant at Vizag for a faster economic growth.

MES TRUE



Jawaharlal Nehru and young Rajiv Gandhi at Bhilai— seeing the shape of things to come

This is a commitment to the future—to enter the 21st century with a resolve of steel

STEEL AUTHORITY OF INDIA LIMITED
Steel Makers to the Nation

m&m/SAIL 88

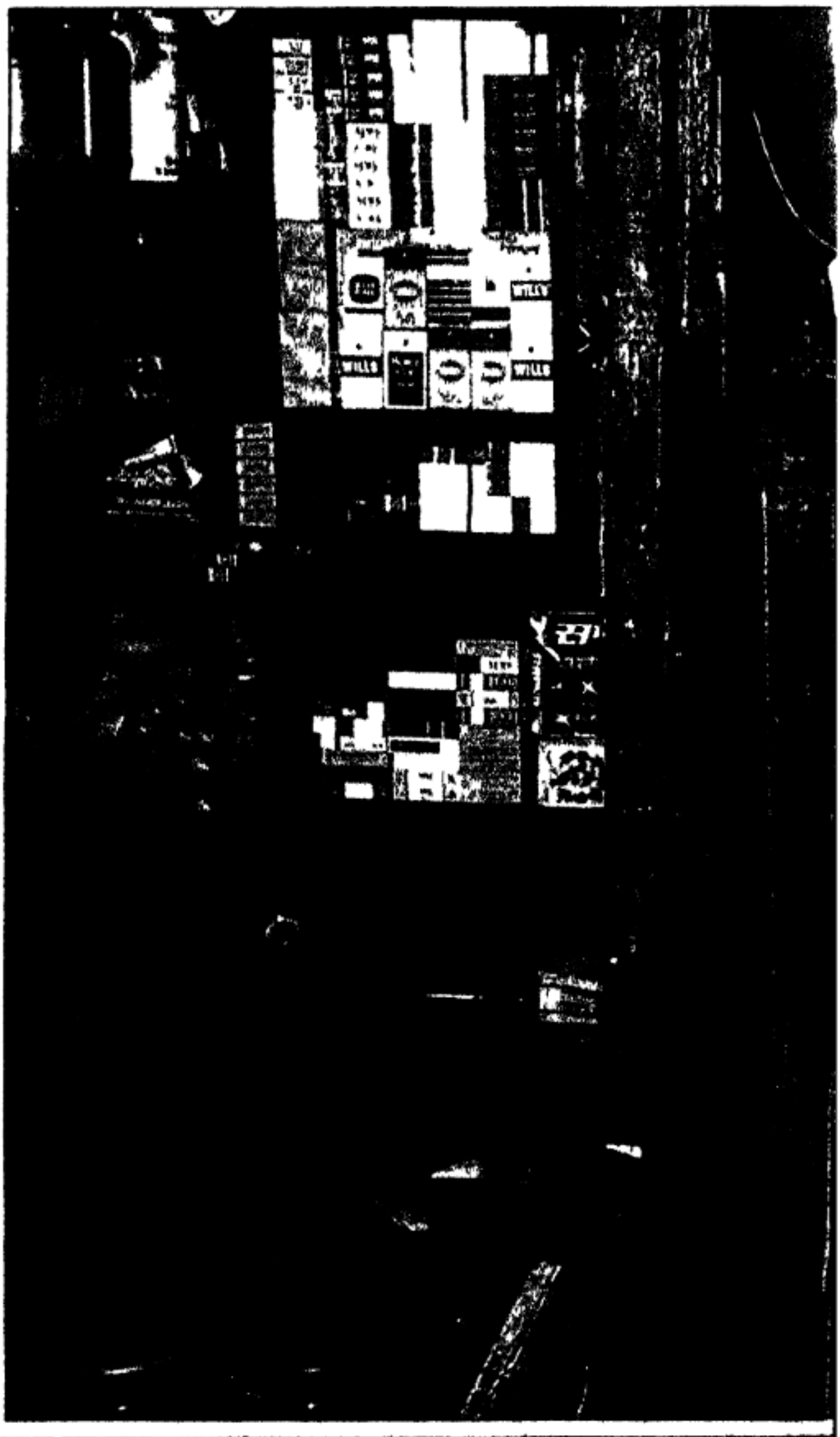
There is a price one pays for working in Calcutta. For me, invariably, it mea

in teeming Calcutta or in Timbuctoo, he must emphasise the ordinary rather than the extraordinary In other words, the timeless over the timebound

In spite of the dumb visual world in which I work, the ordinary life of Calcut ta does make me worry, though those worries have no place in the photo graphs My worries are now rather specific I worry about Kumartuli being turned into a high rise complex I worry



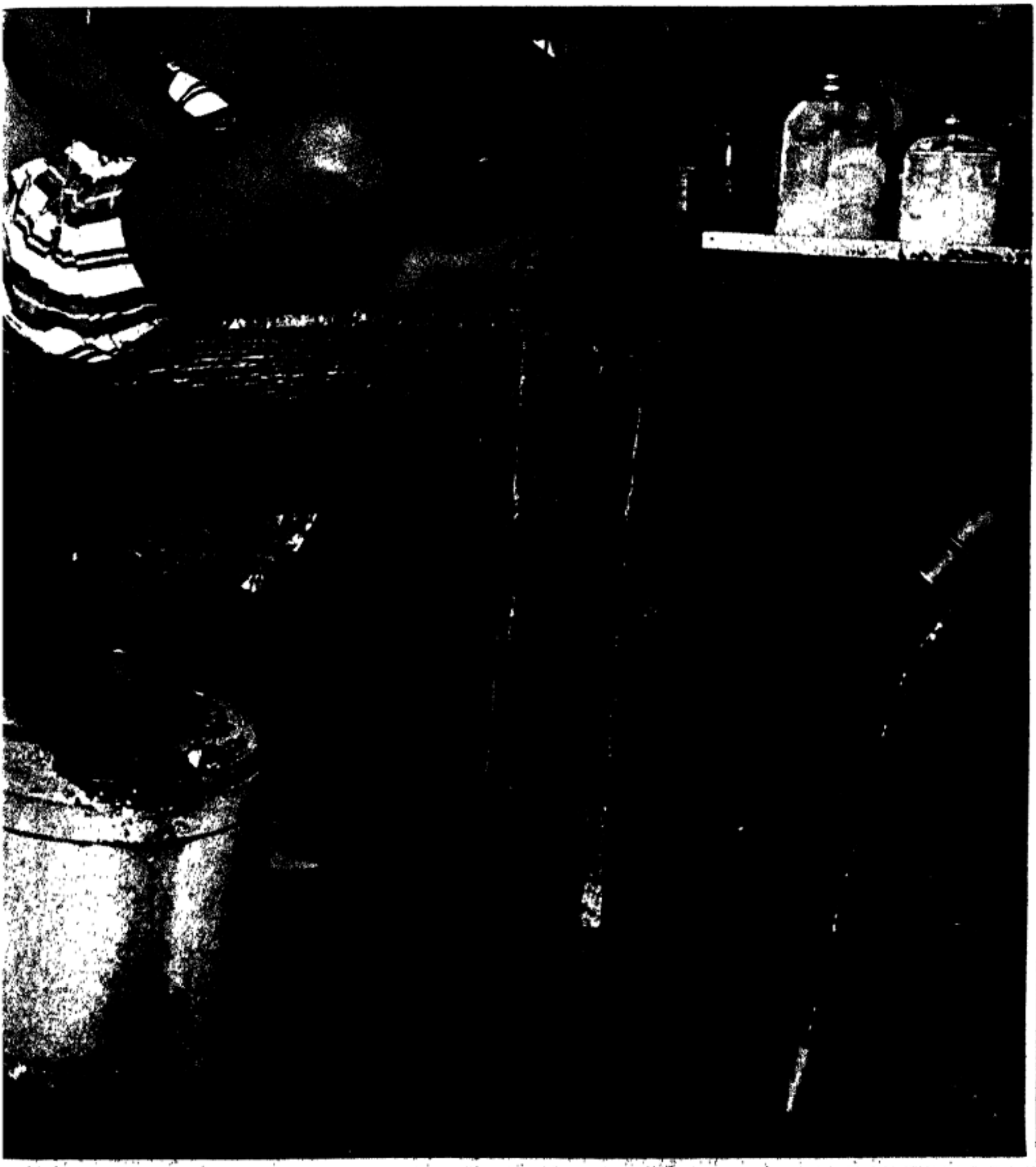
about the demolition of Manmotho Ghosh's home with that wonderful room full of musician's portraits I worry whether the *baul* will sing in the streets several years later I worry whether women wearing red-bordered saris will still do *puja* before the *tulsi* plant a generation from now I worry whether the traditional Kali and Durga images will survive I worry about what effect electronics will have on the traditional life and art of Calcutta I worry about Babu Das, the rag-picker and pavement dweller, who will not budge from the





cold, and high fever. Yet I have never fled the city

(Clockwise from top left) College Street: city exotica; hawking tea and cigarettes: cramped quarters; a street scene: the business of living



A lifetime of work cannot exhaust the infinite possibilities of Calcutta



street. Will he survive another monsoon?

Then there are those worrying aspects that are here to stay: the floodings, the crowding, the traffic jams and the anarchy of the street. Once, during Durga Puja, I was caught in a traffic jam in Gariahat for two hours. As I waited, I steeled myself into a kind of helpless relaxation—or was it stupor?

There is a price one pays for working in Calcutta. For me, invariably, it means a cold, a rasping throat and often high fever. I have never got used to the dust and pollution in the streets or the unhealthy and stagnant air-conditioning of hotels and restaurants. On each trip I have been knocked out for days. The putrid water in the city's taps makes me sick. Yet, I have never fled the city.

Often the Hooghly has been my escape, even in the heat of June. In this scorching season life on the Hooghly is absorbing and more interesting than at any other time. People are swimming, diving, being massaged, and taking their time over rites and prayers. A walk along the Hooghly is a tonic. However, this will have to be included in another volume.

For a photographer in Calcutta, there



(Top) Waterlogged streets: milk vendors make their rounds; (bottom) Durga's departure: a poignant moment

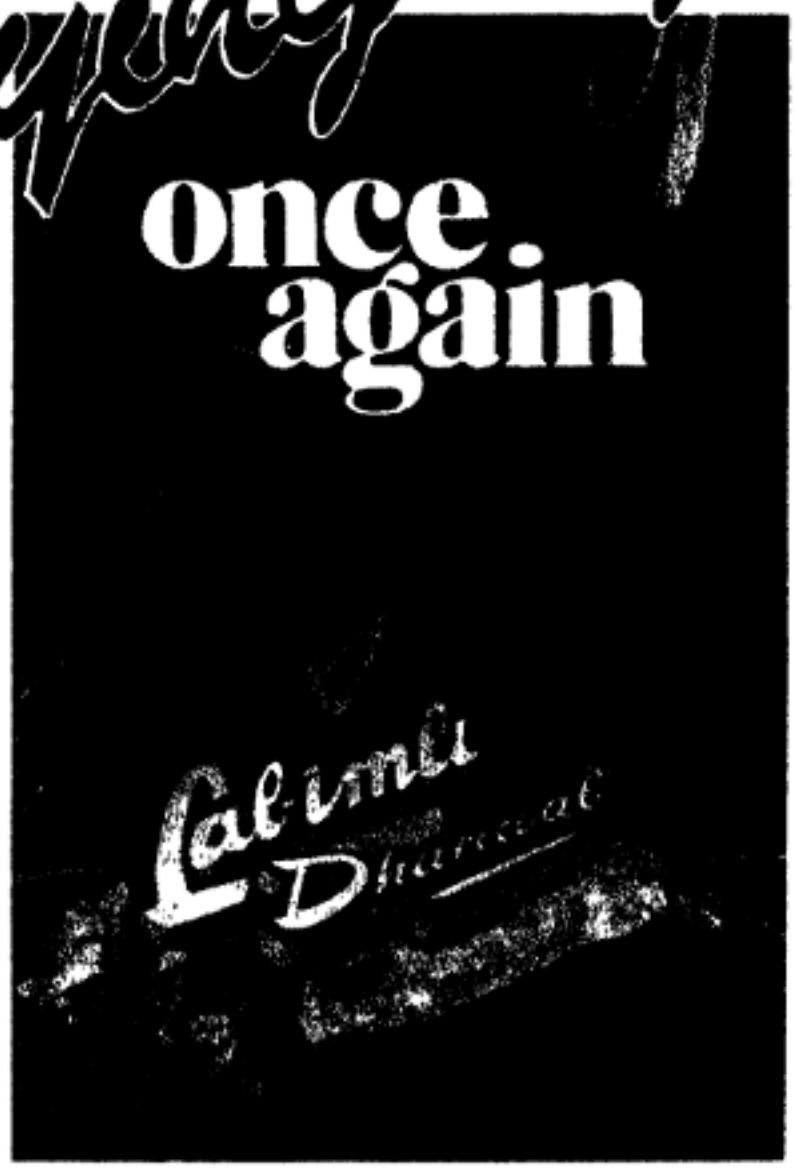
can only be two seasons: good photographs and bad photographs. A lifetime of work from one June to another cannot exhaust the infinite possibilities of Calcutta. The lure of the city's lanes, the surprises in the streets, the complexity of its life are both exhausting and rejuvenating. This powerhouse of a city saps one's energy but simultaneously it bestows rich artistic rewards. It is the most intense city I know —that is what makes me return again and again.

Raghubir Singh

Calcutta. The Home and the Street, by Raghubir Singh. Published by Thames and Hudson, London 1988.

Flying high

once again



Suitings exclusive
for all seasons

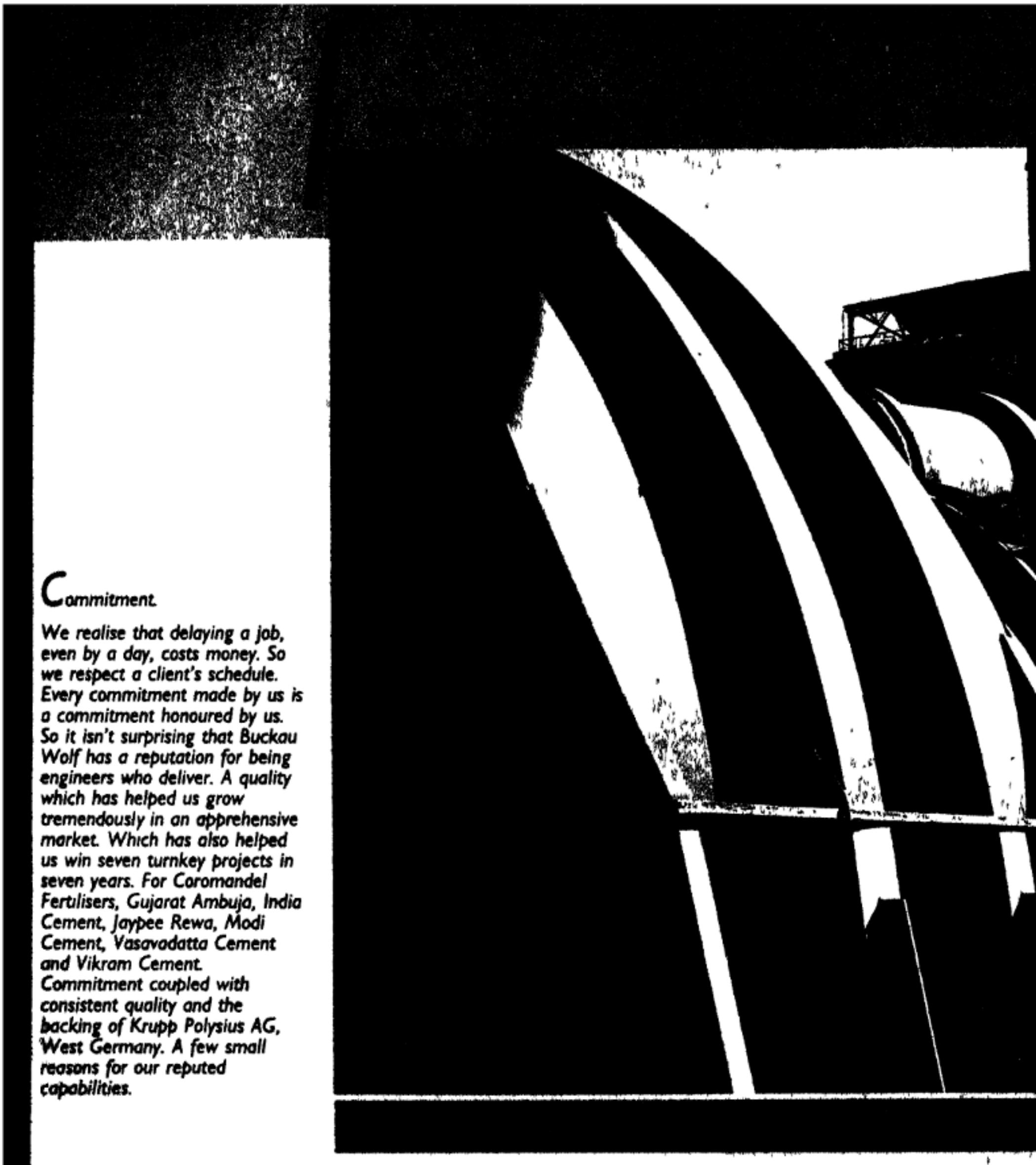


Lal-imli
Dhariwal

The Unforgettable Twins

In Quest of Nehru's Dream...
BIC Weaves





Commitment.

We realise that delaying a job, even by a day, costs money. So we respect a client's schedule. Every commitment made by us is a commitment honoured by us. So it isn't surprising that Buckau Wolf has a reputation for being engineers who deliver. A quality which has helped us grow tremendously in an apprehensive market. Which has also helped us win seven turnkey projects in seven years. For Coromandel Fertilisers, Gujarat Ambuja, India Cement, Jaypee Rewa, Modi Cement, Vasavadatta Cement and Vikram Cement. Commitment coupled with consistent quality and the backing of Krupp Polysius AG, West Germany. A few small reasons for our reputed capabilities.



BUCKAU WOLF
More than engineers. People with a sense of values.

KRUPP

AHEAD OF THE 100's



Death of a soldier

Terrorists gun down Major General B.N. Kumar, chairman of the Bhakra Beas Management Board

PUNJAB

It was the beginning of yet another routine day for Major General B.N. Kumar. On 7 November at 9 am the chairman of the Bhakra Beas Management Board had just stepped into the car after waving goodbye to his wife Sheela and dog Buzzo. The chauffeur revved up the car and as it headed towards the main gate of the bungalow in Chandigarh's sector 35, the major general settled down, probably mulling over the things that he would have to tackle at work that day. It was then that the gunfire was heard. By then, the car had already turned the corner and was out of Sheela Kumar's sight who stood at the door.

Curiosity and terror made her rush out of the bungalow and onto the street. As she watched with growing horror, a blue Maruti flashed past. But it was only when she saw the chauffeur screaming wildly that the truth struck home. And then panic took over. She dashed for the car and wrenched open the rear door. A gruesome sight greeted her. "BN was sitting there with his eyes wide open," said the distraught Mrs Kumar. "Only his forehead was completely... smashed. He was there and yet not there. I did not even know that he figured on the terrorists' hit list. Oh God..." she said, as she wept inconsolably.

It is said that there were three men in the Maruti who forced Kumar's driver to stop; one of them then came out of the Maruti and shot the armyman in the forehead. For some time now Major General Kumar had been in the centre of a raging controversy: that he, as the chairman of the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB), had been responsible for the floods in Punjab. The rumours spread like wildfire especially after Balwant Singh, the former finance minister who is desperately trying to make a comeback to the political arena, charged that it was Kumar's decision to release the excess waters of the Gobind Sagar that had brought misery to the lives of thousands of people in the state.

Obviously many in the marooned villages, overcome by their own misery, believed this fantastic tale. But few could have guessed the truth: not only was B.N. Kumar not responsible for the decision taken but he was abroad when all this happened.

On his return, he learned of the vilification campaign launched against him but he never once shunned responsibility for his subordinates' actions. The heat and dust raised over the unfortunate controversy thus clouded the hitherto impeccable record of the armyman who had been on deputation with the BBMB for the last two and a half years.



S.S. Ray pays homage to the major general; (inset) Kumar: tragic end

The Prime Minister when apprised of the raging controversy and the charges against Kumar did not hesitate to give him a clean chit during a press conference in Chandigarh. But by then, the damage had already been done: the terrorists had found a prize target. And on the second death anniversary of General A.S. Vaidya, who was also gunned down by extremists, they shot dead Kumar, who had distinguished himself both as an armyman and an administrator.

Meanwhile, the situation in Punjab is fast deteriorating and the initial advantage earned by the government following the success of Operation Black Thunder has all but been wiped out. The recent bomb blast in Batala which killed 25 people and the mindless massacre of migrant labourers in Ludhiana are just reminders that peace in Punjab is still a distant dream.

Though the government has taken a few precautions to prevent a further acceleration in violence by sending security forces to surround the headquarters of the Damdami Taksal on the eve of Diwali, the police have failed to control the law and order situation. The police had been fearing the worst ever since Akal Takht chief Jasbir Singh Rode announced a *sarbat khalsa* at the Golden Temple complex during Diwali. Later, however, Rode called it off.

The tremendous goodwill that the government had earned in the wake of Operation Black Thunder is now a thing of the past. And as the death toll mounts, the government's promises of bringing peace to Punjab seem to have been in vain.

Rita Sharma/*Chandigarh*

A gamble that paid off

Popular support for the CM's 'purge' forces the dropped ministers to lie low

ASSAM

For a few uncertain weeks, it seemed as if Assam's young chief minister would have to abandon his post after just two years in power. But the tremors generated by the massive reshuffle in the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) ministry on 22 October have now subsided, the dissidents have retreated, and Prafulla Mahanta still reigns supreme. Not even the heavyweights among the 12 ministers who were axed—and their number was considerable—could tilt the scales of power. No doubt in the heat of the moment, a lot of angry noises were made. But, apparently, none of these rattled either Mahanta or the home minister Bhrigu Phukan or the PWD minister Atul Bora, who comprised the trio that had effected the reshuffle.

Lalit Rajkhowa, the influential minister of transport and power and a Phukan follower, who was dropped, thundered, "We could have left the party before the swearing-in ceremony and brought down the government. But we are not selfish like him (Mahanta) and are more concerned with the interests of the people." The former health and agriculture minister, Chandra Mohan Patowary, also an important figure, described his exclusion as "an insult to the people of his constituency" and to the organisation to which he had originally belonged, the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chhattra Parishad (AJYCP). Biraj Sarma, former minister of food and civil supplies, once thought to be invincible, dared anyone to prove that he was corrupt. Even the low-profile ex-veterinary minister, Nagen Sarma, dashed off an angry letter to the chief minister to demand an explanation for his dismissal.

Predictably, the first phase of the fall from power saw the former ministers holding a series of meetings which were said to have also drawn over 30 MLAs. But apart from nebulous statements about a "future course of action which might demand a change of leadership in the AGP", nothing concrete emerged from these parleys. It was rumoured that Mahanta had sent his emissaries to the dropped ministers and had offered to rehabilitate them in "respectable positions". It was also said that he had even attempted to quell the impending rebellion by offering to quit and call for the imposition of President's Rule in Assam. These reports were, however, denied by Mahanta, who it finally emerged stood on much firmer ground than his opponents.

For just when the AGP seemed to heading towards a crisis, the dissidents abandoned their decision to demand a change in the party leadership. Reason: many within the AGP felt that the reshuffle was Mahanta's master-stroke as it was aimed at winning back the confidence and support of the Assamese, who were getting increasingly disillusioned with the party.

Popular disgruntlement was reflected in the repeated demands made by the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) to remove all those ministers who were facing allegations of corruption as well as in frequent exposes of the misdemeanours of certain ministers in the normally sycophantic regional press. Obviously, Mahanta, Phukan and Bora were aware of the storm their decision might raise, but hoped that the people's support for their "purge" would offset the affected individuals' annoyance. And the gamble paid off.

The last nail in the dropped ministers' coffin was driven by Mahanta's own admission that seven of the 12 ministers who were axed did not face any corruption charges, thereby implying that the other five did. And the five he did not name were those very heavyweights who had stridently denounced his action: Biraj Sarma, Rajkhowa, Patowary, Digen Bora and Thaneswar Bora. Yet another minister, Abhijit Sarma, it was pointed out by top AGP sources, had also been a liability as he was an accused in the murder of R. Parthasarathy, the former commissioner of Upper Asaam, during the agitation.



Prafulla Mahanta and Biraj Sarma (second from right) during a tour of flood-hit areas: falling out

When Mahanta had himself identified the undesirable elements in the AGP it was hardly likely that these people would be able to win the support of the people. Mahanta's rationale for excluding the other ministers was described by him as an 'austerity measure', as Assam is facing a financial crisis this year after the devastating floods. This explanation is bound to go down equally well with the people who are reeling under the onslaught of spiralling prices and periodic shortages of essential commodities.

As a pre-electoral exercise, the reshuffle and the strong action against corrupt ministers is likely to pay off, though Mahanta's headaches are far from over. What with ex-ministers like Digen Bora, who was also a close buddy of the chief minister, issuing veiled threats to the effect that he was privy to many of Mahanta's secrets, the chief minister, it seems, has still not managed to crush dissidence totally.

Radhika Rameeshan/*Guwahati*



S.R. Bommai (right) with Deve Gowda: the return of the dissidents

The price of peace

Dissidents are back on the warpath over the issue of the Janata Dal party presidentship

KARNATAKA

The dissidence tune can be heard once again in the state unit of the Janata Party. In a major revival, the original dissidents under the leadership of the public works and irrigation minister H.D. Deve Gowda are back on the warpath over the contentious issue of who will be the state party president. As party leaders in New Delhi were preparing for the formal ratification of the merger, scheduled for 18 November, the dissidents in Bangalore planned out their moves. For the crucial post of state party president of the Janata Dal, the dissidents are backing Siddaramaiah against Ramakrishna Hegde's protege, Dr Jeevaraj Alva.

The dissidents' game plan is, as before, simple and deadly. On the agenda is a call for a change in the government's style of functioning, a memorandum to be sent to the national party president, expression of doubts about the wisdom of giving up the party's identity, and so on. This time, the dissidents are not threatening to topple the government—as both Siddaramaiah and Deve Gowda are now Cabinet ministers—but the dissidents' campaign might shatter the fragile unity that the constituents of the Janata Dal had achieved. So, the price for peace, seems to be the party presidentship of the state unit.

The dissidents' campaign was mounted with an eye on the timing. Deve Gowda and his vocal supporters, Siddaramaiah, Y.K. Ramaiah, Dr H.L. Thimme Gowda and B.L. Shankar visited chief minister S.R. Bommai on 9 November. According to a close aide of the dissident leader, Bommai was reprimanded for adopting the Hegde line despite his promise to change the old ways. And the foursome suggested that he could demonstrate his willingness to emerge from under Hegde's shadow by appointing their candidate as the party president.

One of the dissidents is reported to have even threatened the chief minister that if he reneged on his earlier promise of making Siddaramaiah the party president, the Janata Dal would start off with a split. And to prove that they meant business, 50 dissident legislators later met at Deve Gowda's residence and prepared a memorandum addressed to the party president Ajit Singh.

But Hegde loyalists have not hesitated to cry out that the dissidents are playing foul. Said one, "There was no understanding that Siddaramaiah would be party president. That understanding was withdrawn the moment Deve Gowda contested, on 12 August, for the chief minister's post. He clearly lost to Bommai."

And so, the battle of nerves has begun once again. "Even one man is sufficient to retain the identity of the Janata Party," say the dissidents. "Unite or perish," say the loyalists. But will Bommai's luck hold and will he be able to avert a showdown?

Prakash Belawadi/Bangalore

School for scandal

Four students accuse the principal of St Stephen's School of abusing them sexually

CHANDIGARH

When Charanjit Singh, a student of Chandigarh's St Stephen's School, was summoned to the principal's room one day, it was with a mixture of curiosity and trepidation that he made his way to Harold Carver's office. The student was met by a concerned headmaster. Charanjit recollects that he had pulled a muscle while playing football. "Once inside the room," Charanjit recalls, "he said that I needed a massage and asked me to remove my clothes while he bolted the door from inside." What followed was a traumatic experience for the young student: Charanjit had allegedly been sexually abused by the principal.

Charanjit's accusation against Carver almost three years after what he claims was the first of a series of such assaults, was corroborated by those made by three others—Harbinder Garcha, Harkanwal and Navin Chhetri. The four have lodged an FIR against Carver alleging that the principal had abused them sexually. Besides, the young students have also claimed that "the principal would threaten us with dire consequences" if they refused to cooperate.

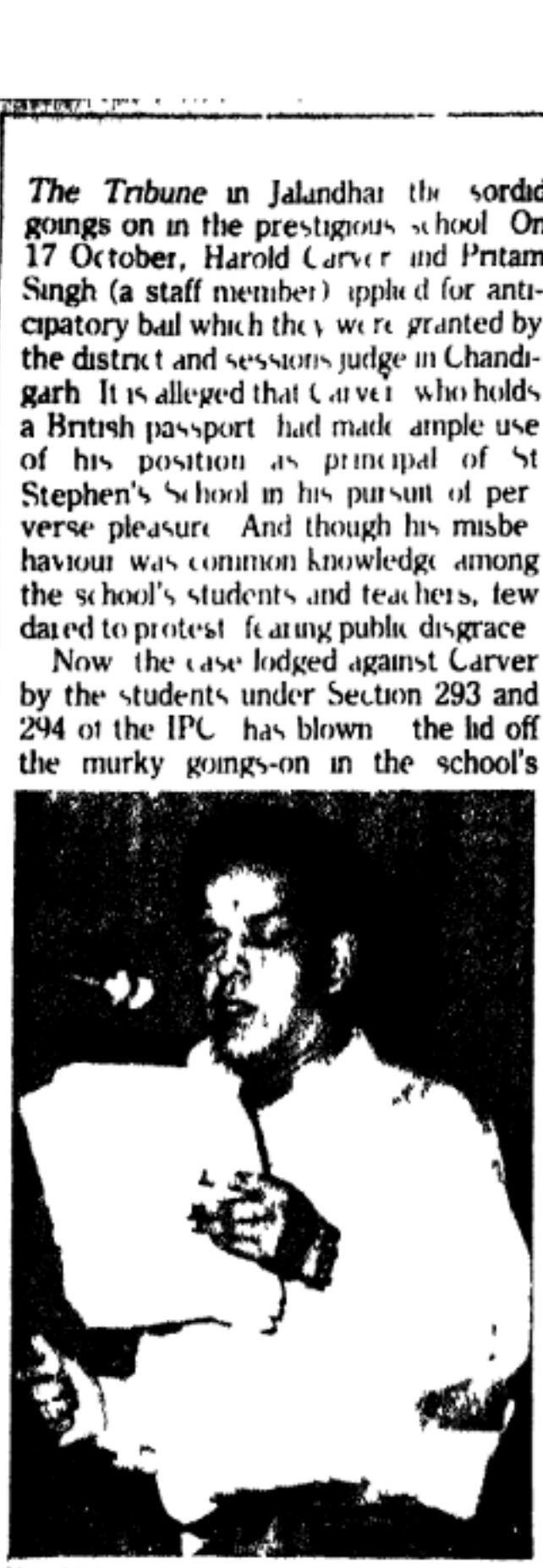
Said Harbinder Garcha, "He used to threaten me that he will get my parents killed if I didn't do it (homosexual acts). He made me sign a blank paper. Later he said he would use it against me by saying that I have been indulging in homosexual acts with other boys. Pritam Singh, a close friend of our principal, forced me to smoke in spite of the fact that I am a Sikh."

Gursharan also alleged that Carver would induce the boys to indulge in homosexuality and then sexually abuse them himself. Carver would often beat them up if they refused his overtures. Eventually, the boys spoke about the principal's misdemeanours to Carver's mother who promised she would have a talk with her son. But the principal continued to abuse the youngsters.

Finally, it was one of the victims' father who disclosed to a reporter of

The Tribune in Jalandhar the sordid goings on in the prestigious school On 17 October, Harold Carver and Pritam Singh (a staff member) applied for anticipatory bail which they were granted by the district and sessions judge in Chandigarh It is alleged that Carver who holds a British passport had made ample use of his position as principal of St Stephen's School in his pursuit of perverse pleasure And though his misbehaviour was common knowledge among the school's students and teachers, few dared to protest fearing public disgrace

Now the case lodged against Carver by the students under Section 293 and 294 of the IPC has blown the lid off the murky goings-on in the school's



Harold Carver charged of perversion

premises The disclosures have, no doubt, caused great public outrage And political parties too have criticised the principal and demanded action against him Governor S S Ray has assured the citizens that justice would be done in this case Meanwhile, the Chandigarh police has conducted raids at the principal's office and residence and the administration has appointed R D Singhal as the acting principal of the school On 7 November, Carver's plea for a fresh anticipatory bail was rejected by the court and on 10 November the police succeeded in arresting him Carver was produced in the court of sub-judge G.S. Sewak who remanded him to police custody until 15 November. However, Carver maintains that all the charges against him are baseless and he is being made the victim of a vicious campaign. So, the scene now shifts to the courtroom where the next act of this sordid drama will be enacted.

Rita Sharma/*Chandigarh*

Many questions, few answers

Congress(I) ministers are caught on the wrong foot time and again in the Assembly



The end of the 22-day winter session of the Assembly must have come as a great relief to Arjun Singh and his ministers Not only was the Congress(I) caught on the wrong foot time and again by the Opposition, but there was no stopping the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Sunderlal Patwa who relentlessly grilled the Congress ministers The upshot of it was that despite the induction of several new ministers by Arjun Singh, they put in a pathetic performance, as a gleeful Opposition continued to embarrass the government So much so that some of the veteran ministers in the Congress too were shamed into silence by their colleagues' inability to satisfactorily answer the Opposition members' incisive questions

The government's helplessness became apparent during the discussion on the Panchayat Amendment Bill Patwa displayed an hitherto hidden talent for debating and few among the ruling party members had a clue about the amendments. The Panchayat Bill was introduced to amend about 40 clauses in the original Act. The amendments had been already made through an ordinance but when the Bill was introduced, it contained more amendments than those agreed upon What made things more difficult for the ruling party was the fact that some within the Congress itself objected to many of the proposed amendments



A well-prepared Opposition took the opportunity and grilled the government on legal and procedural scores At one point a harassed agriculture minister, Shivbhanu Solanki, even commented that if he had any premonition about the grilling, he would have read appropriate books and prepared for the session *Panchayat* minister, Mrs Manju Rai, too was at a loss to answer the Speaker's queries

Strangely, chief minister Arjun Singh, was not present in the House on all such occasions leaving his ministers to fend for themselves In fact, senior Congressmen like former Speaker Ramkishore Shukla maintained a stoic silence throughout the proceedings The apparent unpreparedness of the government evoked reprimand from the Speaker on more than one occasion

Yet again, when the discussion on drought came up, the ruling party was caught napping—literally Since the chief minister was not present in the House, the Opposition demanded that the revenue minister should make an appearance, only to be told that Rajmani Patel was asleep in his bungalow! The Speaker adjourned the House so that the minister could be awakened and brought to the Assembly

The Cooperative Amendment Bill was another issue which provided the Opposition with an opportunity to lash out at the government during the 14 sittings in the House Though the Bill





S C. Shukla: leading the dissidents

was eventually passed, thanks to the Congress' large mandate in the House, the Opposition did pose some embarrassing moments for it.

The Congress(I) faced a difficult time during the debate on the Krishi Upaj Mandi as not just Opposition members but also its own party members, posed many an embarrassing question. The growing disenchantment within the party was apparent at the Congress Legislature Party meetings too and at one such meeting, Arjun Singh's arch-rival, Shyama Charan Shukla, was accorded a grand welcome. Singh had tried to stall Shukla's re-entry into the party for the last eight years but eventually had to back down after the high command paved the way for his comeback. And now, Shukla is spearheading a movement to oust Arjun Singh from the chief ministership.

All this has only demoralised the Congress members whose performance in the House hit rock-bottom. Solanki, in the absence of Arjun Singh, was left all alone to tackle the Opposition's

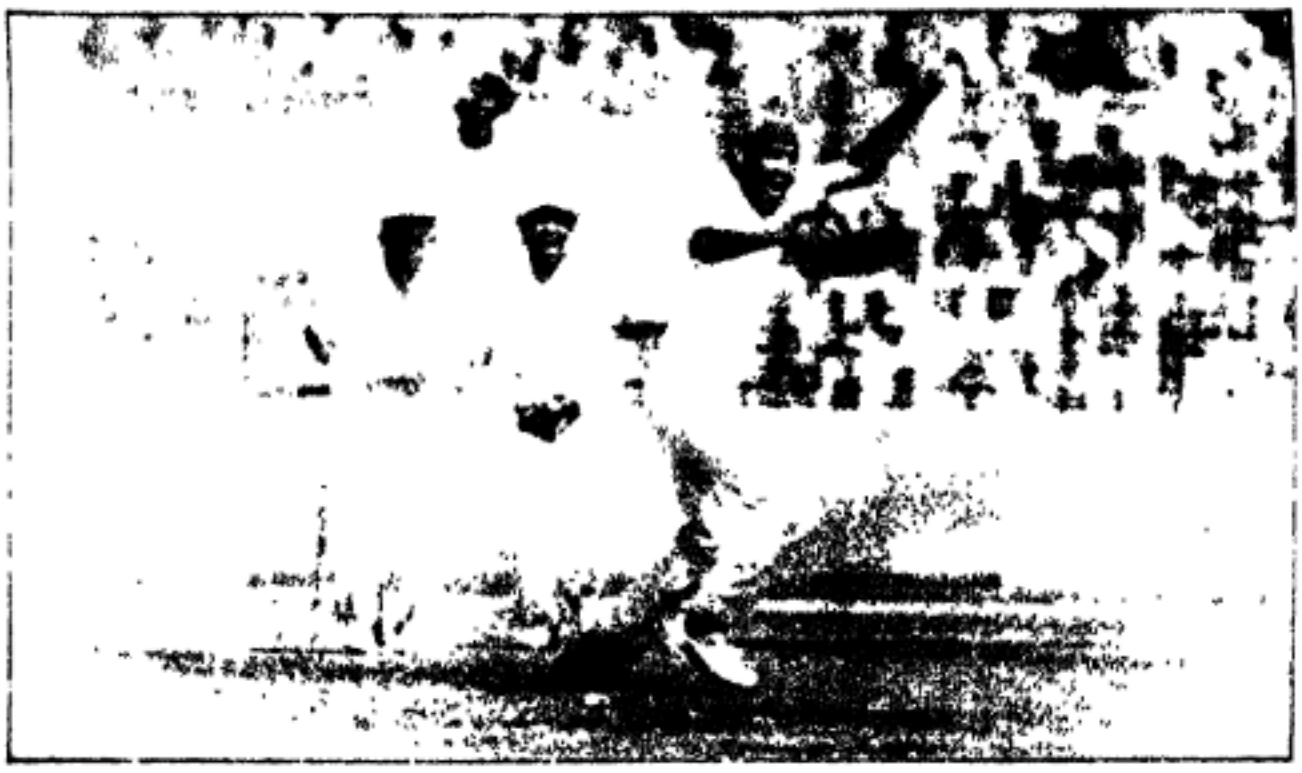


(Left) Sunderlal Patwa: putting the Congress in a spot; Arjun Singh: poor show

onslaught and his spirited fightback failed to do any good for the ruling party. Eventually, Solanki too lost the will to spar with the Opposition members and the debate on the commission's report on the alleged defection of BJP leader, Dr Shakrajeet Nayak, to the Congress ended in disaster. Though the debate was sought by the Congress(I), Patwa turned the issue around and used it to level fresh allegations against the government.

Arjun Singh's second term as the chief minister has so far been riddled by a series of mishaps, beginning with Shukla's comeback and the growing ranks in dissident camps. Now with his ministry's disastrous performance at the Vidhan Sabha, the dissidents are only likely to step up their campaign against Arjun Singh. And, as for the Opposition, it is unlikely to withdraw from the scene after having drawn first blood.

Swami Trivedi/Bhopal



The India-Pakistan semi-final: a much-needed victory

Back on a winning track

India beat Sri Lanka and Pakistan to lift the Asia Cup

BANGLADESH

This year might well have been 1492 for cricket. Ashraful Haq, organising chief of the Asia Cup tournament, has discovered in Dhaka a New World, *a la* Christopher Columbus. Some 80,000 people packed into the 60,000 capacity National Stadium to watch the India-Pakistan match (the only time the crowd exceeded this figure in the last two years for India-Pakistan matches was in Calcutta in Februrary, 1987); gatecrashers broke in at 5 am for one of the matches; tickets were quoted at double their face value and there were queues half-a-kilometre long at ticket counters an hour before Kapil Dev ran in to bowl the first ball of the match to Rameez Raja.

When seen against the backdrop of falling attendances at cricket grounds the world over, this scenario in Dhaka came as a pleasant surprise. But the rest of the competition turned out to be an anti-climax of sorts, interrupted only by upsets that are so customary in cricket. In this respect, Sri Lanka was the principal offender. It beat Pakistan in the and India and qualified for a place in the final. Since Bangladesh was on the receiving end in both its matches against India and Pakistan, the encounter between India and Pakistan decided who would play against Sri Lanka in the final.

India beat Pakistan by four wickets but not before Mohinder Amarnath had played one of the better innings seen in limited-overs cricket. In reply to Pakistan's 143 all out (Arshad Ayub ran through their innings with five for 21 after having been hit for 58 runs in the previous encounter), India appeared to be in trouble at 116 for six. Qadir who had picked up three wickets by then and still had a few deliveries left to bowl seemed set to win the match for Pakistan.

And he might have done so had it not been for Amarnath. He played a Test-match-like innings and saved India. Each time Qadir or Tauseef flighted the ball with three fielders crouching near the bat, Amarnath would be content to tuck it away. Occasionally, he picked a single and very rarely drove for a four. When he walked back (74 not out in a total of 143 for six), after what was just another day at work for him, the acting Pakistan captain Abdul Qadir embraced him and the rest of the Pakistan team formed a respectful aisle as Amarnath, head bowed, bat raised, disappeared into the pavilion.

The Sri Lankans gave a lie to the form book. In their matches against India and Pakistan, they hit the right combination that raises the performance of an average side: average bowling, excellent fielding and attacking batting. On the two days out of three they needed this formula to click, their prayers were answered.

In the final between India and Sri Lanka when the islanders desperately needed a victory they were ditched by Lady Luck. They were bowled out for 176 and the Indians crossed the total with six wickets to spare.

Mudar Patherya/Dhaka

A Bush in hand

Contrary to popular belief, George Bush's victory has pleased New Delhi

"Dear George", the letter began and ended with "warm personal regards to Barbara. From Sonia and Rajiv". The contents of Prime Minister Gandhi's letter to the new US President George Bush, in which he looked forward to working with him, may have been platitudinous. But the personal and familiar tone of the message is not without significance.

Contrary to received opinion and popular belief, New Delhi was pleased by Bush's victory over Democrat rival Michael Dukakis. Given their ideological stances, it is a feeling that neither Rajiv nor his government could make known. But the mood at the foreign office was one of quiet satisfaction.

A good part of the reason for this is Rajiv's personal equation with Bush. When the Prime Minister visited the United States in June 1985, Bush, who was vice-president, was deputed to oversee his stay and entertain him. From all accounts, the two got along famously and Bush even invited him to his ranch in Texas.

A holiday romance, of course, doesn't amount to much— not in the calculating world of foreign policy anyway. But the Indian perception was not based on subjective considerations alone. Over the years, the policy of the Republican Party towards the sub-continent has undergone a change. A Republican in the White House no longer necessarily means a man inimical to India's interests. The Richard Nixon-Henry Kissinger policy of 'tilting' towards Pakistan has been given up for good. And with the advent of Reagan, Indo-US relations have become better than they were in a long time.

Bush has stated that he will continue to follow Reagan's policies with respect to the sub-continent. In effect, this means maintaining the "parity" or treating India and Pakistan as equals in foreign policy calculations. Although India has long protested against being treated on par with what she sees as a much weaker neighbour, there is no reason to believe that Dukakis would have acted differently in this respect. Like Bush, he has stressed the importance of Pakistan to US interests and talked of maintaining friendly relations with both countries.

However, there is no denying that there are a number of areas in which Dukakis' foreign policy would have been more in tune with India's. He is opposed to the US intervention in Nicaragua (Bush is in favour of aiding the Contra rebels), appears genuinely horrified by apartheid (Bush thinks US sanctions against South Africa have been "marginal and negative") and is against the nuclear arms race (Bush is for research on the Strategic Defence Initiative and believes that the decision on deployment should be kept open). But issues like these do not bear—directly anyway—on India's interests.



New Delhi was pleased by George Bush's victory over Democrat rival Michael Dukakis. A good part of the reason for this is Rajiv's personal equation with Bush

On the other hand, a Dukakis government would have proved difficult for India in one respect. Time and again, he has claimed that nuclear non-proliferation would be the "first priority" of his administration. He has recorded his disappointment with India for not signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and there would have been considerable pressure on the country to do so. India's firm opposition to the NPT may have led a Dukakis government to view Pakistan more favourably, since it is willing to sign the treaty provided India does. In contrast, Bush's own attitude is likely to be similar to Reagan's, no serious questioning of India's nuclear policy and some pressure, if only unenthusiastic and insincere, on Pakistan to go slow with its weapons programme.

US military aid to Pakistan is, of course, one of the most important issues in India's eyes. The fear that a Bush administration will continue to provide Pakistan with the kind of military aid that it received during Reagan's reign could well be misplaced. With the Afghan crisis now having been virtually resolved and Pakistan set to lose its position as a frontline state, it is unlikely that any US administration will maintain a similar level of military aid. In any case, neither of the two aspirants has had anything to say on this question. Moreover, when Dukakis was asked a few days before the poll whether he would review the supply of arms to Pakistan after the Soviet troops pulled out of Afghanistan, he parried the question, saying that such details hadn't yet been worked out.

In sum, from the perspective of India's interests, there was, perhaps, little to choose between Bush and Dukakis. Though on balance, it is understandable that New Delhi was partial to the former. Between two alikes, who wouldn't prefer a friend?

But then, it is one of the ironies of Indian politics that a government which believes in the destabilisation theory should welcome the victory of a former CIA director.

Mukund Padmanabhan

The fee of expediency

The controversy over the establishment of a capitation-fee based college in Coorg threatens to take a communal turn

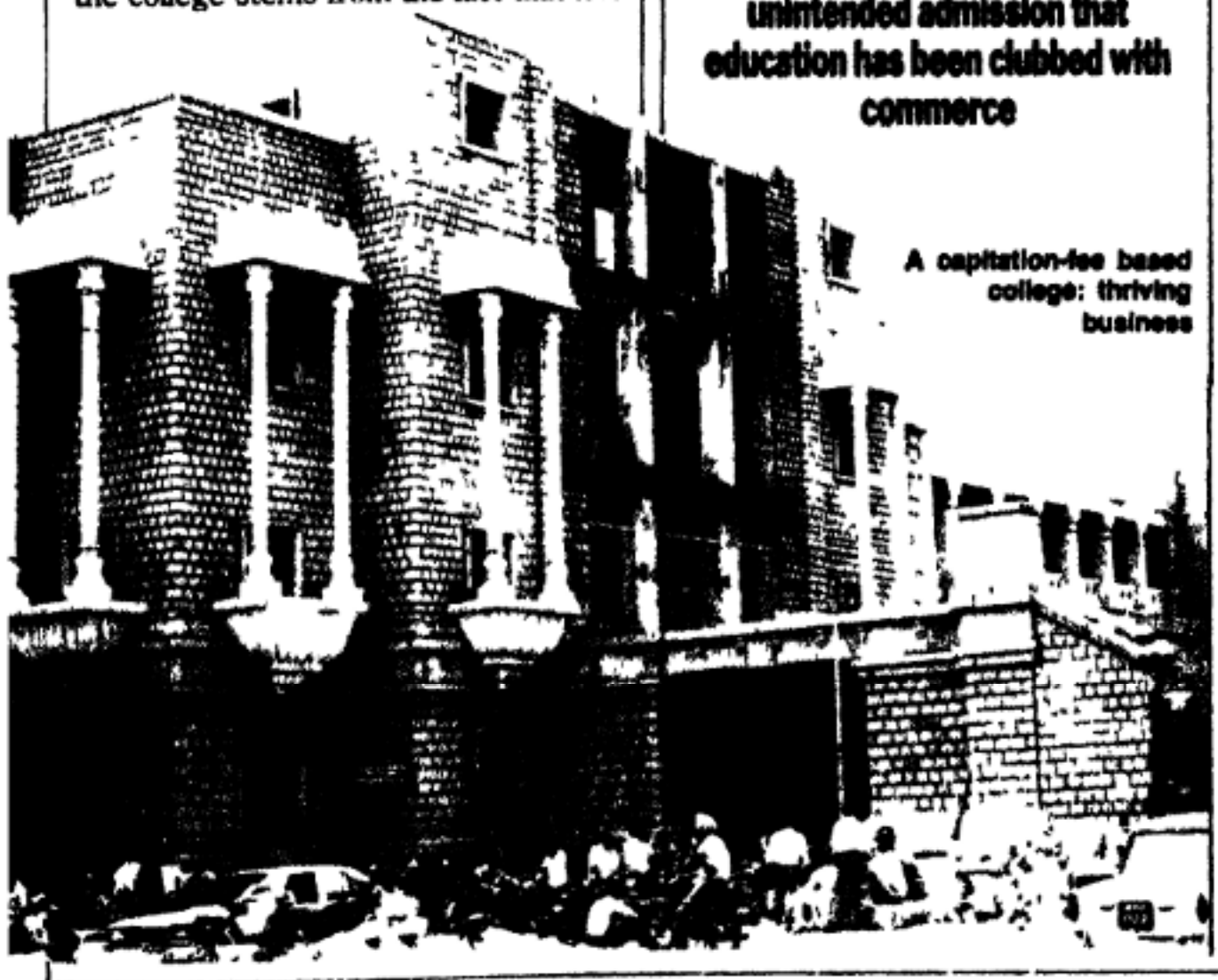
Capitation fee-based colleges have been multiplying faster than rabbits in Karnataka. And ordinarily, news of another one being set up would not make the front pages. However, the government's decision to accord "provisional permission" to a Kerala-based Christian trust to establish an engineering college in the hilly Coorg district could well snowball into a major controversy.

The announcement that the Malankara Orthodox Church Education Trust, which has already acquired 50 acres of land in Kushalnagar, has been allowed to set up a private engineering college sparked off widespread protests in Coorg. A vigorous campaign was launched against the proposal by the Coorg Citizens Action Committee. That the committee had the total support of the citizens was obvious when, on 1 November, the *bandh* called by it was a total success throughout the district. The committee proposes to intensify its agitation, if the government does not reconsider its decison.

The controversy threatens to take on a communal colour. A good part of the resentment over the establishment of the college stems from the fact that it is going to be run by Keralites. Over the years, the Coorgis have become very bitter about the 'immigrants' from Kerala. Particularly, *moplas* (Kerala Muslims), who they view as responsible for the massive deforestation in the district.

When the subject of the proposed engineering college was first raised in the the Legislative Council on 4 October by a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) member, the Janata government had a curious reply. The new education minister, M. Chandrashekar, clarified that the government had not given the trust full permission to go ahead but had only issued a "letter of intent". (An unintended admission that education has been clubbed with commerce in the state.) The minister, however, refused to show the Opposition this 'letter of intent'. The ensuing protests, both within the House and in Coorg, prompted a member of the trust's managing committee, Sunny Kulathakal, to write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper.

When the subject of the proposed engineering college was first raised in the Legislative Council, the education minister clarified that the government had only issued a "letter of intent"—an unintended admission that education has been clubbed with commerce



A capitation-fee based college: thriving business

In it, Kulathakal stated that a senior member of the government had visited the head of the Orthodox Church in Kerala in 1987 and actually extended an invitation to set up an engineering college in Coorg. Kulathakal further revealed that the government had granted the trust permission to start the college in August this year and that it had also given the go-ahead for another college in Bangalore, which is to be established by the People's Education Society, a body which is dominated by Andhraites.

The state government argues that Coorg was chosen as the site for the college since the district does not have a single professional institution to boast of. Counters senior Congress leader, A.K. Subbaiah: "Nobody from Coorg will join the Kushalnagar college. People who can afford capitation fees will prefer to study in Bangalore."

It was during former chief minister Gundu Rao's reign that the practice of setting up private colleges, which extracted capitation fees of staggering sums from its students, was popularised. Then, the Janata-Kranti Ranga combine—which later merged into the Janata Party—had decried the "evil system" and promised to abolish it when it came to power. But the Janata government only added to the number of such colleges in the state and, today, there are as many as 53 private engineering colleges and 18 medical colleges in Karnataka. The Bommai government has proved no different from that of Ramakrishana Hegde's in this respect. According to sources, it is considering how to grant permission to seven more private engineering colleges and two medical colleges without setting off an uproar.

The controversy over the Coorg college may make the government reconsider such plans. But its immediate problem is how to prevent the college at Kushalnagar from becoming an issue that may divide the district along communal lines.

Prakash Belawadi/Bangalore

READYMADE GARMENTS

The cut of class

With the invasion of foreign brand-names and textile giants taking the short step from fabrics to readymades, a cut-throat competition is on the cards

If anybody is going to lose his shirt in the coming battle of readymades, it is the good old tailor round the corner. The right cut, a trendy design and a brand-name that spells status are just what the fashion-conscious Indian male is looking for. For more than three decades, a quick buy meant Zodiac, with Armour and Bond thrown in for a brief period before they made their exit. "Their going left a vacuum that gave a chance to people like us to get in," says Raju Daswani of Charag Din whose family has been in the shirt business since 1959. Get in they did, to change the very profile of the readymade shirts market. If Charag Din is the most sought-after Indian shirt today, it is being given a run for its money by equally famous brands like Double Bull, Proline, Cliff and Newman.

Such is the furious rush for a piece of the readymade men's garment market that a foreign label has become all too indispensable. Zodiac has tied up with Van Heusen, Charag Din is pushing the Italian image, Benetton of Italy which does not keep its readymades for more than six months on the racks, has given a franchise to Surendra Dalmia of Classic Garments. Why Italian? Says Daswani, "Well, Italian men have a real macho image. People think of them as being dapper and well-dressed." But the market has gone beyond the Italian image too; there is a flood of Western brands like the Rod Laver range, Playboy Fashionsport, and of course the inimitable Murjani who has tied up with Bata.

And if it has been a two-way market struggle between Indian brands and foreign labels, it won't be so for long. From fabrics to readymades is a short step—and the heavyweights of the textile industry are all lining up to make it a three-way battle for the burgeoning market. Bombay Dyeing with its Vivaldi range was the first to enter the ring to be followed by Raymond's with its trendy Park Avenue collection. The floodgates have opened and Mafatlal and Grasim (Gwalior Rayon) have decided to bet their corporate future in a big way in shirts and trousers. While Mafatlal is negotiating with the Tootals group of the UK, Grasim has already hit the market with its Masterwear range.

Says S.B. Agarwal of Grasim India, "The only alternative for textile mills to survive is to enter the readymade shirt and trouser market because counter sales of fabrics have drastically fallen in recent years. Ten per cent of fabrics is today taken up by garment manufacturers and in five years' time most of our output would go into readymades." The writing on the wall is all too clear for the textile manufacturers: they are aware of losing their identity for, a good shirt is known by its brand name and no one really cares for the name of the fabric that has gone into its making. As Agarwal says, "Now we will be able to sell premium products with our own name—Grasim Masterwear."

For the biggies of the textile industry,

The Globetrotter clothes: trendy



Park Avenue, Grasim Masterwear and Newman ads: enter the textile giants

the plunge, though it had become necessary, was a logical one even otherwise. Prem Malik, vice-president, marketing, Mafatlal Fine and Mafatlal Industries, puts it succinctly: "We have the infrastructure, fabrics, ready outlets, and a name—a credibility." The big mills have obviously taken note of the changing nature of the market and realised the tailor-made marketing strengths they possess: extensive retail outlets. Says Agarwal of Grasim, "We have 1,200 approved retail outlets throughout the country and our fabrics have a reputation of being of a very good quality." And as Malik points out, Mafatlal has 190 retail stores of its own besides 600 authorised retail counters. Bombay Dyeing and Raymond's too have built up an extensive countrywide retail network which makes marketing of its readymades all that much easier. Raymond's has in fact opened up showrooms in all the big cities only for its Park Avenue range of men's readymades and accessories.



A readymade garments showroom: wide range



A Van Heusen shirt: foreign invasion

It is not marketing infrastructure alone which has motivated the big names of the Indian textile industry to join battle with the Charag Dins and the Double Bulls. Economics and changing consumer preference have played a big part too. In the suiting market, says Agarwal, there is a distinct shift from synthetics to worsted with Raymond's as the leaders. Gwalior Rayon has already diverted 25 per cent of its suitings production from synthetic to worsted and plans to shift another 25 per cent to worsted in the next five years. While 30 per cent of the suitings market is shared by Raymond's, Grasim, Digjam, OCM and Dinesh, the rest is taken up by the powerloom sector. Since the machines required for manufacturing worsted fabrics is too expensive for powerlooms, it automatically cuts out competition. "This way we come out of the queue and compete amongst ourselves. No undercutting as the powerloom people are prone to," explains Agarwal.

Malik and Agarwal don't see much of a fight because of the entry of big foreign brands like Rod Laver, Murjani, Benetton, Gianni Versace, Van Heusen and the lot. They argue that a bulk of these readymades are meant for the export market. And, in the ultimate analysis, what matters is the comfort, fit and quality of fabric—attributes that the textile giants are in a position to provide. Of course, they concede that it will be difficult for the textile mills initially, because many of the current brand-names have become addictions, status symbols and confidence builders. Bombay Dyeing, for instance, is trying to sell the Italian image through Vivaldi range. But Charag Din has been selling the Italian look for two years already. The price range for fast selling fashion shirts is Rs 200-250 and Rs 150-190 for executive shirts.

As Agarwal of Grasim points out, the sale of upmarket shirt brands in Bombay alone is worth Rs 17 crores while in Delhi it is Rs 10 crores. And here Charag Din is the reigning king. Daswani has only one retail outlet in Bombay, but 40 per cent of his buyers come from outside, accounting for 60 per cent of his business.

Like Daswani, Zodiac's Anees Noorani is also unfazed by the competition, especially from foreign labels. Says Noorani confidently, "Our label is the market leader and we are the only ones selling in a national market." Zodiac has a chain of 24 outlets and 1,000 retailers all over the country. Noorani profers that his is not a high-profile company and "we do not feel the need to advertise heavily as other manufacturers do."

That the readymades market is an inviting one can be gauged from the fact that textile mega giant Reliance too is toying with the idea of entering this field if one goes by a statement made by Vimal Ambani in Goa recently. Given the huge reputation of Vimal fabrics which have bulldozed their way into the textiles industry, the entry of Reliance could quite change the face of the readymade garments market. However, Dhirubhai Ambani is learnt to be of the opinion that it is not worth entering this field unless they can have a Rs 100-crore market.



Raju Daswani: setting a trend

As Raju Daswani says, "The market can only grow and each new person coming into the field with heavy advertising and marketing strategies will create greater awareness and bigger sales." Be that as it may, for the present it is a headlong rush to dress the urban Indian male smartly, and in the process some manufacturers are more than likely to lose their shirt with the onslaught of the textile giants who have belatedly decided to take the short step from fabrics to readymades.

Olga Tellis / Bombay

A foreign label has become all too indispensable. Zodiac has tied up with Van Heusen, Charag Din is pushing the Italian image, Benetton of Italy has given a franchise to Classic Garments



BATA, DUNLOP

Assembly lines roll again

The lifting of the prolonged lockouts at the shoe and tyre giants is seen as a victory for the managements

In a state where strikes, lockouts and closures are endemic and militant trade unionism the order of the day, it was a major victory for the managements of Dunlop India and Bata. It was not a defeat for the workers either. The reopening of the units of both these multinational blue-chip companies in West Bengal only proves what a sympathetic management and a committed workforce can achieve. While the CITU and INTUC-affiliated unions of Dunlop India called off their 97-day strike at the Sahaganj factory near Calcutta on 4 November, the management of Bata lifted the 124-day lockout on 10 November. Said Shanti Ranjan Ghatak, labour minister of the state: "We are happy that we could negotiate a settlement."



The Bata factory: back on its feet

Under the memorandum of settlement signed between the management of Dunlop, the CITU and INTUC affiliated unions and representatives of the West Bengal labour department, the salary of each worker at the Sahaganj unit will increase by Rs 265, much less than what the unions had demanded. Moreover, the demand for an additional payment for introducing a seven-day, three-shift work routine has been turned down by the management. In many ways, the strike has been been called off under the terms of the management.

Perhaps, the unions had no other option. The prolonged strike had not only disillusioned the workers, the management of Dunlop showed no interest in negotiating a deal. Moreover, there was a growing feeling among the workers that the CITU bosses in Calcutta were perhaps not interested in the strike any longer. The INTUC leadership, too, was showing signs of tiredness. Said Subrata Mukherjee, state president of the INTUC and a signatory to the agreement: "One cannot say that the strike was called off because we were afraid of taking on the management. The workers were suffering and we decided that confrontation was not the answer to the problem."

If the Dunlop agreement was weighed in favour of the management, the bipartite understanding reached between the management of Bata and the Bata Mazdoor Union (BMU) will go down in corporate history as a milestone. In a unique reversal of roles, the Bata management has forced the BMU to accept a 230-point charter of demands before opening their unit in Batanagar. Admitted Nilratan Kanjilal, the BMU general secretary, rather reluctantly: "It is unprecedented and a hallmark in industrial relations."

In fact, the Bata management had always been in the driver's seat during the four-month-long lockout. Aware that



A. Mukherjee

The Dunlop factory at Sahaganj: the wheels turn again

the BMU was at the receiving end as it did not have the support of a majority of the 11,000-odd workforce, the management had refused to budge from its take-it-or-leave-it attitude. The management was so confident of its strength that it even rejected the West Bengal labour department's proposal that Rs 2,000 be paid to each worker as advance wages.

But for obvious reasons, both the managements of Dunlop and Bata refuse to admit that it is a major victory for them. Said a senior Bata executive: "It is not a victory because we were not fighting a war. There was some misunderstanding between the management and the workers and we have cleared it."

Rajiv Bagchi/*Calcutta*

AIR-INDIA

Piloting a controversy

While the managing director and the pilots are engaged in a battle of attrition, the national carrier's image takes a nosedive

Air-India managing director Rajan Jetley's decision to take on the unions has disrupted the airline's functioning. By the first week of November, Air-India had cancelled 60 flights and rescheduled several others. The problem began when the maintenance engineers objected to Jetley's asking them to travel by Business rather than First class. Next, pilots began to report ill and delay flights. The airline put a stop to this by insisting on medical examinations—it was then found that a majority of those who claimed to be sick were well enough to fly.

To Jetley, this is a battle of nerves, one he must win if he is to tame the unions and turn the airline around. Management sources accuse the unions of putting their comforts before those of the passengers. They point out that the pilots were called for talks nine times and failed to turn up each time. The pilots, however, are unrepentant. A spokesman of the Indian Pilots' Guild (IPG) said, "Our experience with Mr Jetley has shown that once we have conceded to the management's demands, all negotiations come to an end from their side. This is our major grouse

and hence we have made it clear that we will not negotiate either with Mr Jetley or with the director of operations, Capt D.S. Mathur, neither of whom command our respect or our trust."

One of the main demands of the pilots is that an additional pilot should be provided as a safety measure on the long-haul flights. Unlike other airlines, Air-India's long-haul flights take off at two in the morning. As a result, flight commanders are unable to have adequate sleep before a flight and there is no relief midway since there are no stopovers. "We are not even compensated adequately for this," said the IPG spokesman. Pointing out that even in small countries like Singapore and Bangladesh, pilots are paid gross salaries of Rs 95,000 and Rs 30,000 respectively, the spokesman complained, "Our basic pay is around Rs 2,180 and with perks it comes to around Rs 7,000 after 20 years of service. The only reason why they don't have an extra pilot is because of a shortage of pilots."

Gautam Patole



Rajan Jetley: embattled

And while the managing director is at loggerheads with his pilots and maintenance engineers, it is the airline which is suffering. The management spokesman claimed that the corporation made a net profit of Rs 5.54 crores in the first six months of this year, but the undeclared go-slow had already wiped out this profit. This, however, is disputed by the IPG and many other A-I employees who feel that the dispute with the pilots and the engineers is being deliberately aggravated. Their explanation is that it would come as a handy excuse at the end of the year when the management might find itself at a loss to show a profit.

The battle of attrition is adversely affecting the airline's image too. The pilots have accused the management of upgrading a whole lot of Economy class passengers to First class on the Frankfurt-Bombay flight on 1 November, when there were only two First class passengers. They are now using this incident to show the double standards of the management which wanted to "improve the product" by denying their own staff First class travel even on leave. But the A-I spokesman clarifies that it was the inaugural flight of Air-India's newly-acquired Combi. While the Combi has only 188 Economy class seats, the flight had bookings for 258. Air-India solved the problem by sending ten Business class passengers to First class, and 18 others on Pan Am and ugrading the rest.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

METAL BOX

Waiting for a taker

With its British parent turning a blind eye, the ailing multinational is in search of a buyer

Any prospective buyer of the 33 per cent overseas stake of Metal Box India Ltd (MBIL) will have to dish out at least Rs 10 crores for the bank consortium dealing with the troubled multinational to accept the offer. For, with the UK parent, Metal Box plc, unwilling to contribute even a penny to the cause of MBIL's revival, leave alone the Rs 10 crores that the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) and the bankers have demanded from it, the criterion that would perhaps be considered most important is whether the bidders are willing to offer what the parent company has refused.

It is in the interest of MBIL's bankers to see that the Rs 50-crore rehabilitation package worked out by ICICI is implemented so that this once bluechip company can be put back on the rails. The Rs 10-crore figure has been identified as the promoters' contribution, which the overseas parent has refused to pay. And B.M. Khaitan who bought into the company last year, is now keen to wash his hands off. While he and his son Deepak Khaitan stepped out of the MBIL board sometime back, their replacements, J. Sanyal and D. Moitra, also resigned recently. However, in a somewhat more generous mood than the UK parents, Khaitan has offered to contribute Rs 40 lakhs.

What is of interest in the immediate future is whether the bidders—of whom two seem to be around—at present would consider MBIL worthy enough for a Rs 10-crore investment given its state of affairs. For, according to the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) report, the company had an estimated accumulated loss of around Rs 37.88 crores against a paid-up capital of Rs 15.48 crores and free reserves of Rs 6.67 crores.

Latest reports indicate that ICICI considers the market for containers in the country to be growing at a very fast pace, which means that if MBIL is revived, it has a fairly good chance to become fully viable. However, ICICI also states that the market is very competitive and MBIL has to operate very efficiently indeed to stay in the market. An encouraging factor of course is the recent rush by big industrial houses to the food processing industry and the government promise of reliefs to this sector to help it grow. It is widely felt that much of this benefit would percolate to the packaging industry, and Metal Box would thus have a great opportunity to put itself on an even keel.

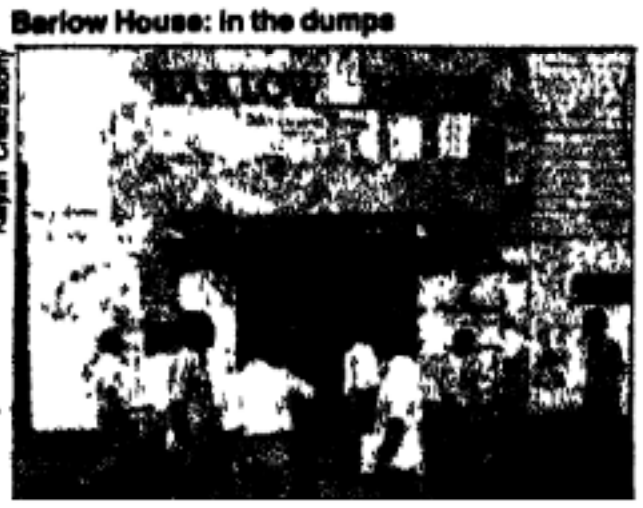
A case-by-case study is also being made about the requirements of each Metal Box unit. The techno-economic feasibility study made by Batliboi and Company has suggested that the manufacturing units at Deonar and Worli in Maharashtra should be merged and the profitable product lines transferred to Deonar. In keeping with the recommendations, the Deonar unit was recently reopened.

The paper unit at Mahul which was recently reopened, and the metal container units have been found to be marginally viable. Metal Box products still enjoy the goodwill, but the market share of these items have gone down from 35 to 22 per cent between 1982 and 1987. But a revival, corporate circles believe, is still possible with an infusion of funds and if the recommendations are implemented.

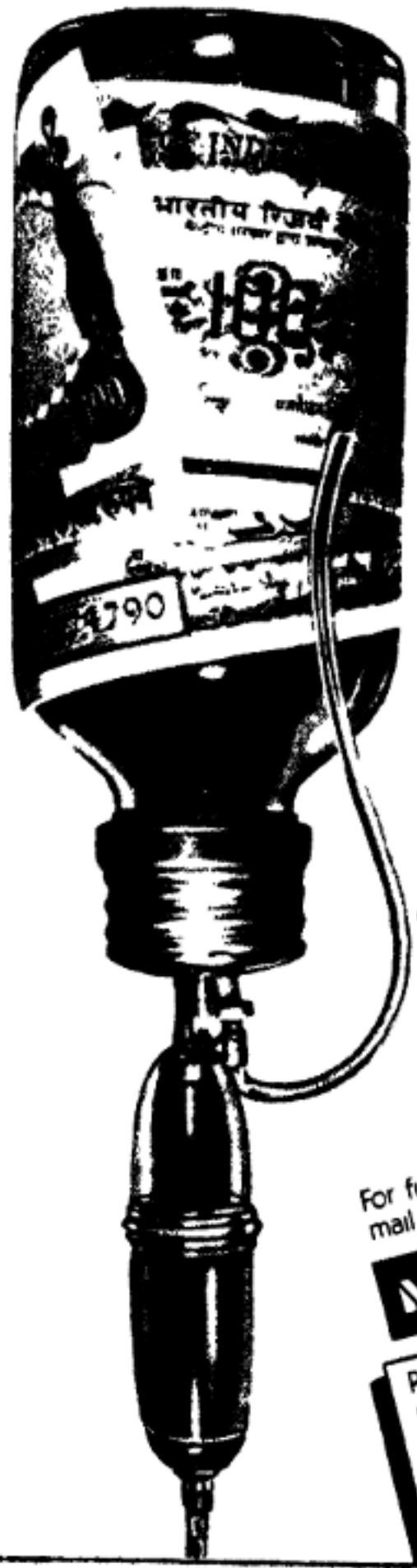
Basistha Basu / *Calcutta*

Barlow House: in the dumps

Kalyan Chakraborty



TO SAVE YOUR LIFE, YOU MIGHT NEED YOUR LIFE'S SAVINGS.



Major illnesses can be pretty expensive indeed Reason why, United India has tailor-made Mediclaim slabs to help you when you need help most

With its total hospitalisation and domiciliary hospitalisation scheme, UI Mediclaim helps you cope with the heavy expenses of major illnesses—a probability in everyone's life

For a premium that amounts to less than 60p a day, Mediclaim reimburses your hospitalisation and domiciliary hospitalisation expenses upto Rs 13,600/-per year (minimum slab) and you can avail of the best in medicare

Inexpensive and tax-deductable

The most attractive feature of UI Mediclaim is that premiums upto Rs. 3000/- enjoy a deduction on your taxable income

Family Discount

UI Mediclaim also offers a special family discount of 10% if you cover besides yourself, spouse, two children and dependent parents

Take the UI Mediclaim Cover.

Premium per day	Premium per annum	Hospitali-sation	Domiciliary Hospitali-sation
Rs 0 54	Rs 200	Rs 10,500	Rs 3,100
Rs 0.68	Rs. 250	Rs 17,600	
Rs 0 95	Rs 350	Rs 25,500	
Rs 1 64	Rs 600*	Rs 37,750	Rs 5,250
Rs 2.30	Rs 840*	Rs 52,750	Rs 7,400
Rs 3 56	Rs 1,300*	Rs 82,500	Rs 11,500

* Personal Accident cover available on payment of additional premium

For further information, fill in the coupon and mail today

MEDICLAIM

Please send me the Mediclaim folder with information on United India's Mediclaim

Name _____

Address _____

UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.
(A Subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India)
24, Whites Road, Madras - 600 014.

We cover you all the way through

Interpub/UI/88

Ambani eyeing Siemens?

Even as Siemens India has been emphatically and repeatedly denying the rumours, speculations that Dhirubhai Ambani has set his eyes on the company refuse to die down. But can there be smoke without fire? After all, Ambani coolly walked into Larsen & Toubro recently after scoffing rumours



Dhirubhai Ambani: takeover move?

that he was trying to take over the company. In its latest denial Siemens says that its parent, Siemens AG of West Germany, which holds a 51 per cent stake, has no intention of disinvesting.

The denial was sparked off by rumours that Reliance was planning to acquire the Siemens-managed Cable Corporation of India (CCI). It is well-known in business circles that Sudhir Thackersey and the Khataus who both have a 15 per cent shareholding in CCI, are willing to sell to the highest bidder. If Ambani can buy into CCI, he could well make the move to get onto the Siemens board. Of course, there is a stumbling block: Siemens remains the largest shareholder in CCI. From the look of it, a keen tussle is likely.

More soaps from TOMCO

Tata Oil Mills (TOMCO) appears to be drawing up big plans to expand its share of the soap market. The company has applied for a licence to set up a new plant in Maharashtra where it plans to make 30,000 tonnes of fatty acids and 240,000 tonnes of glycerine. The plant is likely to be set up at Aurangabad.

TOMCO's plans indicate that it will make a fresh thrust into the soap business—perhaps by putting out a few new brands in the market. At least 30 per cent of the production at its new factory will have to be sold to the small-scale sector but there is no bar on the Tatas buying it back. The entire project is likely to cost Rs 13 crores.

The Shrirams carve up

Close on the heels of a whopping Rs 8.23-crore loss in 1987-88, the troubled house of Shriram has finally decided to carve up the Rs 624-crore empire. Last week the members of the DCM family signed a formal agreement to trifurcate the multi-product business house. DCM chairman and senior managing director Bansi Dhar will run a new company comprising the contentious Kota complex which was recently proposed to be sold off, Swatantra Bharat Mills, and Daurala Sugar.



Charat Ram (left) and Bharat Ram

The Bharat Ram branch of the Shriram family has got the closed textile mill in Delhi, DCM Data Products, Shriram Fibres and DCM Toyota.

The Charat Ram branch has agreed to take up the vanaspati and chemical units in Delhi, Jay Engineering Works, Usha Sales International, Shriram Refrigerators, Shriram Honda and Mawana Sugar.

It's a fairly equitable distribution. Bansi Dhar has got the bulk of the DCM assets; the Charat Ram branch has two profitable units; and the Bharat Ram family stands to gain a great deal from the real estate value of the closed mill.







Return of the supercop

Katre gets an extension—yes, again

On 13 March, 1987, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) raided the *Indian Express* guest house in New Delhi's Sunder Nagar. The investigating officers seized secret files procured from the Directorate General of Technical Development, several blank pads with the letterhead of Bhure Lal, then director of enforcement, printed on them, and a draft of a letter meant to be sent to the Prime Minister from President Zail Singh.

It was, in retrospect, the most important raid in the life of Rajiv Gandhi's government. Present at the Sunder Nagar guest house was the *Express*' cannily mercurial proprietor Ramnath Goenka, till then a Rajiv Gandhi supporter, who regarded the intrusion as a personal insult. The discovery of Bhure Lal's letterheads proved what had long been suspected: that the enforcement directorate was being manipulated by Nusli Wadia and the *Express* camp and set off the Fairfax affair. And the discovery of the Zail Singh letter confirmed to Rajiv Gandhi that the *Express* was conspiring against him, perhaps with the intention of getting Zail Singh to dismiss his government and appoint Goenka's hero V.P. Singh Prime Minister instead.

From this raid stemmed the exploitation of the Bofors affair, the emergence of V.P. Singh as the Opposition alternative and the Zail Singh-led coup that failed.

It is extraordinary, therefore, that the man who ordered the raid was not a senior Cabinet minister, but an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer. But then, Mohan Katre is no mere policeman. Even before the *Express* raid, he had emerged as one of the most powerful directors of the CBI ever. And after it, he has become the Rajiv Gandhi regime's supercop, a man that the government values so highly that his term has been twice extended, most recently on 1 November, when he was told to continue in office for another year. Inevitably, the Opposition sees him as the regime's hatchet-man.

A year and a half after the raid, Katre confirms that he did not clear it with the Prime Minister. He had been authorised to investigate S. Gurumurthy's ability to come up with secret files and as the lawyer-cum-accountant-cum-*swayamsevak*-cum-investigative reporter used the Sunder Nagar guest house as his Delhi residence, he regarded the decision to order the raid as well within his brief. What, one wonders, would have happened if he had held off? Perhaps, recent political history would have been very different.

Katre, of course, insists piously that such considerations have never moved him. He even claims, somewhat implausibly, that the two forged Fairfax letters that tipped the CBI off, were mailed anonymously to him! (The *Express* line is that the Ambanis forged them, gave them to Amitabh Bachchan, who took them to Rajiv, who ordered the investigation.) What he can't deny, however, is how important the CBI has been to this government. Katre followed up the Fairfax affair with the arrest of Nusli Wadia on somewhat questionable grounds and, since then, has kept up his pursuit of Gurumurthy. (The *Express*, in turn, has portrayed him as a greedy Ambani stooge.)

Next, he headed the three-agency team that investigated Bofors and while there's no doubt that the sleuths were only able to scratch the surface of the whole murky business, it is also clear that they found much that the JPC ignored. For instance, the CBI clearly established that AE Services was a mere shell company and its parent Ciaou Anstalt, not much better.

In the process, Katre's CBI has been accused of playing political games. Most recently, the furore over Sanjay Singh's arrest for the murder of Syed Modi has reflected badly on the bureau. Katre says the case is solid but there are widespread reservations about the manner in which the CBI officers handling the matter actively telephoned journalists and offered them salacious titbits from Amita Modi's diaries. (This is reported to have cost one of them the opportunity to succeed Katre.) They could have taken lessons in press relations from their director who maintains a lofty distance from the media most of the time and then suddenly lobs a grenade onto the front page. One instance: the leak of the Gurumurthy-Mulgaokar draft of the President's letter to the *Indian Post*.

Oddly enough, most people who knew Katre in his Bombay days (he is from the IPS's Maharashtra cadre) never reckoned that he would become a Prime Minister's supercop. As DIG, CBI, in Bombay, he was studiously apolitical and then, as special inspector general, Maharashtra, he avoided getting caught up in the political games played by the Kasbekars, Nagarkars and Ribeiros of the Maharashtra police. When he was called to Delhi to head the CBI, his appointment was attributed to home minister S.B. Chavan's fondness for Maharashtrians, and Katre was expected to serve out his time quietly and retire to his house in Poona.

For his part, he still insists that the directorship is just another job, and that he doesn't seek extensions. Last month, he was telling all and sundry how Voltas, his tenants in Poona, had vacated his house, and talking about a peaceful retirement. Not once did he betray what he must surely have known: that moves were afoot to re-appoint him.

Perhaps, it is this discretion that makes him so invaluable to this regime.

Vir Sanghvi

Katre is no mere policeman. Even before the *Express* raid, he had emerged as one of the most powerful directors of the CBI ever. And after it, the Opposition sees him as the Rajiv regime's hatchet-man

On the Bofors trail

Chitra Subramaniam has delivered all the big scoops

Of all the Indian newshounds on the trail of the Bofors story these past two years—only one has dug up a bit of bone. And she is still digging furiously for more. Chitra Subramaniam, special correspondent in Geneva has put *The Hindu* at the top of the investigative pack, leaving the *Indian Express* and Arun Shourie not only far behind but perhaps also on the wrong scent.

Who is Chitra Subramaniam? And where was she before Bofors? When she burst on the scene with her startling revelations, she provoked much speculation. But so far she has been very reluctant to talk about herself, well aware of the dangers of promoting herself instead of her work.

Eventually she agreed, admitting that she was already something of a celebrity. The investigative reporter's name has even figured in Parliament, where Madhu Dandavate asked Chidambaram if she would be arrested in the event that the Defamation Bill was passed. (After some deliberation he said no.) She has also appeared on Swiss television. Not as a reporter, which is her usual garb on the government's French channel, but as an interviewee in a Bofors related programme.

Chitra, a tall striking woman of 30, admits it has all been very heady. She has come a long way from her *India Today* days, when like many other women journalists she was expected to do soft stories on art and culture. She has since earned her Master's degree in journalism from Stanford University in the US where she met her Italian husband Gian Carlos Duella. Later she freelanced for a while stringing for *India Today*, the *Indian Express* etc, before accepting a job two years ago as *The Hindu* correspondent (it was the only paper that agreed to pay her for living in one of Europe's most expensive cities.)



Chitra Subramaniam: reporter at work

Chitra Subramaniam has put *The Hindu* at the top of the investigative pack, leaving the *Indian Express* not only far behind but perhaps also on the wrong scent. Her name has figured even in Parliament, where Madhu Dandavate asked Chidambaram if she would be arrested in the event that the Defamation Bill was passed. (After some deliberation he said no)

As it turns out, it was a good decision. Once N. Ram, the editor of *The Hindu* (for whom she has undiluted praise) had set her on the Bofors investigation, she has not looked back. Chitra says chasing the biggest story of the decade has not been easy. She has lived and breathed nothing but Bofors these past few months.

The timing could not have been worse. Chitra has a 14-month-old-son, Nikhil, who was born, right in the middle of her investigations. Her sources would even call her at the hospital, leading to inevitable jokes that she should name her baby after the Swedish arms manufacturer.

In a way, though, being a new mother has allowed Chitra to remain level-headed. As she wryly pointed out, changing diapers between phone calls tends to bring you down to earth.

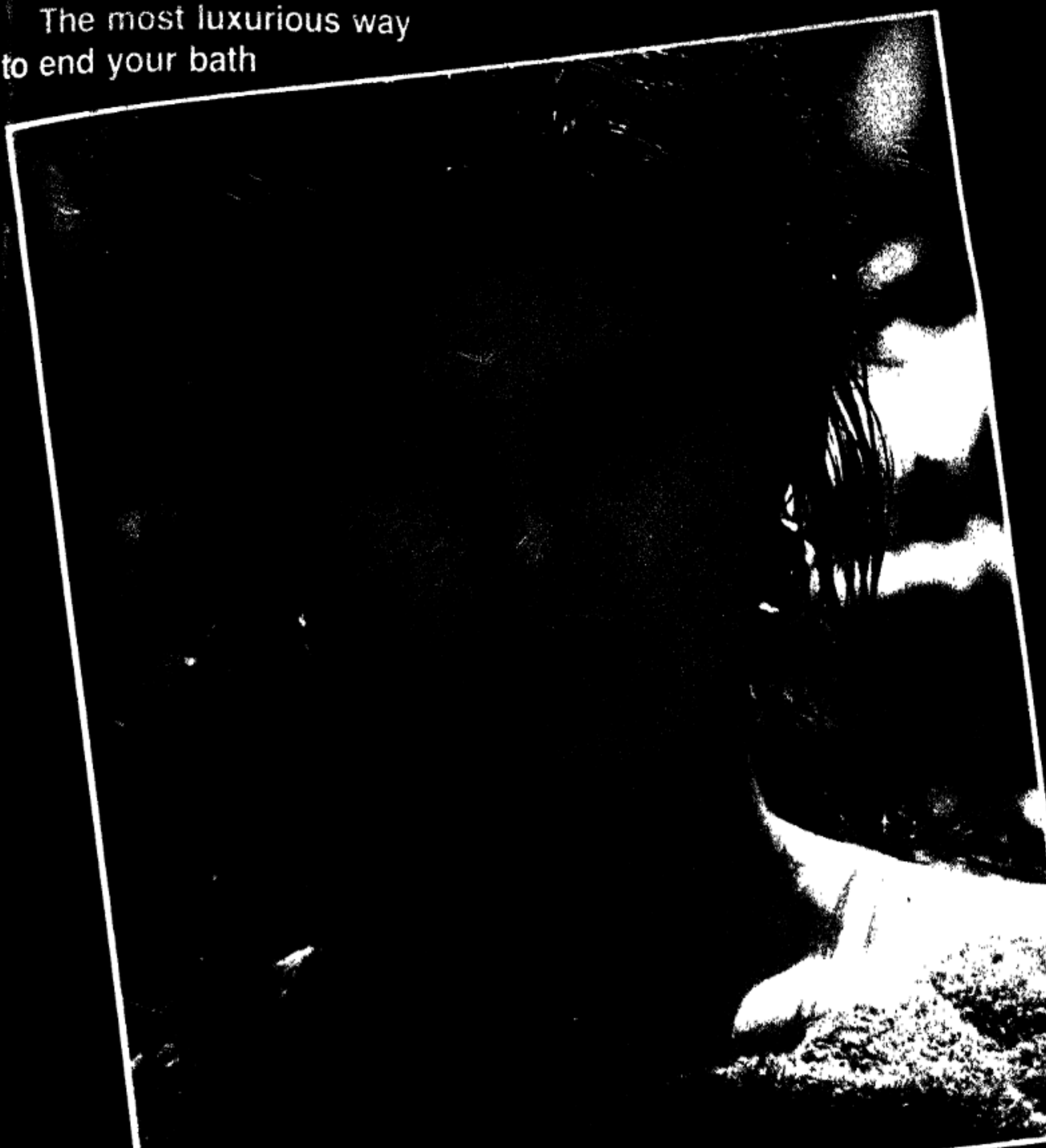
But it's not just bouquets that have come Chitra's way. She's heard of the uncharitable rumours as well. That her stories and the documents are nothing but leaks. That Chitra is no more than a postman delivering material to *The Hindu*, which was specially chosen as the most believable paper to leak documents to. The rumours make her really mad. Of course it was a leak, she admits angrily. But then even Watergate was a leak. What of all the work that went into developing her sources, gathering information, sieving it, verifying it and cross-checking it? Not for nothing did Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein grab the Pulitzer and all those other awards.

So what are her sources? Chitra makes oblique references to some friends in Sweden that date back before Bofors. Then she adds that her sources are not that difficult to find. She wonders why no other journalist has got hold of the documents she has. The people who've talked to her would talk to anybody, she thinks. Predictably, Chitra has been pestered by journalists and especially politicians who try to skin off her work. She has resolutely headed them off, especially the Opposition (read Ram Jethmalani) and then there are the government's secret services to think of. No doubt they are also on her trail.

Of course the big question everyone is after is, "Did Rajiv Gandhi get the money?" Chitra is trying to keep an open mind on that one. After all, the Bofors story is not yet over. Not by a long shot. She and Ram have worked out some of the angles but many mysteries remain. Which hands did the commissions finally reach? Rajiv's? The Congress (I)'s? And what of AE Services? Did it route the big money? Whoever cracks those questions will certainly have the biggest story of post-Emergency India. Chitra is supremely confident that it will be *The Hindu* which gets there first.

Rohini Nilekani/Geneva

The most luxurious way
to end your bath



Ultrx Luxury Towels — in a variety of vibrant colours. Made with superior Japanese technology to give you a towel that's comparable to the finest in the world.

Softer, super-absorbent and with an ultra-rich pile, in 100% pure cotton.

Available as single towels or sets. Also in a special luxury large size.

Ultrx

BOMBAY DYEING

DESIGN

Trendy traditions

The Samode festival celebrates Anokhee's 20-year-old success story



Gautam Patowary

John and Faith Singh: pioneer garment exporters

It was a handmade extravaganza for handcrafted people. Martand ('Mapu') Singh danced under a starlit sky, Rajeev Sethi stared meaningfully from the sidelines; while around them were the cream of Indian design: David Abraham, Ritu Kumar, John Bissel, Naresh Kumar, Mani Mann (garments); Rakesh Thakore, Madhumita Patel, Anshu Nath, Bindu Jain (fabric); Preeti Vyas, Vinay Jain (graphics); Neera Nath (jewellery) and many others. Plus: teams from *Elle* and Australian *Vogue* and a BBC crew.

The two-day Anokhee Festival of folk arts and crafts at Samode and Jaipur in Rajasthan was, however, much more than a mere artsy-craftsy bash. It celebrated twenty years of Anokhee, the company that pioneered the Indian garment export boom. The high-powered guest list (the Maharaja of Jaipur threw a banquet for the Festival) and the glittering but suitably ethnic nature of the festivities were tributes to Anokhee's awesome influence on textile design: indeed many trace the international belief that Rajasthani design is India's most striking to the efforts of the Anokheewallas.

It all began in 1967 when John Singh, a well-educated (Doon and Oxford) but bored Thakur met Faith Hardy, the daughter of an Irish Bishop, who had travelled to India during the summer of love. Hardy was fascinated by Indian fabrics and after she married Singh, the couple incorporated a company called Rajasthan which exported Rajasthan's distinctive hand-blocked prints. Passing up the temptation to sell cheesecloth to the Western counter-culture, the Singhs linked up with Peter Simon of the now hugely successful Monsoon chain of high street fashion shops in England.



A V.I.P. ?

LUGGAGE TO BE SEEN WITH

Simon kept them in business with orders for high-quality garments and a mention in English *Vogue* in 1971 cemented their position.

Unlike most garment exporters who turned themselves into medium-sized industries, however, the Singhs took the line that how they ran their business was at least as important as how much money they made. Accordingly, they eschewed the "workshop" approach of manufacture and allowed craftsmen to work at home. To further integrate Rajasthan (Anokhee is the label) with the environment, they set up a school for craftsmen's children in their garden (and sent their own kids there) and established a health centre, and then a veterinary centre.

The approach has led the Singhs to see Anokhee as more than just a business. Says Faith, "In highly structured traditional societies, patterns, colours and wear have, since time beyond, been used as non-verbal statements of social relationships and realities of significant life events, rituals and religious ceremonies." The couple believes that Anokhee perpetrates this tradition and is proud of the manner in which the firm has found commercial success without disturbing Rajasthan's traditional ecostructure.

And indeed the emphasis on traditional methods has meant that Anokhee clothes are painstakingly prepared by committed craftsmen. A typical garment will go through 20 distinct processes (tanning, block printing, dyeing, dusting, immersion in indigo, a 15-day curing, etc.) before the tailors even get their hands on it. The ornamentation, *patwa* work, embroidery and the like, will all come later.

Inevitably, this costs money. But, says John Singh, the London price of an Anokhee dress (typically $60) represents an enormous mark-up—upto three or four times Anokhee's original price. And despite the Singhs' emphasis on tradition over commerce, Rajasthan's business has grown: it now has a turnover of around Rs 2 crores and exports to 13 countries, including most of the Western world.

The Samode Festival demonstrated the Singhs' commitment to Rajasthani folk tradition. There was folk music provided by Kamal Kothari, a musicologist from Rupayan Sansthan, Jodhpur who gathered over 60 musicians representing many of Rajasthan's folk music communities. Local craftsmen exhibited earthen pottery, lac ornaments, miniature painting, metal jewellery, palm leaf fans and other such traditional arts. The food came from *samosa* makers, ***rasogolla*** **sellers,** ***chaatwallas*** and ***halwais.***



Tajdar Singh

The Samode Palace

The folk arts contrasted nicely with a super-slick fashion show organised by England's John Walford, and featuring top Indian and British models as well as African, Rajasthani and rock music played on a state of the art music system.

The show was supposed to demonstrate the interaction between traditional clothing, in particular of Rajasthan, and contemporary design sensitivity. In a sense, that was what Samode Festival was about. Just as Anokhee's success shows that it is possible to mingle Sixties sensitivities, Rajasthani designs and belief in the traditional workplace—and still storm the high street boutiques of the West.

Malavika Rajbans Sanghvi/ ***Jaipur***

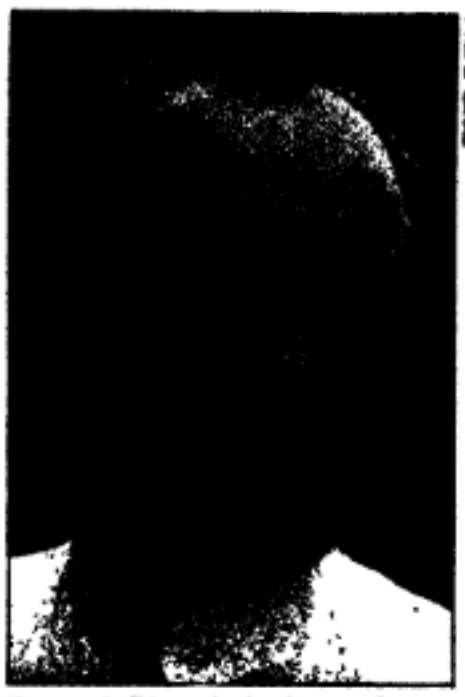
AT LAST, life imitates art. **Neena Gupta**, the queen of the television soap opera (*Khandaan, Buniyaad,* etc.) has kept all of India guessing over the last nine months about her pregnancy. At first the big question was: is she or isn't she? After a certain protuberance in her shape sorted that one out, the next question was: who's the lucky man?

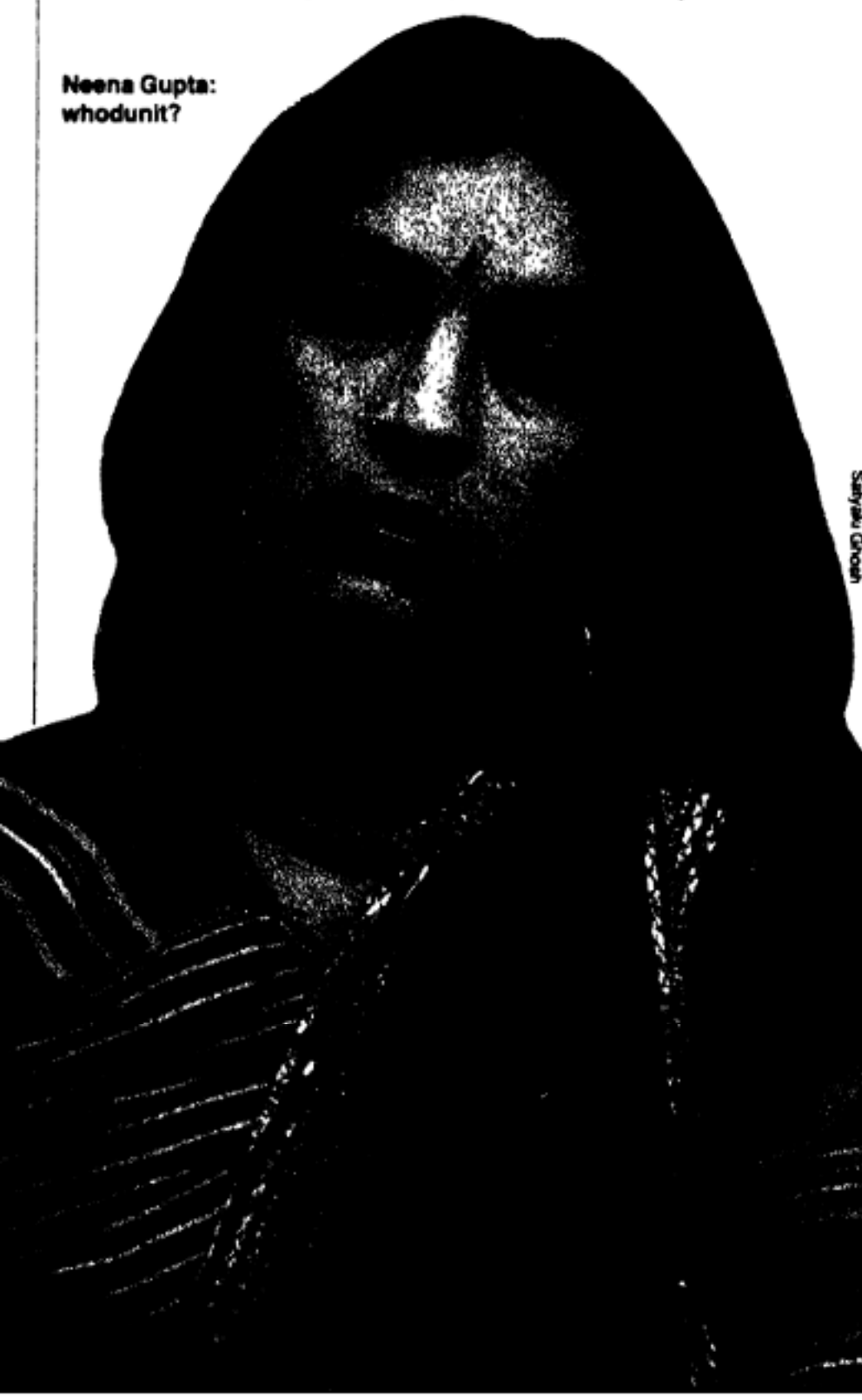
Last month, we had the last gripping episode. Ms Gupta became the film industry's first unwed mother, when she gave birth to a daughter. Nevertheless, the last scene left a lot to be desired. We were never told who the father was.

For months now, the probables have been lining up. Musician Sharang Dev, moody actor Om Puri, high-living cricketer Vivian Richards and well-publicised director Amit Khanna. But whodunit? Neena will not say. And though the curious rushed to peer at the baby (does it have Viv's nose? Om's complexion? Amit's height?), the final answer is not yet in.

Watch this space.


Vasant Sathe: gratuitous advice


Romesh Bhandari: clever chap


Neena Gupta: whodunit?

THE NEXT time you come across a lunatic, take a closer look—he might just be the effective number two in the Union Cabinet. We have this on the best authority—that of **Vasant Sathe**, central energy minister and the ideas person of the Congress(I) party (such being the state of that once-proud organisation).

Moving the economic resolution at the AICC(I) session held recently at the Talkatora Stadium, Sathe could not quite resist making a dig or two at the erstwhile finance minister (and second only to Rajiv Gandhi in the old dispensation) V.P. Singh. *"Malum nahi,"* mused Sathe, in chaste Hindi, "*do number kursi mein kya bemari jai, ki jo usme baitha hai, uska dimag* out *ho jata hai.*" (I wonder why everyone who sits on the number two chair gets mentally deranged.)

The point was misunderstood by another one-time second-in-command, Pranab Mukherjee. He sat squirming in his chair until Sathe thought fit to clarify, referring to a certain former minister called Vishwa who thought he could conquer the world (how's that for symbolism?) and therefore quit the party to become Opposition leader.

Having proved himself a palpable wit, Sathe went on to give his leader gratuitous advice—that he should never again have a number two man in the Cabinet. Well, there certainly is no danger of Sathe ever being appointed to the post.

THE PUBLICITY-CONSCIOUS Lieutenant Governor of Delhi **Romesh Bhandari** is known for two things: his strange insistence on repeating everything thrice (as in "No problem, no problem, no problem," or "Hello Adnan, hello Adnan, hello Adnan"), and his extreme reluctance to give up the government house at 18 Akbar Road that he occupied as foreign secretary.

After Bhandari retired from the foreign office, the government made several attempts to boot him out of


Jayalalitha: back to the arc lights

the bungalow but he clung on by his fingernails ("I'm not going, I'm not going, I'm not going"). Now that he's been appointed Lt Governor, he has taken to claiming that he has a legitimate right to the house.

The problem is that the LG already has an official residence called Raj Niwas. No matter. Bhandari now claims that Raj Niwas has structural faults and operates out of Akbar Road.

Last month, the thrice-

blessed Bhandari invited guests to a party at Raj Niwas. Those who turned up found nobody there. Then they read the small print on the cards. It said: 'Raj Niwas, 18 Akbar Road'. Obviously, Bhandari had rechristened his old bungalow. And so now, nobody can throw him out.

Clever chap, clever chap, clever chap.

THOSE WHO rise by the silver screen have also to live with it, whether they will or no. **Jayalalitha**, leader of one perpetually-warring faction of the AIADMK, for instance. One of the claimants to MGR's disputed legacy, Jaya has one thing in common with her deceased mentor—her cine popularity.



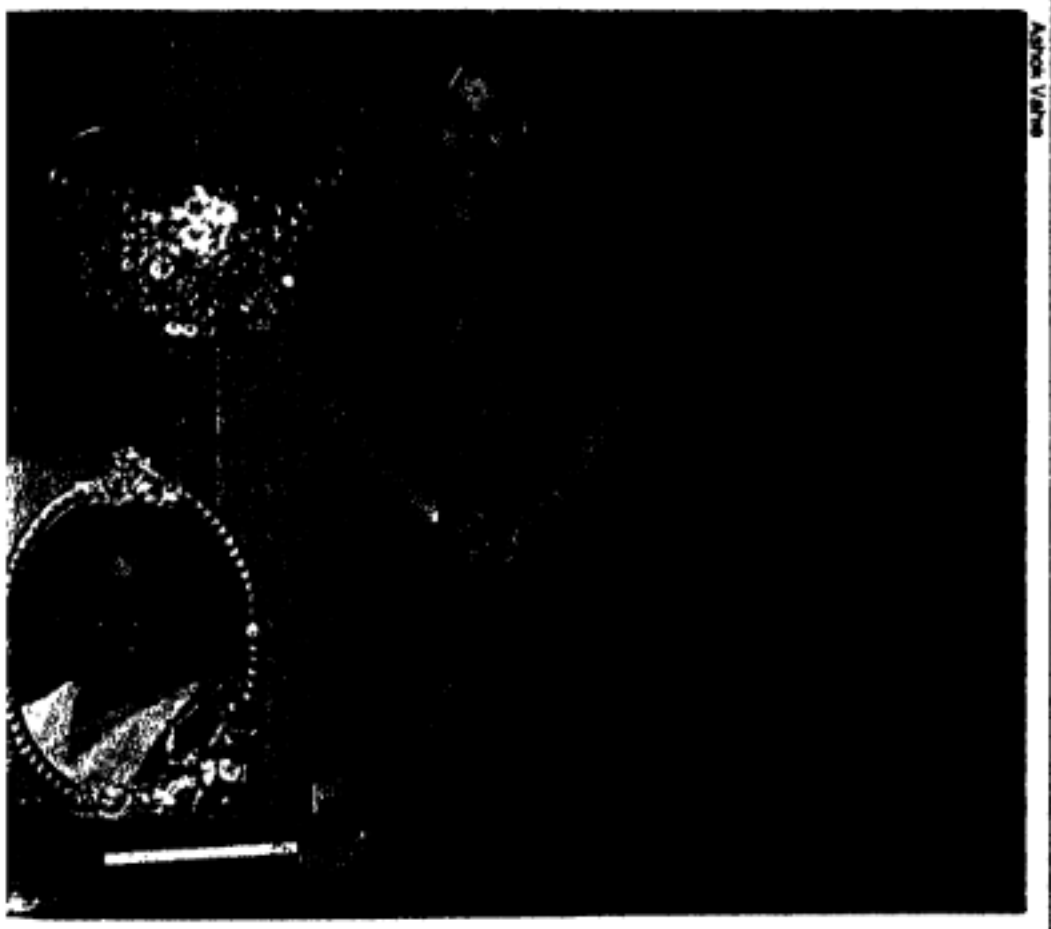
N. Prasad

Vinod Khanna: hooked



Nirmal Bhattacharya

Dilip Doshi: principled stand



Ashok Vaity

Now that politics is no longer the piece of cake it was during MGR's lifetime and her stock is plummeting (thanks, in part, to the undignified squabbles between the wife and the... um... political heir), Jaya has decided to take to the arc lights again.

No, it's not back to films full-time. All she has in mind is a quickie, which would refurbish her badly-battered image. If the plans work out, cinegoers will soon see her battling social evil, aided by such stalwarts as Kamalahasan and Rajnikant, or so insiders would have it. No prizes for guessing who would emerge the winner.

THIS PARTICULAR courting couple has gone to court. Yes, it is the **Vinod Khanna-Amrita Singh** combine we are talking about. The rumours that had them wedded had some substance to them, after all. For SUNDAY has it on very authoritative sources that the lovers have given notice to the law courts that they intend to go in for a registered marriage once the statutory waiting period is over. Another month or so, and they will go public with the joyous news.

Past record though, does not augur very well for their future. Vinod's Rajneesh predeliction is well-known, as is his love of the female form. And Amrita's reputation as man-eater is not exactly unearned. So, bets are already being laid on how long the union will last. Needless to add, the odds are stacked heavily against the starry pair. But God and Ravi Shastri willing, they will live happily ever after.

THEY THOUGHT it was an offer nobody could refuse. But they had reckoned without the principled **Dilip Doshi**, ex-Test cricketer and left-arm spinner second only to the great Bishen Bedi.

South African cricket was to celebrate its 100th anniversary and festivities were being planned, which would include exhibition matches featuring 'names' from cricket fields from all over the world. And how could they be induced to accept invitations from a political pariah like South Africa? Only by the lure of the lucre. The country being always flush with slush funds, those bound for British shores (on the recruitment drive) were given one million pounds, which they proceeded to wave under the nose of Doshi and others. Doshi did not bite and acknowledging defeat, the press-gang made its way back home. So not everybody has a price, some of us have values, too.

Ashim Dasgupta: fall from grace



Pranab Mukherjee

A MARXIST and no gentleman, is the general consensus about West Bengal finance minister **Ashim Dasgupta**.

The Prime Minister, on a visit to the city, was addressing his obligatory predeparture press conference at Calcutta's Dum Dum airport. Gracing the occasion as the state government representative was Dasgupta.

Rajiv proceeded to hector scribes on sundry weighty issues—the Bengal Lamp controversy, central assistance to states, the Haldia project, the Bakreshwar thermal power project—all sore points with the state government. As is Gandhi's wont, the statements were not totally accurate. A fact that Dasgupta, as amicable host, should have overlooked. Only such magnanimity was not for the good communist and he interrupted the PM repeatedly to contradict his statements, making him out to be, at best, a blithering idiot, at worst, a rotten liar.

"Bad form," cried sticklers for protocol, aghast at such unprecedented misbehaviour from a responsible minister. Dasgupta preferred proferring his explanation to the chief minister, Jyoti Basu. And it must have been a good one, for Basu said later: "It is a trivial matter and I don't think there is any point in commenting on the incident."

Compiled by Seema Goswami

Guess who is emerging as the industry's effective number two? Not Vinod Khanna or Dharmendra. But Anupam Kher. The versatile star has emerged as Bombay's most consistent hit-giver these days while all the other heroes have had flops. What's more, he can play villains, fathers, uncles, brothers and heroes with equal ease; is totally professional; and is genuinely talented unlike Vinod Khanna and party.

Anupam Kher: effective number two



She took her Superwoman image a trifle too seriously, perhaps. Shooting for Ram Shetty's *Khatarnak*, Anita Raaj, mid-way through her pregnancy, insisted on performing her dance sequences with all the zest and fervour of yore. And paid the price for her overenthusiasm, landing up in hospital.

Most worried about Raaj's ill-health was Hema Malini, who had gone through the same rigours trying to complete all her films before she 'showed'.



Anita Raaj: overdoing things

Somewhat surprising, all this tender concern. After all, nobody has yet forgotten Anita's Dharmendra connection.

What news of *Satyam*, the long-awaited Amitabh-Shabana starrer? It was supposed to have been released five months ago, but there's still no sign of it. Worse still, Amit's *chamchas* say that his two Manmohan Desai films (*Ganga Jamuna Saraswati* and *Toofan*) will be released before it.

What accounts for the delay? Three reasons. One: Amit feels he needs a big-budget *tamasha*, not a low-budget film, cogged by Javed Akhtar from Frank Capra. Two: he thinks that Tinnu Anand's direction is awful. Anand has already lost his place in the superstar's camp to another Anand: Mukul.

And three: after seeing a preview, Jaya told her husband that Shabana and he made a terrible screen pair; that the Azmi had all the sex appeal of a chipmunk; and what's more, looked older than him on screen.

Madhuri Dixit claims to be teething. No, it's not the latest gambit to appear younger-than-all-else. The dishiest thing to hit filmland in a long, long time, Dixit is merely getting her wisdom teeth: as painful a process as any. And suffering with her are her numerous producers, for the star cannot even articulate her lines on the sets, let alone emote, because of the agonising pain. ■

In search of roots

A bureaucrat with literary talent highlights the problems affecting his generation

Successful civil servants are not expected to achieve credibility as prophets of alienation. But that is precisely the kind of dual distinction that 29-year-old Upamanyu Chatterjee has acquired after the publication of his first novel, *English August.* As assistant collector in Thane, Chatterjee pushed papers with diligence in the best traditions of colonial administration. But out of office he combined pen and paper to spurts of literary creativity.

Of the many Indian authors writing in English today, Chatterjee is probably the one who is most closely identified with his hero—Agastya Sen, facetiously named "English August" by friends for his Anglo-Indian predilections. Much too closely perhaps for comfort—since Chatterjee finds it necessary to insist on the tenuous distinction that though the hero is a trainee in the civil service, "the book is not about the civil service." For Chatterjee, the novel is about the "pressures of feeling dislocated, of not feeling at home". And Agastya Sen becomes the prototype for the dislocated young man of the post-Partition generation who needs his fantasies to cope with his reality. After the book was published, Chatterjee's friends wrote to him "thanking him for reviving the Agastya in us all."

Being a civil service trainee should not have produced any significant disorientation in Upamanyu Chatterjee. He travelled often enough in the districts with his parents who were with All India Radio, and he has an older brother who is also an IAS officer. Nonetheless, like so many others manning the civil service, Chatterjee is primarily an urban person. A graduate in English from St Stephen's College in Delhi, Chatterjee also taught there for a year before joining the civil service.

Perhaps it was his sophisticated education and background that gave him a perception of Indian administration in its historical context, a perception that is bound to create distance if not dislocation. "District administration in India", observes this author, "is largely a British creation—like the railways and the English language, another complex and unwieldy bequest of the Raj."

The difference of course is in the kind of people administering the district today. Unlike the confident or committed empire-builders of the past, this is the post-Partition generation whose members "are dislocated because of lack of involvement." Laments Chatterjee, "they have nothing concrete to identify with. Wouldn't it be nice to be at home anywhere in the country?"

Young civil service trainees with urban backgrounds like Chatterjee's are not likely to be at home in the rural outposts they are dumped in. Time, language and culture—all tend to recede for them, and the likely options left are either to wallow in a potentially corrupt lifestyle or to retreat into fantasy. Chatterjee's hero Agastya thus becomes the perfect anti-hero, a 24-year-old recruit who is sent to a small town called Madna for training before becoming a block development officer in a primarily tribal district infested with Naxalites.

Any discussion with Chatterjee also reveals his insights into a problem that is uniquely Indian—speaking and thinking in English which is not one's own language. The most significant legacy of the Raj, English (or the ability to use it) still confers tremendous advantages on the Indian. Chatterjee reminds you of the irony of English-bashing. In 1980 the government decreed that candidates could take the IAS examinations in any Indian language they chose. But less than one per cent chose to take adantage of this gesture of liberalisation!

At the same time, Chatterjee feels that Indians are making too much use of English. It will fade away in the next three generations, without doubt, simply because it is being pushed beyond its limits. What will be left will probably be the strange lingo of a Chatterjee character, Srivastava, the collector of Madna, who says, "My own English is quite funny too—but then I had to learn it on my own."

After five years of administration, Upamanyu Chatterjee can say that he has chosen a "justified" subject for his first novel. Previous experiences of short story writing for magazines like *The Illustrated Weekly, Debonair* and the *London Magazine* only laid the foundation for the seven month burst of *creativity in 1985-86 when 'English August* was written. Appropriately enough, the book was written in Delhi where Chatterjee was on leave, not in the distraction of the districts.

Critical accolades or appreciative comments from friends have not made the 29 year-old writer lose his grasp of reality. He has not forgotton the eight rejections from publishers while the novel made the rounds for 15 months before Faber & Faber took it. The novel does not seem to have made much difference to his career. He has recently been made officer on special duty, festival, department of culture. And unlike his protagonist, he has no immediate plans to leavethe service in order to "get himself out of all his perplexities."

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*



Upamanyu Chatterjee: writer at work

Gautam Patole

Of the many Indian authors writing in English today, Upamanyu Chatterjee is probably the one who is most closely identified with his hero—Agastya Sen



A short story by Jeffrey Archer about a finance minister who is determined to end corruption and unearth Swiss accounts

Clean Sweep Ignatius



Jeffrey Archer



Few showed much interest when Ignatius Agarbi was appointed Nigeria's minister of finance. After all, the cynics pointed out, he was the seventeenth person to hold the office in 17 years.

In Ignatius's first major policy statement to Parliament he promised to end graft and corruption in public life and warned the electorate that no one holding an official position could feel safe unless he led a blameless life. He ended his maiden speech with the words, "I intend to clear out Nigeria's Augean stables."

Such was the impact of the minister's speech that it failed to get a mention in the Lagos *Times*. Perhaps the editor considered that, since the paper had covered the speeches of the previous 16 ministers *in extenso*, his readers might feel they had heard it all before.

Ignatius, however, was not to be disheartened by the lack of confidence shown in him, and set about his new task with vigour and determination. Within days of his appointment he had caused a minor official at the ministry of food to be jailed for falsifying documents relating to the import of grain. The next to feel the bristles of Ignatius's new broom was a leading Lebanese financier, who was deported without trial for breach of the exchange control regulations. A month later came an event which even Ignatius considered a personal coup: the arrest of the chief of police for accepting bribes—a perk the citizens of Lagos had in the past considered went with the job. When four months later the police chief was sentenced to 18 months in jail, the new finance minister finally made the front page of the Lagos *Times*. A leader on the centre page dubbed him "Clean Sweep Ignatius", the new broom every guilty man feared. Ignatius's reputation as Mr Clean continued to grow as arrest followed arrest and unfounded rumours began circulating in the capital that even General Otobi, the head of state, was under investigation by his own finance minister.

Ignatius alone now checked, vetted and authorised all foreign contracts worth over one hundred million dollars. And although every decision he made was meticulously scrutinised by his enemies, not a breath of scandal ever became associated with his name.

When Ignatius began his second year of office as minister of finance even the cynics began to acknowledge his achievements. It was about this time that General Otobi felt confident enough to call Ignatius in for an unscheduled consultation.

The head of state welcomed the minister to Durden Barracks and ushered him to a comfortable chair in his study overlooking the parade ground.

"Ignatius, I have just finished going over the latest budget report and I am alarmed by your conclusion that the exchequer is still losing millions of dollars each year in bribes paid to go-betweens by foreign companies. Have you any idea into whose pockets this money is falling? That's what I want to know."

Ignatius sat bolt upright, his eyes never leaving the head of state.

"I suspect a great percentage of the money is ending up in private Swiss bank accounts but I am at present unable to prove it."

"Then I will give you whatever added authority you require to do so," said General Otobi. "You can use any means you consider necessary to ferret out these villains. Start by investigating every member of my Cabinet, past and present. And show no fear or favour in your endeavours, no matter what their rank or connections."

"For such a task to have any chance of success I would need a special letter of authority signed by you, General..."

"Then it will be on your desk by six o'clock this evening," said the head of state.

"And the rank of Ambassador Plenipotentiary whenever I travel abroad."

"Granted."

"Thank you," said Ignatius, rising from his chair on the assumption that the audience was over.

"You may also need this," said the General as they walked towards the door. The head of state handed Ignatius a small automatic pistol. "Because I suspect by now that you have almost as many enemies as I."

Ignatius took the pistol from the soldier awkwardly, put it in his pocket and mumbled his thanks.

Without another word passing between the two men Ignatius left his leader and was driven back to his ministry.

Without the knowledge of the chairman of the State Bank of Nigeria and unhindered by any senior civil servants, Ignatius enthusiastically set about his new task. He researched alone at night, and by day discussed his findings with no one. Three months later he was ready to pounce.

The minister selected the month of August to make an unscheduled visit abroad as it was the time when most Nigerians went on holiday and his absence would therefore not be worthy of comment.

He asked his permanent secretary to book him, his wife and their two children on a flight to Orlando, and to be certain that it was charged to his personal account.

On their arrival in Florida the family checked into the local Marriot Hotel. He then informed his wife, without warning or explanation, that he would be spending a few days in New York on business before rejoining them for the rest of the holiday. The following morning Ignatius left his family to the mysteries of Disneyworld while he took a flight to New York. It was a short taxi ride from La Guardia to Kennedy, where, after a change of clothes and the purchase of a return tourist ticket for cash, Ignatius boarded a Swissair flight for Geneva unobserved.

Once in the Swiss capital Ignatius booked into an inconspicuous hotel, retired to bed and slept soundly for eight hours. Over breakfast the following morning he studied the list of banks he had so carefully drawn up after completing his research in Nigeria: each name was written out boldly in his own hand. Ignatius decided to start with Gerber et Cie whose building, he observed from the hotel bedroom, took up half the



Illustrations: Debashis Deb

ABSOLUTE DENTAL FACT

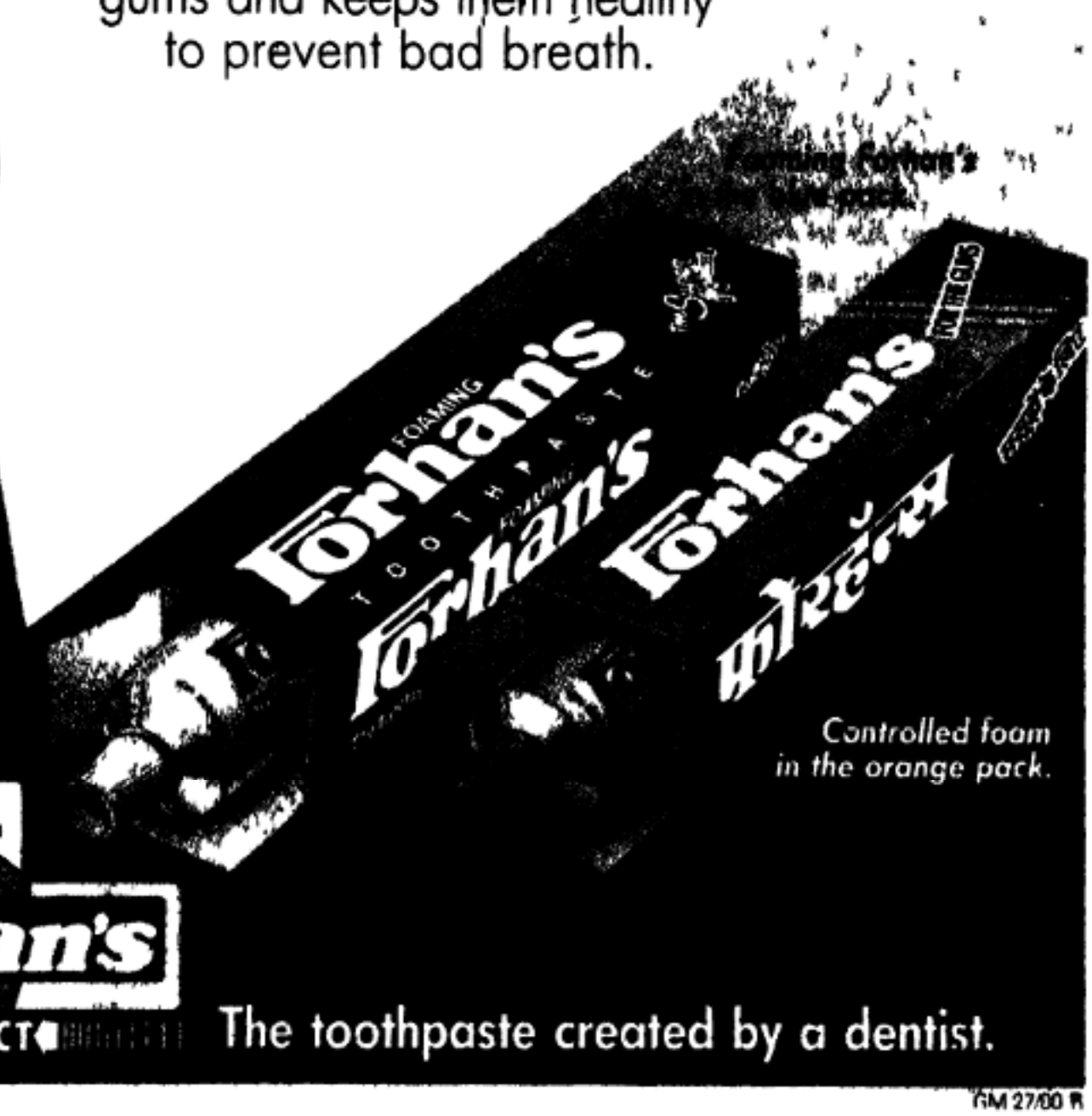
Bad breath has more to do with
the health of your gums than your teeth.





ABSOLUTE FACT

Only Forhan's* has an
exclusive astringent that tightens
gums and keeps them healthy
to prevent bad breath.



*Contains
no animal
bone-based
agent.

Controlled foam
in the orange pack.

Forhan's

32 INTACT

The toothpaste created by a dentist.

GM 27/00 R

Avenue de Parcline. He checked the telephone number with the concierge before placing a call. The chairman agreed to see him at twelve o'clock.

Carrying only a battered briefcase, Ignatius arrived at the bank a few minutes before the appointed hour—an unusual occurrence for a Nigerian, thought the young man dressed in a smart grey suit, white shirt and grey silk tie, who was waiting in the marble hall to greet him. He bowed to the minister, introducing himself as the chairman's personal assistant, and explained that he would accompany Ignatius to the chairman's office. The young executive led the minister to a waiting lift and neither man uttered another word until they had reached the eleventh floor. A gentle tap on the chairman's door elicited "*Entrez,*" which the young man obeyed.

"The Nigerian minister of finance, sir."

The chairman rose from behind his desk and stepped forward to greet his guest. Ignatius could not help noticing that he too wore a grey suit, white shirt and grey silk tie.

"Good morning, minister," the chairman said. "Won't you have a seat?" He ushered Ignatius towards a low glass table surrounded by comfortable chairs on the far side of the room. "I have ordered coffee for both of us if that is acceptable."

Ignatius nodded, placed the battered briefcase on the floor by the side of his chair and stared out of the large plate-glass window. He made some small-talk about the splendid view of the magnificent fountain while a girl served all three men with coffee.

Once the young woman had left the room Ignatius got down to business.

"My head of state has requested that I visit your bank with a rather unusual request," he began. Not a flicker of surprise appeared on the face of the chairman or his young assistant. "He has honoured me with the task of discovering which Nigerian citizens hold numbered accounts with your bank."

On learning this piece of information only the chairman's lips moved. "I am not at liberty to disclose—"

"Allow me to put my case," said the minister, raising a white palm. "First, let me assure you that I come with the absolute authority of my government." Without another word, Ignatius extracted an envelope from his inside pocket with a flourish. He handed it to the chairman who removed the letter inside and read it slowly.

Once he had finished reading, the banker cleared his throat. "This document, I fear, sir, carries no validity in my country." He replaced it in the envelope and handed it back to Ignatius. "I am, of course," continued the chairman, "not for one moment doubting that you have the full backing of your head of state, both as a minister and an ambassador, but that does not change the bank's rule of confidentiality in such matters. There are no circumstances in which we would release the names of any of our account holders without their authority. I'm sorry to be of so little help, but those are, and will always remain, the bank rules." The chairman rose to his feet, as he considered the meeting was now at an end; but he had not bargined for Clean Sweep Ignatius.

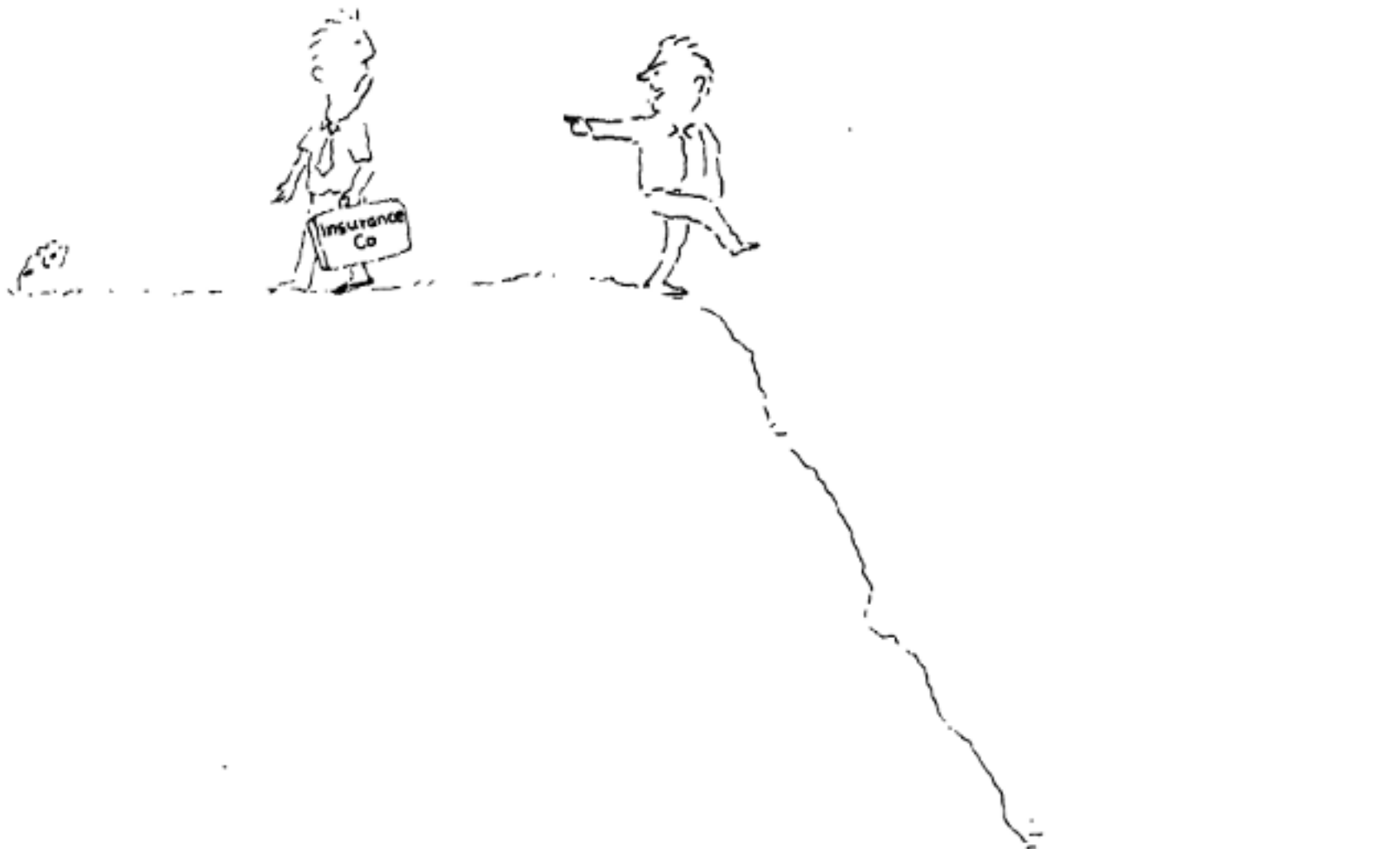


The finance minister's reputation as Mr Clean continued to grow as arrest followed arrest and unfounded rumours began circulating in the capital that even the head of state was under investigation by his own finance minister

"My head of state," said Ignatius, softening his tone perceptibly, "has authorised me to approach your bank to act as the intermediary for all future transactions between my country and Switzerland."

"We are flattered by your confidence in us, minister," replied the chairman, who remained standing. "However, I feel sure that you will understand that it cannot alter our attitude to our customers' confidentiality."

Ignatius remained unperturbed. "Then I am sorry to inform you, Mr Gerber, that our ambassador in Geneva will be instructed to make an official communi-



"Insurance is the last thing I need."

A few moments later, he lost a leg

Two weeks later, the medical bills and his absence from work was telling on his income

Moral of the story is that there are times when you are not sure where you are heading

It is for such unforeseen contingencies that New India Assurance provides for with different schemes like the Personal Accident Insurance and others

New India believes in being more than just an insurance company, it believes in being a loyal friend, philosopher and guide to you in times of distress and otherwise

More than sixty five years have passed since New India first started helping people help themselves. A tradition which continues. No wonder New India has retained for itself the number one spot over the years

Pioneers in the field, they have launched various innovative schemes like the Unborn Child Welfare Scheme and Cancer Insurance Policy and even a policy covering kidney failure.

It is New India's firm belief that insurance can be beneficial to every aspect of living and for people from all walks of life

And New India's agents are more than just insurance salesmen, they reflect the company's commitment to professional but personalised service. So much so that he'll be there wherever and whenever you need a shoulder to lean on

There are few things you can depend upon in this age of uncertainty.
New India is certainly one of them.

I would like to know more about the schemes offered by New India Assurance.

Name _____

Address _____

Tel. _____

Mail this coupon to: New India Assurance Co. Ltd., Publicity Dept., New India Assurance Bldg., 87 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Fort, Bombay 400 023.

ASP-NIA-453/88

que to the Swiss foreign office about the lack of co-operation your bank has shown concerning requests for information about our nationals." He waited for his words to sink in. "You could avoid such embarrassment, of course, by simply letting me know the names of my countrymen who hold accounts with Gerber et Cie and the amounts involved. I can assure you we would not reveal the source of our information."

"You are most welcome to lodge such a communique, sir, and I feel sure that our minister will explain to your ambassador in the most courteous of diplomatic language that the foreign ministry does not have the authority under Swiss law to demand such disclosures."

"If that is the case, I shall instruct my own ministry of trade to halt all future dealings in Nigeria with any Swiss nationals until these names are revealed."

"That is your privilege, minister," replied the chairman, unmoved.

"And we may also have to reconsider every contract currently being negotiated by your countrymen in Nigeria. And in addition I shall personally see to it that no penalty clauses are honoured."

"Would you not consider such action a little precipitate?"

"Let me assure you, Mr Gerber, that I would not lose one moment of sleep over such a decision," said Ignatius. "Even if my efforts to discover those names were to bring your country to its knees I would not be moved."

"So be it, minister," replied the chairman. "However, it still does not alter the policy or the attitude of this bank to confidentiality."

"If that remains the case, sir, this very day I shall give instructions to our ambassador to close our embassy in Geneva and I shall declare your ambassador in Lagos *persona non grata*."

For the first time the chairman raised his eyebrows.

"Furthermore," continued Ignatius, "I will hold a conference in London which will leave the world's press in no doubt of my head of state's displeasure with the conduct of this bank. After such publicity I feel confident you will find that many of your customers would prefer to close their accounts, while others who have in the past considered you a safe haven may find it necessary to look elsewhere."

The minister waited but still the chairman did not respond.

"Then you leave me no choice," said Ignatius, rising from his seat.

The chairman stretched out his arm, assuming that at last the minister was leaving, only to watch with horror as Ignatius placed a hand in his jacket pocket and removed a small pistol. The two Swiss bankers froze as the Nigerian minister of finance stepped forward and pressed the muzzle against the chairman's temple.



The chairman stretched out his arm, assuming that at last the minister was leaving, only to watch with horror as Ignatius placed a hand in his jacket pocket and removed a small pistol

"I need those names, Mr Gerber, and by now you must realise I will stop at nothing. If you don't supply them immediately I'm going to blow your brains out. Do you understand?"

The chairman gave a slight nod, beads of sweat appearing on his forehead. "And he will be next," said Ignatius, gesturing towards the young assistant, who stood speechless and paralysed a few paces away.

"Get me the names of every Nigerian who holds an account in this bank," Ignatius said quietly, looking towards the young man, "or I'll blow your chairman's brains all over his soft pile carpet. Immediately, do you hear me?" he added sharply.

The young man looked towards the chairman, who was now trembling but said quite clearly, *"Non, Pierre, jamais."*

"D' accord," replied the assistant in a whisper.

"You can't say I didn't give you every chance." Ignatius pulled back the hammer. The sweat was now pouring down the chairman's face and the young man had to turn his eyes away as he waited in terror for the pistol shot.

"Excellent," said Ignatius, as he removed the gun from the chairman's head and returned to his seat. Both the bankers were still trembling and quite unable to speak.

The minister picked up the battered briefcase by the side of his chair and placed it on the glass table in front of him. He pressed back the clasps and the lid flicked up.

The two bankers stared down at the neatly packed rows of hundred-dollar bills. Every inch of the briefcase had been taken up. The chairman quickly estimated that it probably amounted to around five million dollars.

"I wonder, sir," said Ignatius, "how I go about opening an account with your bank?"

A Twist in the Tale, by Jeffrey Archer. Published by Coronet Books, London, 1988. Distributed by India Book House. Price: Rs 51.75

Back to the present

Boman Desai's hero recalls figures from his past to find himself



Any novel that marries a first person character with an account of places and times beyond that 'I' figure's lived experience, needs a narrative device to yoke the two together. The reason for this probably is that readers are willing to take on trust an author's omniscience when the tale is told in the third person, but the 'I', being part of the action and the story, doesn't rate the same authority. We want to know how he knows. Sometimes the author's solution is to make the first person character a story-teller within the novel: Saleem Sinai telling Padma the story of his life in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, or the seventh Trotter writing a chronicle of his eccentric Anglo-Indian clan in Allan Sealy's *Trotter-Nama*. But Boman Desai's device for telling the story of a Parsi family over four generations through the consciousness of his first-person hero, Hormus (Homi) Seervai, is rather different. Homi is given access to his familial past, to the collective consciousness of the Parsis, through machine error.

Homi, a graduate student in America, has invented the memoscan, a contraption that can 'read' the wrinkles of the mind, thus making it possible for the user to relive episodes long past. When Homi uses the invention on himself he programmes it to replay one event in his recent past, over and over again—the nature of this event is kept from the reader till almost the end of the novel. Homi knows that the price of such repetitive stimulation is derangement, even death, but he goes ahead anyway. He is rescued and unhooked but not before the apparatus has scrambled his mind. During his convalescence his senses oscillate between everyday normalcy and over poweringly vivid visions from the past, where kinsfolk, dead and alive, buttonhole him and show him edited footage from their lives.

Homi's convalescence: this then is the frame story. The stories that it frames, the visions, follow serially. So the novel begins with Bapaiji, Homi's dead paternal grandmother, giving him a guided tour of the events in ancient Iran that led up to the Parsi diaspora. This is by way of prologue—the rest of the visions are



Illustration: Krishnendu Chaki

sited in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and they carry the story right up to the event that prompted Homi to make his Faustian compact with the memoscan.

We are treated to two dead grandmothers. One is Bapaiji: tough, Gujarati-speaking, a big noise in a small town, a proper *mofussil* matriarch. The other is Granny, Homi's maternal grandmother: Bombay-bred, English-speaking and such an Anglophile that in heaven (where anything is possible because nothing makes a difference) she has chosen to relocate her Bombay home in Cambridge. Bapaiji on the other hand, has kept her bungalow in Navsari and rehoused her mind instead, in a man's body because all through her energetic life she had craved the freedom and strength given to men. And so it goes on, each relative waiting for a chronological cue to step in and splice his or her reel on to the film playing in Homi's head.

Boman Desai's device for telling the story of a Parsi family over four generations through the consciousness of his first-person hero, Hormus (Homi) Seervai, is rather different. Homi is given access to his familial past, to the collective consciousness of the Parsis, through machine error

The best two-reeler concerns Bapaiji. Her childhood in Navsari, the romance with the beautiful but daft son of a *mithaiwala* the marriage to a gentle middle-aged chemist whose family was so haughtily inbred that all the women were hunchbacked and all the men had elephantiasis, a family moreover, where baby daughters were drowned in buckets of milk to keep them from the horror of marrying beneath them—all this is wonderfully exuberant and so compelling in itself that the reader's mind never wanders off in search of some grand design.

But by the time Granny, Mom, Dad and Rusi have put their lives on view, the same reader has begun to wonder if chronology is the only ordering principle in these pages. Granny's passion for Cambridge, Dad's obssession with Edinburgh, brother Rusi's determined pursuit of American co-eds—all these are nicely observed but less gripping. Questions arise about the sum of the parts. Will the resolution of the frame story, the reason Homi used the memoscan, bring the story to a satisfactory close?

In the end it is revealed that Homi turned to the memoscan because Candace, the woman who exorcised his virginity, had refused to sleep with him again. Traumatised, he chooses to relive in his mind what he can't repeat in real life.

That's more or less where the story finishes, and Homi recovers, so it's a happy ending—but it is also a pretty feeble one. For a start, Candace, whose rejection had driven Homi to suicide, turns out to be a thick blonde from the backwaters of Middle America and quite unworthy of such heroic despair. In the absence of a greater revelation it is hard to know why four generations and more had to be involved to convince Homi that he'd been stupid. Deprived of the scaffolding of a larger history or the thread of an organizing idea, the lifestories that make up the book need motives, events and consequences in the frame story to give them meaning. But these turn out to be so trivial that Bapaiji, Granny, Mom, Dad, Rusi and Homi remain a bunch of lively cameos in search of a novel.

Mukul Kesavan

The Memory of Elephants by Boman Desai. Published by Andre Deutsch, London, 1988. Price £9.95

Break bread in Bombay

A new guide to eating out in the city makes waves

Conventional wisdom has it that Bombay is something of a gastronomic wasteland, at least when compared to Delhi which not only has four times as many fancy restaurants but also the best Muslim eateries. Diana Proeschel and Saroj Merani (both from Bombay's US consulate/USIS) set out to prove in *Flavours* that there's lots of good food to be had in India's commercial capital if only one knows where to look for it. Their guide to 86 city restaurants is at least partly directed at the foreign tourist which is why their Bombay consists largely of South Bombay (70 out of 86 restaurants)—a fact that the map at the front of the book (in which the race-course is shown as the city's northernmost tip!) makes clear. Consequently, *dhabas* lose out and of the less hygienic establishments only the famous ones like Bade Mian and Delhi Durbar get in.

Nevertheless, this is no guide to five-star eating. While all of the Taj's restaurants are included, some get it in the neck. Of the Sea Lounge, they write with justification: "Enjoy the view, save your appetite for other restaurants and encourage the Taj to try harder." They are as hard on the Shamiana: "The service (is) excruciatingly slow...the food here sustains life, that's about all." And bang on target about the Rendezvous: "The prices are high, the menu ambitious, but the results are not always satisfactory." Similarly, of the Sea Rock's execrable, overpriced restaurants, only the Earthen Oven gets a qualified recommendation, while no Centaur outlets are included. Sadly, the authors pull their punches when it comes to the Oberoi. Clearly, they don't like the Cafe Royale's heavily marked-up mishmash of Sheraton-style *haute cuisine* but fight shy of saying so, preferring to concentrate on the decor instead. The Moghul Room's disastrous Kwality-style Punjabi food similarly escapes censure and only the Samarkand comes in for mild criticism. Some double standard, surely?

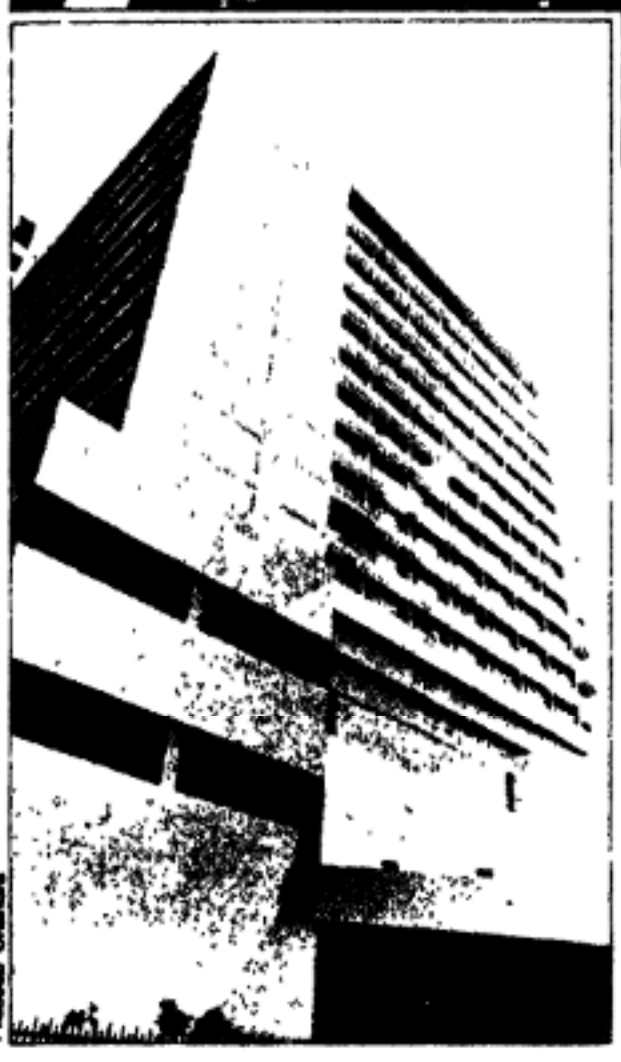
They are much better on non-five-star places. They dismiss the pretensions of the Ambassador's rubbishy "French" (read Anglo-Indian) cuisine; of the absurdly concocted Steak a la Fernandes, they note drily, "Our preference is for the sea food." And they accurately dismiss the food at Mandarin as "Chindian, featuring thick sauces and lots of sauces and chillies."

But the guide's real value is in its description of out-of-the-way places. Who could resist the Kori Roti at Pratap Lunch Home after reading Proeschel and Merani's description of it? Or give Thali a miss? Or not trek out to Dadar to eat Malvani-style fish at Sindhudurg? Even the better-known places like Delhi Durbar (the original, not the disaster near Regal) benefit from detailed descriptions and some tips—"try the Bread Halva even though it is not listed on the menu."

"While we have tried to compile as representative a coverage of Bombay as possible," the authors note a little defensively in their introduction, "we are sure to have left out your favourite eatery. This is inevitable. "Clearly, this is a subjective selection but there are obvious omissions. At least one place that serves good Bhelpuri should have been listed, perhaps Swati, which is the cleanest. If Sindhudurg gets in then Anant Ashram deserves a mention. If a tourist trap like Bade Mian can get a rave, then there's no excuse for excluding the world's best Channa-Bhatura, available from a street stall near Churchgate station. Some of the purpler prose could have done with a good editor. ("This is, indeed, the stuff dreams are made of...This jewel is quite an adornment in Bombay's crown...You owe yourself this unforgettable experience," and even "The Sindhi culinary grail does indeed reside here.") The book has obviously been designed by a blind man and Mario's talents would have been better utilised if he'd been asked to do line drawings of the restaurants rather than the inappropriate cartoons. But despite these minor blemishes, a useful guide. And one that nobody who likes eating and plans to do so in Bombay can afford to be without.

Vikram Sinha





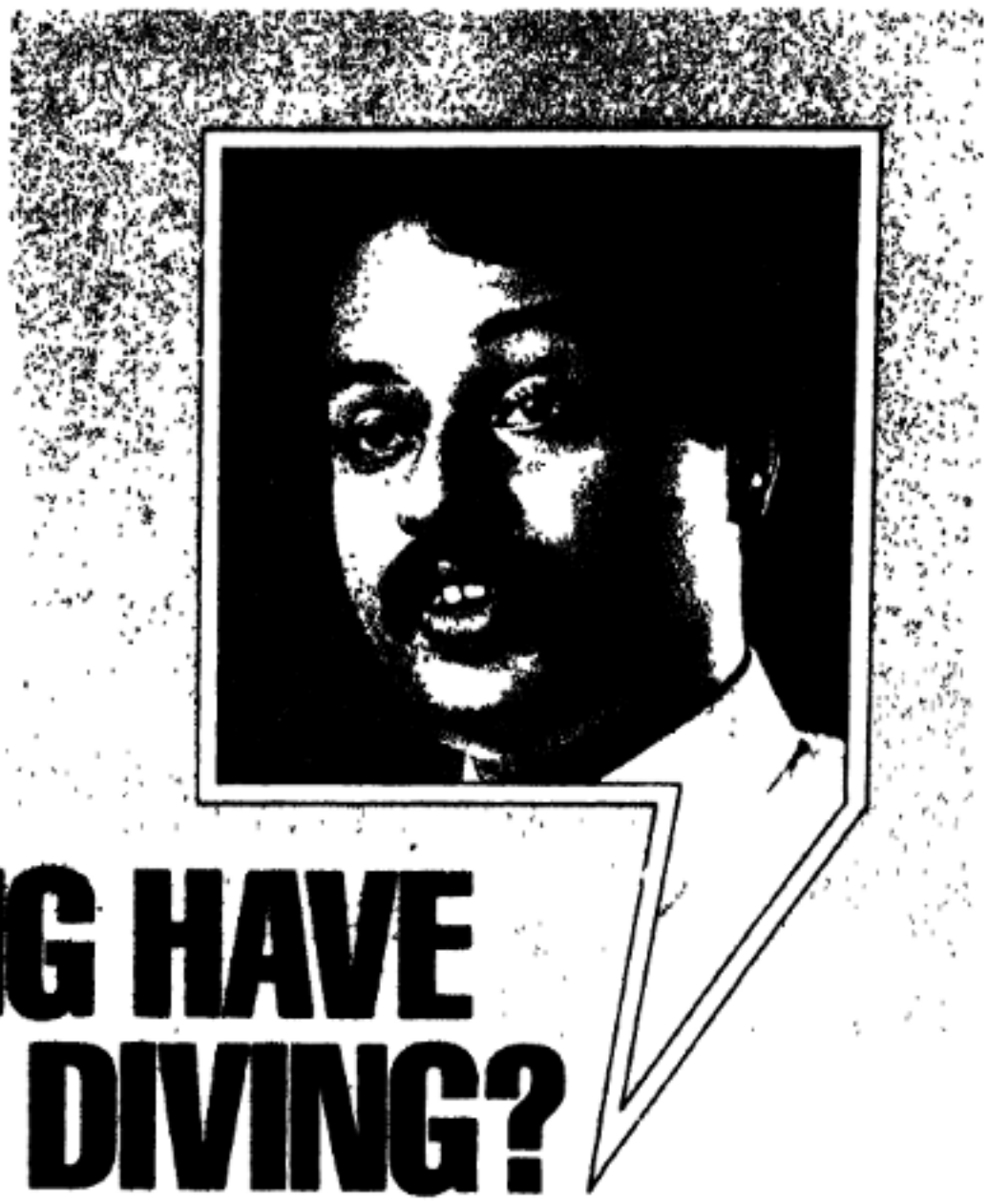
Pradeep Chandra

(Top) Shamiana: not recommended; (inset) the Oberoi: favoured treatment

Flavours: A Selective Guide to Eateries in Bombay by Diana Proeschel and Saroj Merani. Published by Perennial Press, Bombay, 1988. Price not listed.



WHAT DOES
IN COMMON



HIGH PRESSURE.

Deepsea divers and vessels know the pressure they encounter when they near the seabed. That's the kind of

METAL FORMING HAVE WITH DEEPSEA DIVING?

pressures our metal forming tools withstand during constant use.

At Sandvik, our expertise in compacting techniques covers a broad range. From touch-sensitive automatic presses to isostatic pressing. With stringent controls in order to satisfy a basic requirement: the right product for the right application. Requiring the right grade of cemented carbide; extreme hardness, high corrosion resistance, long life.

Hard materials are our hardware, while applications expertise is our software.

From steel rolling to alloy extrusion to dies and punches, our hard materials are spelling new dimensions in metal forming productivity.

That's right — this is carbide application engineering at the frontier level. That's the level we're comfortable with at Sandvik Asia.



SANDVIK

SANDVIK ASIA LTD.

The Science.
The Technology. The Commitment.

Contract SA/54.88

SUNDAY WEEK

BEGINNING 20 NOVEMBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) This is a favourable week for you with rapid success likely in your work. Chances of a promotion for those in service are very good Businessmen will find fortune smiling on them. This is a good week for new ventures. An old acquaintance will prove to be of great help The domestic front will remain peaceful
Good dates: 21, 22 and 23
Lucky numbers: 4, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: East



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) This is going to be an excellent week. You are likely to gain financially, either through inheritance, or through your profession An unexpected journey could lead to a windfall. But seek the advice of your elders before making decisions for you may be tempted into extravagance by your good fortune. A good time for romance
Good dates: 22, 24 and 26
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: North



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) This is a good week for businessmen who can go ahead with new contracts or buy new stocks. They are also likely to profit from earlier investments. Family problems are likely to be sorted out this week; But your health will need attention. This is not a lucky week for romance either
Good dates: 21, 23 and 25
Lucky numbers: 5, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: South



CANCER (21 June—20 July) Good fortune awaits you this week. Take risks if you have to, for they will pay off. Those in service might get a promotion. But they should not get carried away and become extravagant because of their good fortune. This is a good week for lovers to make matrimonial plans. You must exercise tact at home, as well as pay more attention to family members.
Good dates: 20, 22 and 24
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: West



LEO (21 July—20 August) If you are in business, you are likely to make some quick money; if in service, you can look forward to promotion You will have to travel a lot in connection with your work but do not get distracted while travelling. You can rest assured that while you are away from home, no serious problem will crop up.
Good dates: 24, 25 and 26
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: North-east



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) Not a very good week A trusted friend might betray you so be on your guard This is also not a week to precipitate matters, if you are in business do not have a showdown with your partners or take irrevocable financial decisions If you are in service, do not challenge your superiors even if you feel you are in the right
Good dates: 20, 21 and 25
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: South-east



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) The stars are in your favour, so go ahead with your plans. Do not let anything hold you back. It is an ideal week to take decisions about new investments If you are in service, you are likely to catch the eye of your superiors. But exercise caution while trying your luck and take a little advice from your elders.
Good dates: 22, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 1, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: West



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) You are likely to fall ill this week; take precautions against the change of climate. But go ahead and take financial risks because luck will be on your side in money matters. Be flexible and persuasive both at work and at home. A little patience in dealing with elders will not go unrewarded. Try to avoid controversies at all costs.
Good dates: 20, 23 and 25
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: South



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) This, unfortunately, is not going to be a good week for you. But do not despair too much, for no major loss is indicated. Those in service should try and avoid displeasing their superiors, a little bit of tact now could pay rewards later. A love affair could come to an end, causing great distress.
Good dates: 23, 24 and 25
Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: North-west



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) Use your intuition to solve the professional problems that will crop up this week, it will pay off. This is going to be a good week financially, but it would be advisable to take competent advice before making any investments An important journey is likely in the near future. Your family life will provide comfort. Take care of your health.
Good dates: 22, 23 and 26
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: East



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) This is not a good week for romance—a love affair could come to an abrupt end But financially, this is an excellent week. An old friend will prove helpful A valuable new acquaintance could begin this week Your health will not pose problems Children will bring joy A short journey foretold.
Good dates: 21, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 3, 4 and 7
Favourable direction: South-west



PISCES (21 February—20 March) There will be remarkable progress on all fronts. You will get a lot of praise and respect from your seniors You should be bold to ask for necessary help from influential people. Even if you have been ill, your health will cause no problems this week Sportsmen will find themselves among the prizes; children, in particular, will be very lucky.
Good dates: 20, 25 and 26
Lucky numbers: 1, 2 and 8
Favourable direction: North

Star Partners: Gemini—Leo

The impulsive Leo woman and the flighty Gemini man will get along like a house on fire. However, for once, the Leo woman must curb her tendency to dominate for the Gemini man will not remain docile.

Raj in reverse

The First Empire may be distant history, but racial discrimination is something that the British are still far from giving up. It has certainly had its fallout in recent times on the cricketing world – a sport that is a contribution of the Empire. Most recently, India took the extreme step of refusing visas to English cricketers with South African links, thus putting paid to the MCC's winter tour of India



On another front, a well-known club in Nagpur has done its bit to give back as good as it got in the days of the Raj. This club does not admit Englishmen and, of course, dogs. When the MCC team last toured India, and played a match in Nagpur, the cricketers were allowed to enter the club only after they secured special permission from the secretary.

It seems that some decades ago, when an Indian became the secretary of the club for the first time, one of the things he did was to change the club's constitution to bar Englishmen and their dogs from the premises. That's what is meant by paying them back in their own coin!

A bite makes news

'Dog bites man' doesn't make much of a headline. But when a dig bites a VIP, it is enough not only to make headlines but also send an apathetic civic body into frenzied activity. Result: a massive eviction drive against stray dogs.

It all began recently when Nirupam Som, the retired director general of police, was bitten by a dog while on his early morning walk at the Calcutta Cricket and Football Club. While Som suffered serious wounds, V.P. Singh, the dog's master, was promptly arrested.

That was not all. The civic body, embarrassed by the incident, suddenly woke up to the fact that Calcutta's streets were teeming with stray dogs. A number of eviction drives have since been launched to rid the city of its canine creatures. While a few thousand dogs have been picked up by the dog squad, hardly solving the problem, one question remains unanswered: do VIPs have to be bitten for the Calcutta Corporation to take stock of this not-so-stray menace?

Calling India

India Digest is his magnificent obsession. He is Placido D'Souza, a diplomat with a flair for journalism in the Indian High Commission in Hong Kong. The bi-monthly edited by D'Souza is a melange of condensed articles already published in the Indian press and presents a "positive face" of the subcontinent. The magazine, circulated in 40 countries, is, however, not the author's maiden venture.

In the Seventies, D'Souza had begun a newsletter in Panama, and then, in New York, it was *Darshan*, a features magazine which crashed when its author moved on to his next assignment. Within six months of his posting in Hong Kong came *India Digest* and now, nine issues later, it is growing from strength to strength and spreading from continent to continent.

The lions move

Some of the Asiatic lions are moving house — or rather their habitat. The Sasan Gir Forest in Junagadh district of Gujarat is the only abode of the Asiatic lion, but soon the jungle king will be seen loitering in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries in other states.

The authorities have decided to despatch lions, lionesses as well as cubs to different parts of the country where life would be far happier for them.

With the decision to send a few lion families to other Indian sanctuaries, tourists and wildlife lovers, especially foreigners, will not have to travel all the way to Junagadh to see the king of the jungle.

Bhagwan's joke

It appears that Bhagwan Rajneesh has a penchant for cracking jokes about international celebrities during his evening discourses. And his proud disciples have been flooding newspapers with press releases of these jokes. Here is a sample of a Rajneesh joke delivered on 1 November:

'Ronald Reagan and



George Bush go hiking together in the Montana mountains. They have been walking all day discussing the forthcoming presidential election, and Ronald has been giving George lots of advice on how to wear make-up and look good on TV.

Suddenly, they look up and see a huge grizzly bear coming over the hill towards them. Immediately, Bush reaches into his pack and pulls out a pair of running shoes. He then starts taking off his hiking boots and putting on the sneakers.

"Hey," says Ronald, nervously. "You don't think you can outrun that grizzly bear, do you?"

"I don't have to," says Bush, with a grin. "I just have to outrun you!"'

THIS INDIA

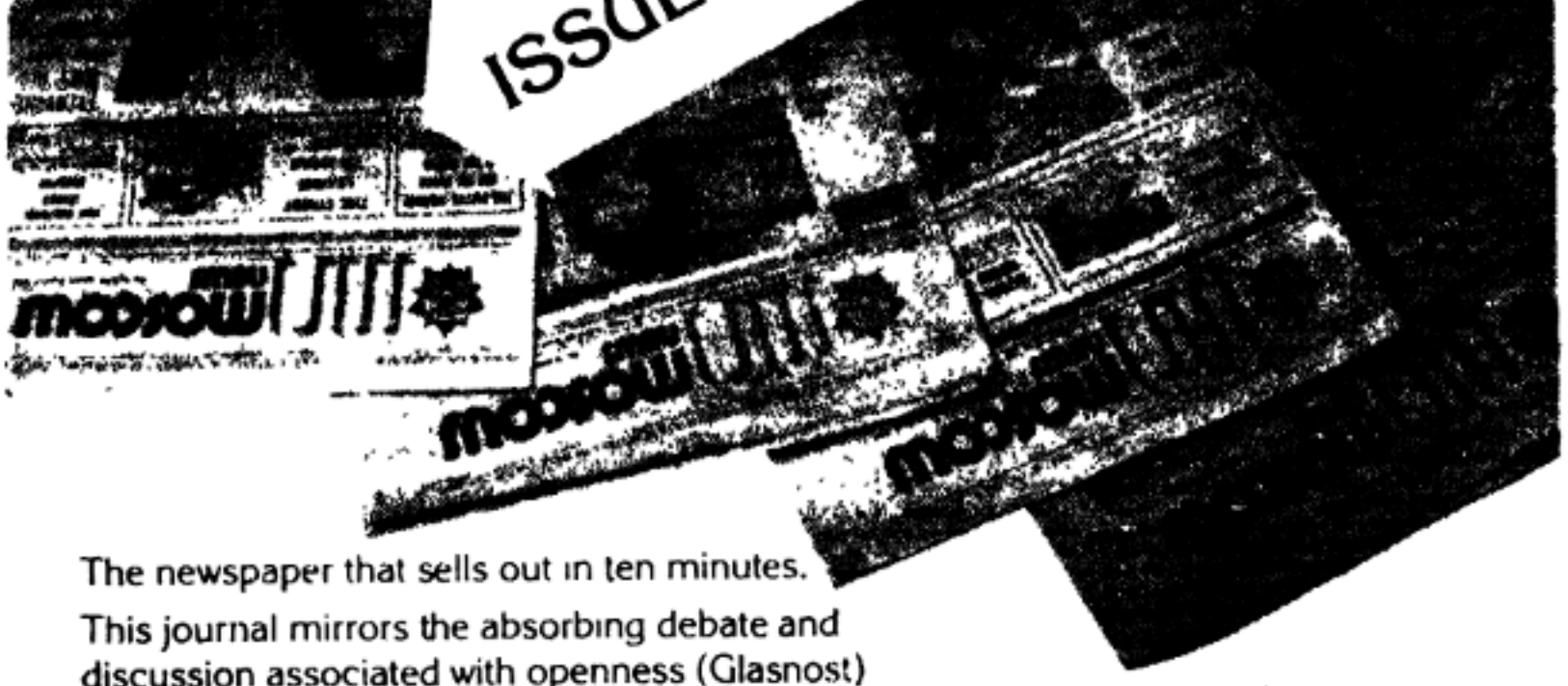
- COCHIN: An exhibition of paintings and sculptures was inaugurated here with the chief guest putting a bullet through one of the paintings. There was, however, no legal problem since the person who inaugurated the exhibition was none other than the deputy inspector general of police—*The Hindu* (P. Chandrasekharan, Udyogmandal)
- BAREILLY: A man who got unnerved when his wife lodged an FIR with the police claiming that he had demanded dowry, committed suicide. According to the police, the couple had a quarrel after which the woman went to the police station with the complaint that her husband had been harassing her for dowry. The husband tried but failed to convince the police of his innocence, and committed suicide—*The Hindustan Times* (S.R. Datta, New Delhi)
- TUTICORIN: An 86-year-old widow of a police constable received the family pension after a lapse of 64 years. Ammaithai, widow of Lakshmana Naidu, had approached the superintendent of police for the family pension in 1924. The government has only now sanctioned payment of the pension with retrospective effect from 1976—*The Statesman* (Gautam Sinha, Patna)

Illustrations: Debashis Deb

MN MOSCOW NEWS

A weekly newsmagazine of current affairs.

ISSUES FOR PATHFINDERS



The newspaper that sells out in ten minutes.

This journal mirrors the absorbing debate and discussion associated with openness (Glasnost) in human, social relations and re-structuring of Soviet society (Perestroika).

The reforms and changes which the Soviet Union is experiencing today are of paramount global interest.

To keep abreast of current trends, events and developments in the USSR, reading Moscow News is an absolute necessity. For subscribers, it is airmailed.

One year : Rs. 23.00
Three years : Rs. 45.00

GIFT
A FULL SIZE MULTI-COLOURED CALENDAR

Enclosed is my DD/MO receipt for **MOSCOW NEWS** for
Rs 45.00 being 3 years subscription
Rs 23 00 being 1 year subscription

(please strike out whichever is not applicable)

My Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

. . . . . .

Send this advertisement and payment to:

Magazine Centre
M C D Bldgs No 2, IInd Floor
Deshbandhu Gupta Road
New Delhi 110 055

Bengsha Shatabdi
7b C Park Street
Calcutta 700 016

Vijay Associates
Commissariat Building, 1st Floor
231, D N Road, Fort Bombay 400 001

New Century Book House (P) Ltd
41-B, Sidco Industrial Estate
Ambattur Madras 600 098

Another postponement

Despite the Prime Minister having said that the Tamil Nadu polls will be held in January as scheduled, there are indications that they will be postponed. Rumours in Madras have it that the high command is not convinced that the state unit of the party will be able to translate the massive reception that Rajiv has been accorded in the state into votes. Party bosses are considering holding the polls along with the general election next year. It is likely that the polls will be deferred on the pretext that the Election Commission needs more time to revise the electoral rolls, now that the law reducing the voting age to 18 has become effective.

Already, President's Rule has been extended once in the state. Governor P.C. Alexander argued in favour of its continuance on the grounds that the climate was not conducive for elections. The strike by government staff and the agitation of the Vanniars, a casteist organisation, were advanced as the reasons. It is not clear how the government can extend it again as the Constitution requires that elections be held before one year of President's Rule is over.

Crossed wires

Orissa chief minister J.B. Patnaik has crossed swords with the Union minister of state for communications, Giridhar Gomango. The dispute is over the site for the fourth telecommunications training centre, which will come up in Bhubaneswar. While Patnaik seems to have other uses in mind for the seven-acre plot allotted for the centre 14 years ago, Gomango wants to go ahead immediately, lest the Rs 1.69-crore project be diverted to some other state.

Gomango, a tribal leader from Orissa, lost the first round to Patnaik, when the chief minister failed to turn up at the foundation stone-laying function on 6 November, though invitation cards stating that Patnaik had "kindly consented to preside" over the ceremony had already been sent out. A helpless Gomango, who was supposed to lay the foundation stone, looked on as red-faced officials told waiting newsmen and other invitees that the programme had been called off.

Apparently, shortly before the function, Patnaik had called Gomango at his residence to ask him to shift the project to some other site. The Vani Vihar plot, which was recently the venue for a government-sponsored *kisan* rally, is also being used as a meeting ground by followers of godman Thakur Anukul Chandra. Patnaik's unwillingness to part with the plot stems from his desire to please Orissa PCC(I) president, K.C. Lenka, and minister for urban development, Batakrushna Jena, who are devout followers of Anukul Chandra.





J.B. Patnaik; (inset) Gomango: dispute over a project site



Ganesan: in search of funds

The party is over

Parties cost money, especially new political parties. Film star and former Congressman Sivaji Ganesan is discovering this the hard way. Ganesan, who formed the Tamizhaga Munnetra Munnani (TMM) after quitting the Congress in a huff, now finds that his party is broke.

For a while things looked all right. Ganesan received a hefty donation from MGR's widow Janaki Ramachandran. In a sense, this was a return gesture, for the aging thespian had quit the Congress to launch his own party mainly because he felt that it had "backstabbed my good friend Janakiamma". Then, he had also supported her government during the 23 days it ruled before being dismissed.

Ganesan has now taken to selling pieces of prime farm land that he owns in Thanjavur district. But he clearly can't keep his party going for ever by making distress sales. If he doesn't come up with ideas to generate money soon, he might soon discover that the party is over.

Rough weather

Shipowner Captain Harcharan Singh Maini is finding it hard sailing. He has earned the dubious distinction of becoming the first Indian shipowner to be prosecuted for negligence under Section 304 of the Indian Penal Code. Maini owned two ships—the Nitya Ram and Nitya Nanak—both of which disappeared without a trace in the Bay of Bengal in June 1985. With them, 45 crew went missing, causing an uproar in Parliament and throughout the country. A draft complaint recommending prosecution has been sent to the ministry of surface transport.

The decision follows an inquiry which found "prima facie evidence of gross negligence" and is intended to curb the practice of shipowners plying vessels that are unfit for sailing. However, shipping circles have it that the authorities have woken up to the reality only because a nephew of Lok Sabha Speaker Balram Jakhar was among the crew.

DELHI DIARY

D.E. NIZAMUDDIN

Three birds with one allegation

When V.P Singh launched his broadside against Rajiv on Bofors and Swiss bank accounts, he had a second target in mind as well The Raja leaked to selected journalists that, as finance minister, he had come across details of H.N Bahuguna's secret Swiss bank account.

When this appeared in the

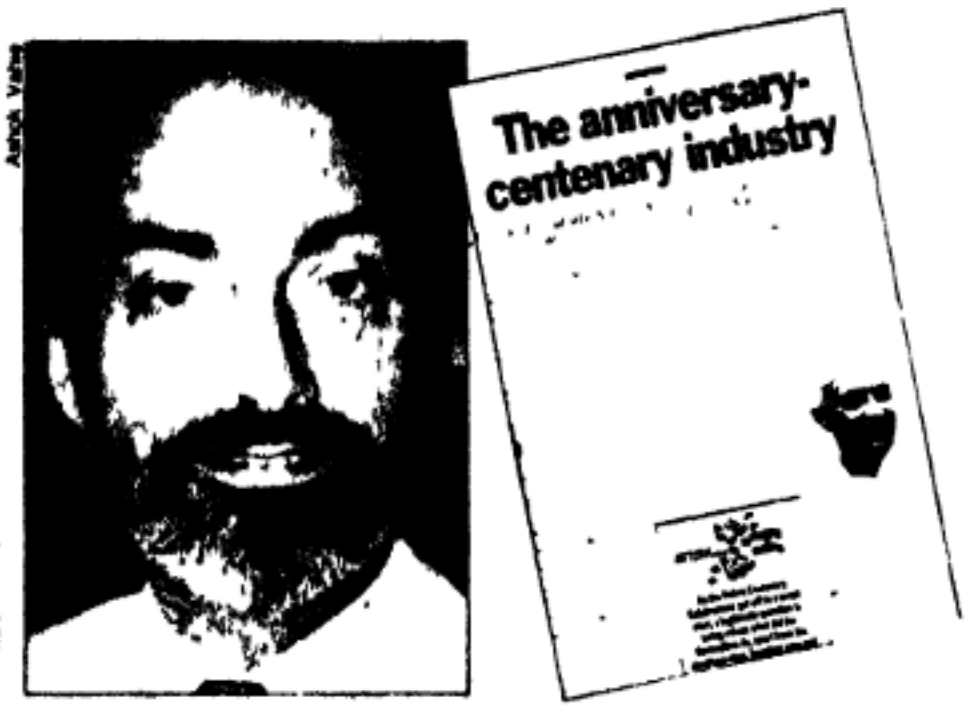


H.N. Bahuguna: Swiss bank account?

press, a peeved Bahuguna wrote to Singh demanding that he deny the report. At this, the Raja turned coy and stopped taking Bahuguna's phone calls, obviously delighted that he had been able to smear an old enemy.

Meanwhile, Subramaniam Swamy jumped into the fray. He put it about that he'd heard that as finance minister, V.P. Singh had found evidence of R.K. Hegde's bank account. So, said Swamy, how about a clear statement on *everybody's* Swiss accounts?

By now, it was all getting too much for the poor Raja of Manda, especially as the only evidence he had was a recycled *Hindu* document pertaining to Svenska's account. So, he hastily dropped the hot potato of bank accounts and went back to talking about Bofors.



Romi Chopra; (inset) the SUNDAY article: forced out by public opinion

Bye, bye Romi

All those who say that Rajiv Gandhi is insensitive to public opinion when it comes to his friends will have to think again. Last week, the Prime Minister moved swiftly to boot his old Doon School buddy, the balding, bearded, Rajneesh-lookalike, Romi Chopra, off the Nehru Centenary Committee.

Chopra's chief contribution to perpetuating the memory of Pandit Nehru had been the decision to print an extremely expensive diary, which public sector organisations were then forced to buy. (*See SUNDAY 30 October-5 November for a fuller exposé.*)

After some public criticism—such as the SUNDAY article—Rajiv moved to reconstitute the committee and threw Chopra out.

Presumably, after this public humiliation, Chopra will cease to harangue journalists at cocktail parties in the name of the Prime Minister and will stop singing praises of the Defamation Bill.

Aunty vs Mrs Dixit

A battle is brewing in the Prime Minister's office between Sheila Dixit, Rajiv's minister of state, and Serla 'Aunty' Grewal, his secretary. Mrs Dixit is more like a sophisticated civil servant than a minister, preferring to use charm and persuasiveness to get things done. Aunty, on the other hand, has sterling qualities that Patton would have been proud of and would not dream of doing such undignified things as cracking a smile.

So far, because of Aunty's links with Cabinet secretary B.G. Deshmukh, she has always won the day: earning her extension, pushing out Gopi Arora and cutting Mani Shankar Aiyar down to size.

But, say veteran PMO-watchers, she has met her match in the efficient Mrs Dixit who, unlike the blundering Arora and Aiyar, is much too astute to let her feelings show. At the moment, she smiles pleasantly at Aunty (who manages the odd grimace in reply) and seems determined to sit this one out.

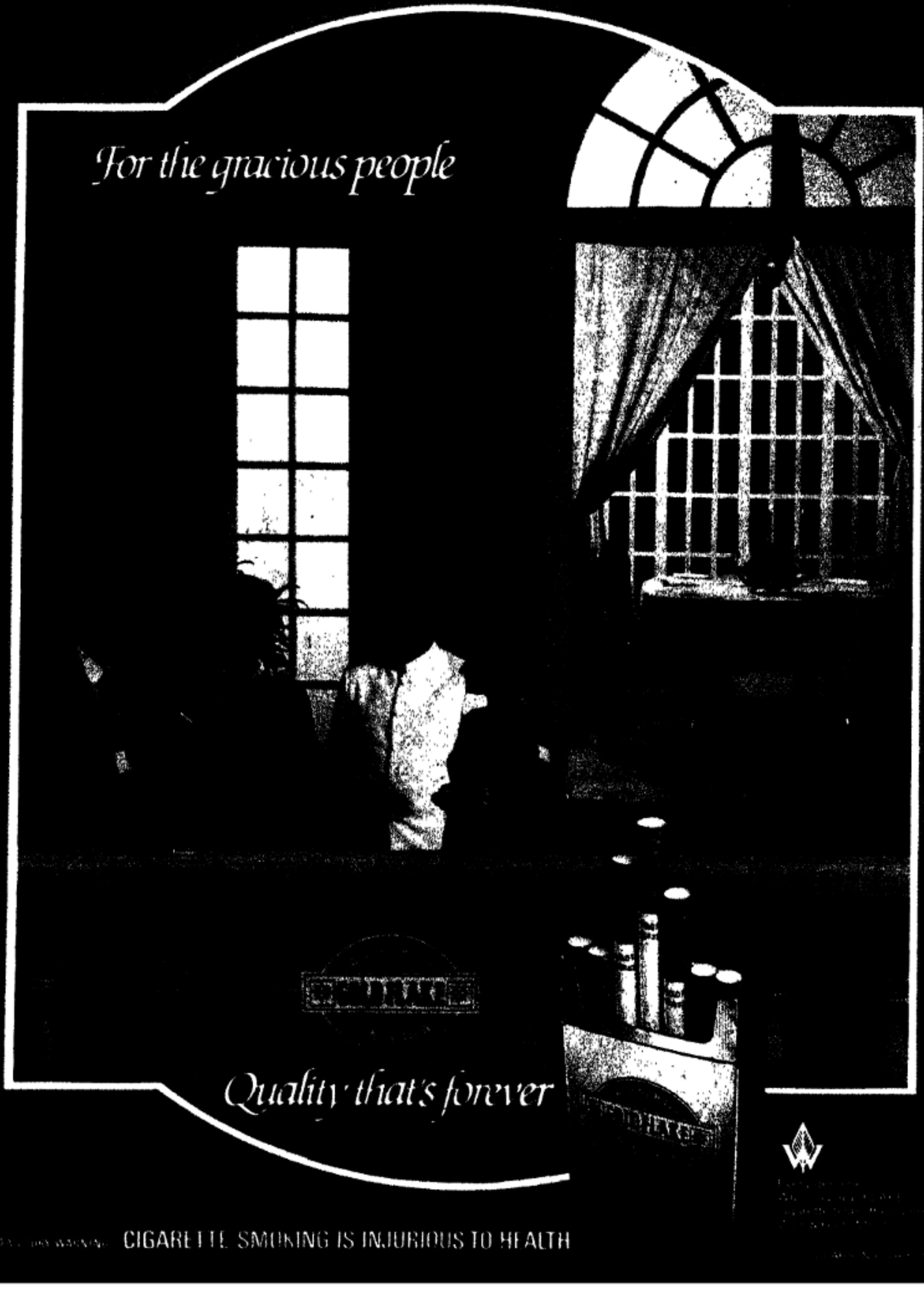


Sheila Dixit (left) and Serla Grewal: a battle brewing in the PMO

Move up... to McDowell's

McDowell's

For the gracious people

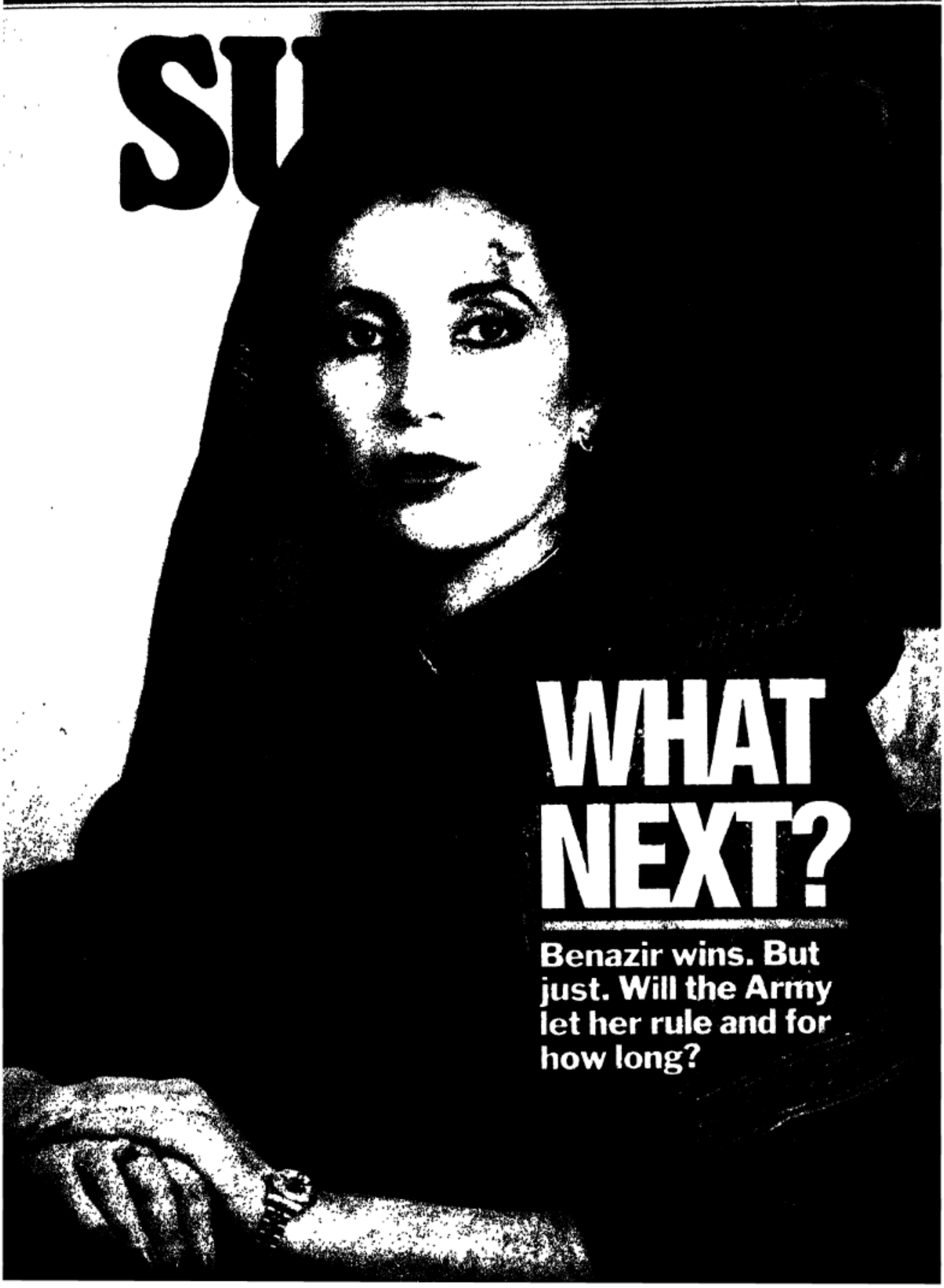


Quality that's forever

GOVERNMENT WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

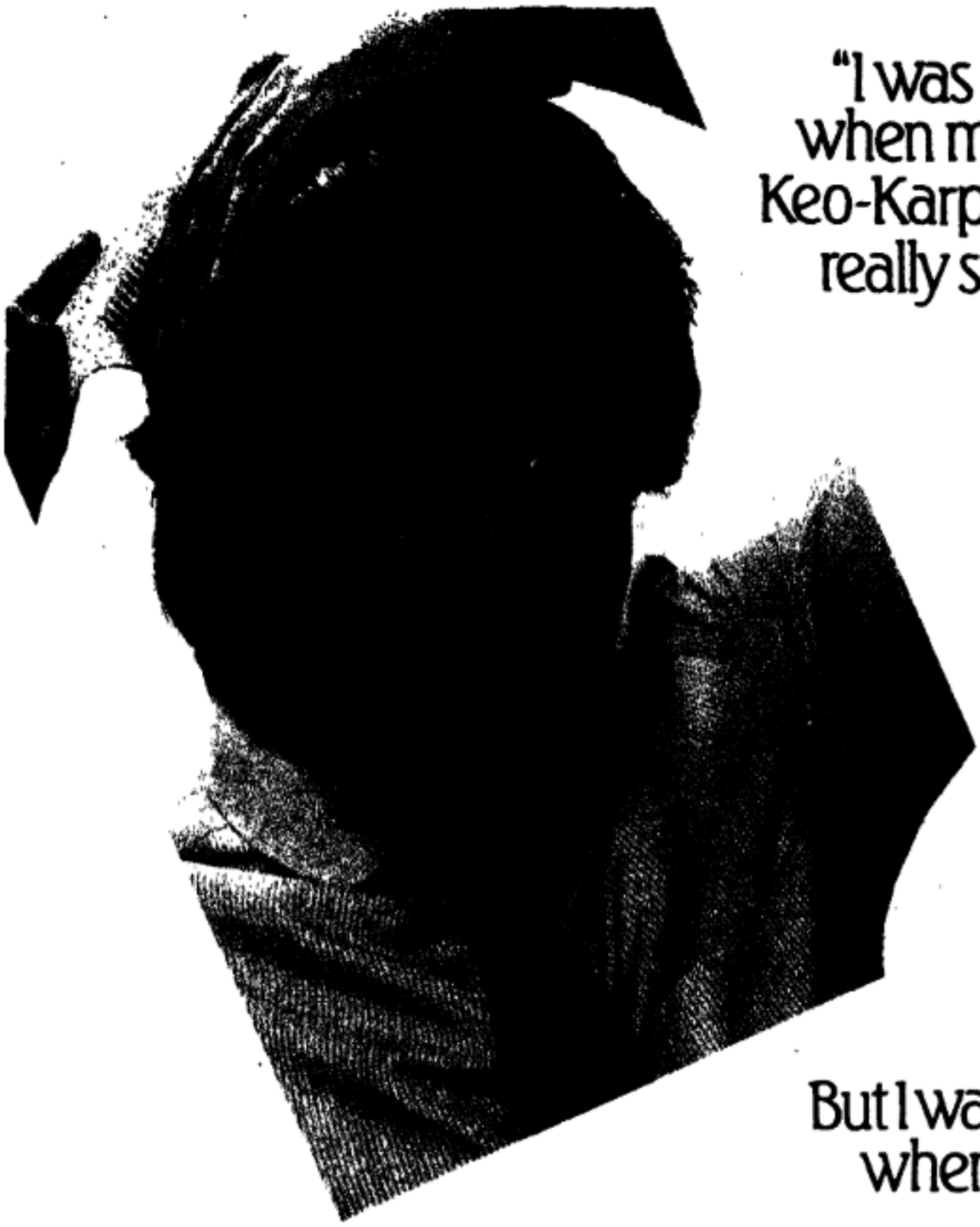
EXCLUSIVE: THE INSIDE STORY OF THE FALL OF THE ARUNS

SU



WHAT NEXT?

Benazir wins. But just. Will the Army let her rule and for how long?



"I was impressed when my doctor said Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer really stops hair loss.

But I was convinced when I used it."

"My doctor told me Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer* is a unique scientific formula based on extensive research. He also told me it provides all the essential proteins, co-enzymes and vitamins for strengthening hair roots.

All I know is that it has certainly stopped my hair from falling and checked dandruff."

Here's an excerpt from the research report:

"66.66% gave excellent and 33.33% gave good results with complete disappearance of dandruff in all cases and nearly cent per cent stoppage of fall of hair...So, success rate with Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer may be stated to be cent per cent."

Indian Medical Gazette 118, 223 (1984)



The proven scientific way to prevent hair loss.

Dey's® Dey's Medical. Care you can trust.

*It is not a toilet preparation.

DMHV-4

CONTENTS

Uttarpara Public Library

VOLUME 15 ISSUE 52 :: RS 6 00 **SUNDAY** AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

27 NOVEMBER—3 DECEMBER 1988

COVER STORY 12

WHAT NEXT?

Benazir Bhutto is the winner in Pakistan's election But her victory stops short of an absolute majority. Will the army let her rule? A report from Pakistan. Plus, an extract from Benazir Bhutto's new autobiography, *Daughter of the East*

NEWSWATCH **32**

NO PEACE IN THE VALLEY



Farooq Abdullah faces massive internal strife in Kashmir but attributes it to the machinations of Pakistani agents.

NEWSBEAT **36**

A STATE OF TERROR

The terrorism of the NSCN in Manipur gets very little national publicity because of the state's far-eastern location. An on-the-spot account.

SPECIAL REPORT **44**

THE FALL OF THE ARUNS

They were Rajiv Gandhi's most trusted advisers. But in the autumn of 1986, he fired Arun Nehru. And in the summer of 1987, Arun Singh resigned. What went wrong? A detailed, exhaustive reconstruction of the split based on the accounts of nearly all the principal players.



Page 12





Page 44

COMMENT

Letters 4
Byline M.J. Akbar 6
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 10
Sight and Sound 11
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 42
Business Diary 66

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Random Notes 89
Delhi Diary 90

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bipi Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700001

Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura 20 paise North-Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts of Assam
30 paise

FOCUS **40**

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

Devi Lal's granddaughter-in-law is killed by bullets from a gun which "accidentally misfired". But did it misfire thrice? And was the post-mortem a farce?

NEWS **54**

How V.P. Singh botched the Opposition's chances of scoring a parliamentary breakthrough on Bofors; why the Congress(I) in Andhra Pradesh is upset about P. Shiv Shankar's son and more on cricket selectors and striking civil servants.

BUSINESS **60**

The warring Modis finally come to a kind of settlement; do things really go better in India with Coke; is Parle cheating by calling Frooti a fresh fruit drink; and the story of coffee prices.

FILMS **72**

OF MEN AND HEROES



Naseeruddin Shah is one of Bombay's most talented and versatile actors. But are his talents being effectively utilised? A profile.

Spotlight 68
Khaas Baat 70
Sundayweek 87



Dynastic ways

The cover story gives an insight into the author's peculiar mindset (*The Nehrus*, 6—12 November). M.J. Akbar sees the Opposition as pandering to communal interests and the Congress(I) as the only party which can govern the nation. But a party which has subverted all democratic norms, named itself after an individual, Indira, whose chief ministers are hired and fired in the court of its Sultan in



Indira Gandhi: dictatorial

Delhi, is anarchic, even if its Sultan is Akbar's friend.

The author, in his biographical work on Nehru, sees the overthrow of the Communist government in Kerala in 1959 as an instance of Mrs Gandhi's organisational ability and conveniently glosses over the platform on which she did that—a ragbag of communal interests who took to the streets. Akbar has also avoided the by-now open secret that the CIA had funded this coup of a democratically elected government. Akbar is free to perceive things as he wants to, but since he has chosen to write about matters of contemporary history, let the facts be straight for the record

Arun Subramaniam, Tiruvalla (Kerala)

■ Lord Mountbatten was of the opinion that if Muslim provinces were separated, the rest of India could have a Constitution with a strong Centre. What Pakistan would take in quantity would be compensated by the solidarity and unity it would give to the rest of the subcontinent.

The question that Nehru and other leaders faced was not whether Partition should take place, because Partition had become inevitable. It was the "compulsion of events" which offered a way out of the deadlock. To blame Nehru for the Partition, therefore, would be folly.

Deepa Sinha, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ The cover story evades the issue of priority of values in case of a conflict between secularism and a corruption-free administration. Subramaniam Swamy, on his part (*Nehru: myth and the man*), is bent on finding fault with Nehru by saying that Hindu nationhood was sabotaged by his bias towards Anglo-Saxons after Independence. The truth is that there was no Hindu state before Independence—only Hindu and Muslim states fighting against each other. The concept of nationhood and secularism came via the English language to which our nationalists were exposed.

V. Charyulu, Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh)

Illogical demand

The news about the hijack of the Bangalore station of All India Radio was shocking (*AIR hijack*, 16—22 October). The protest of the activists against the fact that non-Kannadigas have received employment seems illogical as jobs are given on the basis of competence, irrespective of the caste, race or class of the applicant. The lack of respect for the national language as well as for Independence Day should indeed be abhorred.

Sujoy Kumar Dutta, Durgapur (West Bengal)

Golden run

Rekha indeed deserved to be on the cover of your magazine (*The great survivor*, 30 October—5 November). She is the only actress who has fought the ravages of time to emerge the winner. It is her perseverance which has catapulted her to the heights of success. What your article failed to mention is the fact that it was the film *Mujhe Insaat Chahiye* which proved her abilities as a heroine and established her as an actress to be reckoned with.

Kartikeswar Behera, Keonjhar (Orissa)

■ Rekha has indeed been lucky. It is luck more than talent and opportunity which has taken her on the road to success. I sincerely hope that the Almighty gives this actress the strength and endurance to reign supreme for many more years to come. Good luck to her.

Balaram Panda, Sambalpur (Orissa)

■ It is evident from your story that Rekha has indeed worked hard to reach the top of the ladder of success. In her long film career, she has proved that dedication can turn a heroine into a brilliant actress.

Rajib Das, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

Not so malicious

My name has been maliciously dragged in the report (*Same tales from a Congress state*, 6—12 November). What has been written about me is based on surmises of the correspondent who, like some local journalists, has concocted a false story or has perhaps borrowed the information from his fellow journalists in Patna. It is surprising that he could believe that the confidential file containing the vigilance report against me was sent to me following the chief minister's order according to secretariat procedure, and that I sat over it till I

Rekha: perseverance pays



retired, and the government did not look for the file in the meantime.

D.N. Ram, former director of agriculture, Patna (Bihar)

Tirthankar Ghosh replies: Controversy is nothing new for Deep Narayan Ram. Till 30 September, 1988—the day he "retired gracefully"—he had been in the thick of it. I mentioned the D.N. Ram case to highlight the position of the state and its bureaucracy.

I would like to draw his attention to a few facts. Does he remember the booklet by Saryu Rai, the convener of the Bihar Khetihar Manch, entitled *Bihar kev krishi pichdapan may krishi nirdeshak, Dr D.N. Ram kev ghor bhrastachar ki bhumika*? This title is self-explanatory. Based on the charges published in the booklet, Congress MLA Satischandra Jha brought a call-attention notice to which a dozen-odd MLAs put their signatures.

To make a long story short, I would like to point out to Mr Ram that the state's agriculture minister, Siddheswar Prasad,accepted that Mr Ram was guilty. To top it all, the High Court, in a showcause notice to the Bihar government, demanded an explanation on why no action had been taken against Mr Ram.

Power hungry

The report (*A party is born*, 30 October– 5 November) exposes the ways of the new party which is like a collection of rotten eggs in one basket. A man like V.P. Singh who once declared that he would not accept any political position, is now desperately trying, as president of the Janata Dal, to unite the wild horses of the Opposition parties who are always pulling against each other. He has shown himself to be nothing but another power-hungry politician. K.P. Unnikrishnan was



Gautam Patole

V.P. Singh: double standards

wise enough to keep away. Like the 1977 Janata experiment, the Dal is also on the way to a similar failure.

M.A. Razzak, Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

Views on a ban

I had always considered Khushwant Singh to be a person with an open mind. So it came as a surprise to read that he thought the book, *The Satanic Verses*, contained lethal material (*For better or verse*, 2—8 October). A novel cannot cause riots, Mr Singh, people can. And the reaction of the Muslims to the book also exposes the oppressive nature of Islam. It's sad how India has treated perhaps its best writer ever. The ban has also exposed Indian democratic traditions to be somewhat of a sham.

Saul Eastman, Bangkok (Thailand)

Second chance

I cannot agree with the views of the columnist (*On the line*, 6— 12 November). His contention that one should not do "anything for a vote" is not absolutely true. A politician may have committed a crime once, but that is no reason to believe that he will not respond to his conscience later and make amends. After all, Ratnakar who was once a notorious pirate, later became the saint Valmiki who wrote the *Ramayana*. The old-timers of the Congress, likewise, who have been reinstated may prove to be a boon to the party.

Sunil Kumar Mookerjee, Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh)

■ It is strange that a journalist of Kuldip Nayar's standing has conveniently avoided criticising V.P. Singh's ways. And what is wrong in readmitting former Congressmen like A.R. Antulay if they have made amends for their past actions?

K. Thangarasu, Tiruchirapalli (Tamil Nadu)

Why exceptions?

The incident has indeed been blown out of proportion (*Art and sole*, 6—12 November). Whatever the press may have to say in M.F. Husain's favour, one thing cannot be ignored: every club has its own laws and regulations and is thus within its rights to see that they are enforced. Husain should have abided by the rules of the club.

We talk of the need to have strict discipline in our educational institutions. Wearing a school uniform is an integral part of discipline. Dressing up according to club regulations is a part of discipline too. When a club tries to enforce its rules, we brand it as being anti-Indian.

Husain, no doubt, is a great artist. But does he



Sunil Ghosh

M.F. Husain: wrong-footed

have to be an exception to the rule? The fact that his paintings are exhibited alongwith those of Picasso's doesn't make him very different from an ordinary Indian.

Mithu Mukherjee, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ The article was in bad taste. It seems to openly support the stance that Willingdon Club was wrong in asking M.F. Husain to leave its premises. Every club has its own rules and regulations and is well within its rights to ensure that discipline is enforced. Husain is an international figure and is probably aware of the saying, 'Respect begets respect'.

S. Hussain, Dibrugarh (Assam)

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager (U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta-700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

Benazir! Benazir!

She looked utterly radiant, the natural beauty of her face touched by the magic of a long-dreamt victory. It was her first press conference after the elections, but the confidence in her voice was not a mere post-success phenomenon: she has been handling the world with an aplomb and an assurance which no one suspected in the 35 year-old, ever since she returned to her country to pick up the gauntlet thrown by those who had assassinated her father by manipulating the system and twisting the law. Few modern heroines can have seen as much tragedy as Benazir has in her life. Even those who know her well perhaps cannot quite guage just how much her father meant to her, just how much she suffered through his trial and death, just how deep and shattering the grief was, and just how indelible was the scar on her psyche. It needed the extremes of courage and maturity to live out the long twilight without losing her sense of balance, and she has shown that she has inherited the mettle of leadership. It was not victory which was Benazir's finest hour, but the wait.

The "ifs" of history are impossible to answer. Would Benazir have come to power if that highly over-rated (and over-rated because he managed to bribe the media with either charm or expensive gifts, and often both) dictator Mohammed Zia ul Haq had lived? The conventional answer would be: no! Zia, as was his wont, would have been able to do what his successors attempted but failed, which is, rig the election completely (his successors managed only a partial rigging, which denied Benazir the single party majority which would easily have been hers). But at least I firmly believe that not even all the wiles of Zia would have stopped Benazir this time. He had played out a long hand through bluff, but the bluff had been called. It has been my privilege to watch, as often as the generosity of Pakistan's visa handlers would allow, the growing storm and there was little doubt in my mind that this time round not even the army could have done anything about this storm. When Benazir drove in her jeep even through cantonments, the ordinary soldiers would come running out and forget their orders: for that magic moment they became just Pakistanis, rather than Pakistani soldiers, and joined the cry that shook the nation: Benazir! Benazir! All of Pakistan's frustration at being denied that basic, elemental right, the right to democracy, was embodied in that cry, all the deeply-nursed anger at the death of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto found expression in the tumult around his daughter. And Benazir sent no better signal to the world that she was ready for power than in the way she handled the death of Zia. Her statement was correct without being sentimental; cool without being rude; and neatly protected by the necessary veneer of patriotism (a virtue which is particularly remembered at moments of perceived national crisis). Perhaps it was only fitting that the Zia era end in death, a kind of moral recompense for the way in which the Zulfiqar era had been snuffed out. Moreover, the tension between a surviving Zia and a victorious Benazir would have been too much perhaps for Pakistan to bear. I can never forget the slogans which echoed through Pakistan when Benazir returned in May 1986: "Zia-Marcos *bhai bhai*, Cory *aayee*, Cory *aayee*" (Cory referred to Aquino of course); "Bhutto family hero, hero, *baki sab* zero, zero"; and, most of all, "*Bhutto*

It has been my privilege to watch the growing storm and there was little doubt in my mind that this time round not even the army could have done anything about this storm. When Benazir drove in her jeep even through cantonments, the ordinary soldiers would come running out

The best news for Indians is that we can finally begin the search for peace between these warring neighbours. The hand that Gen. Zia stretched out was deceptive, for in the other he carried the Kalashnikov... With Benazir democracy returns to Pakistan



ham sharminda hain, tere qaatil zinda hain." Fate has taken the *qaatil* away.

But the damage of the Zia legacy lay not just in the decade he stole from Pakistan's life. No man—apart from Ayatollah Khomeini—has done so much to distort the image of Islam in the world as Gen. Zia. He made the religion whose name means peace look like one spurred only by violence. Islam stands for love and brotherhood; Zia made it look like the religion of the whip. He made the rough edges seem like the heart of Islam, and did it all in the name of serving Allah. As Benazir told this correspondent during an interview in May 1986: "I don't think it behoves a man like Gen. Zia who committed treason and murder to talk in terms of Allah." To take, at this point, just the most relevant distortion of Islam: over and over again he told the world that Islam does not allow a woman to rule. Suddenly after his death no one in Pakistan can find that religious injunction. Has everyone stopped being a Muslim in Pakistan? But for more than a decade lies were paraded in the name of Islam. At least this much will not happen under Benazir

The 'ifs' of history are impossible to answer. Would Benazir have come to power if dictator Zia-ul Haq had lived? The conventional answer would be no. But I firmly believe that not even all the wiles of Zia would have stopped Benazir this time

Benazir Bhutto: storming to victory



And after more than a decade Pakistan will once again get a leader who lives in the twentieth century.

She said as much in her first press conference—which unfortunately one saw only on a television screen. Her victory was a triumph for democracy, of course, she said, but also for modern ideas; it was also a mandate to bring science and technology to her country, to take it into the twenty-first century. Another young heir on this subcontinent had made a similar promise, and then got subdued when those who will not survive into the twenty-first century began to mock and jeer. Hopefully, Benazir will stick to this promise. The next century is not just a date; it is a vision of a world blossoming with the creativity of modern science, of horizons opening up as man takes knowledge into hitherto unrevealed dimensions.

But the best news for Indians is that we can finally begin the search for true peace between these warring neighbours. The hand that General Zia stretched out was deceptive, for in the other he carried the Kalashnikov. Zia did more harm to India than any previous ruler of Pakistan: he could, as Shakespeare put it, smile and smile and still be a villain. (One hesitates to write ill of the dead, but this is what happened.) Of course, he was a villain only as far as India was concerned; for Pakistan he did what he could in a difficult time. But Zia was anti-Indian by ideology. And he remained true to those convictions. He was a theocrat, and therefore consciously put in motion a policy to help theocrats in India, whether in Punjab or Kashmir. With Benazir democracy returns to Pakistan. It is not in her interest to support or sustain anti-democratic forces, whether in her country or ours. And it is for this reason that true peace is possible with her at the helm of her country. She has already signalled her desire for an early meeting with Rajiv Gandhi. Delhi should respond with warmth to the idea.

This is only a glimpse of the enormous changes which could take place on the subcontinent, and at least I am filled with excitement when I view the future. A truly historic opportunity awaits our two nations. There is but one possible snag—that those who murdered Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto may rally to deny his daughter her legitimate place in power. These forces are strong and deeply entrenched in Islamabad. For them too it is a matter of life and death. They have stayed in power by crushing the will of the people, but a quirk of fortune has exposed them. They might be tempted to repeat what Zia did more than a decade ago, either immediately or at the first excuse.

They should remember one thing. The last time the army allowed free elections in Pakistan, the consequences were so dramatic that the nation itself cracked into two. Bangladesh was formed because the vested interests in Pakistan would not hand over power to the person elected by the people. If they deny Benazir power they could once again be risking the unity of their nation.

"The Eureka Forbes salesman is so good, he is more a friend who introduced modern cleanliness and hygiene in my home"

— Mrs. Archana Kampani of Bombay.



One of these days the Eureka Forbes salesman will ring your doorbell and introduce himself with his identity card.

This man inspires confidence – which is only natural. Because he is a member of the largest, most successful sales organisation of its kind in India. Backed by dependable after sales service.

He will introduce modern home products to cope with today's problems – dust, pollution, contaminated water and the lack of domestic help.

He has two unique products to demonstrate: EUROCLEAN all-purpose cleaning system, which is much more than a vacuum cleaner and AQUAGUARD on-line. water filter-cum-purifier.

EUROCLEAN removes even minute specks of dirt and dust in your home effortlessly. Even dust you didn't know existed. AQUAGUARD gives you clear, safe drinking water on tap – at the flick of a switch – even if the raw water has high bacterial contamination.

The Eureka Forbes salesman will show you – in your own home – how these products can bring the advantages of modern cleanliness and hygiene to your family. Making it a cleaner, safer world for you.

You need not wait till his rounds bring him to your doorstep. Do contact Eureka Forbes at any of the following locations for an early visit. Or, write to Eureka Forbes; P.O. Box 936, G.P.O., Bombay 400 001.

Euroclean

The all-purpose cleaning system which is much more than a vacuum cleaner

Aquaguard

On-line, water filter-cum-purifier.

EUREKA FORBES LIMITED

Pioneers in modern cleanliness and hygiene.

EUROCLEAN Sales and Service Centres are listed below.
AQUAGUARD is also available at the locations marked with an asterisk.

Eureka Forbes Limited
Head Office: Forbes Building, 4th Floor, Charanjit Rai Marg, Fort, Bombay - 400 001. Tel: 2044695/3286.

BOMBAY:
* 1. Crystal, 4th Floor, 79, Dr. A. B. Road, Worli. Tel: 4935175/7126/4661/62/63.
* 2. D-16, Commerce Centre, Tardeo Main Road. Tel: 4949183/6184.
* 3. B/3, Happy Home Apts., 1st Floor, 66 Wodehouse Road, Colaba. Tel: 217458/217430.
* 4. 71, Nahur, 2nd Floor, Opp Hoechst Factory, L.B.S. Marg, Mulund (West). Tel: 5601082/5619148.

CALCUTTA:
* 5. 7, Chakraberia Road (South). Tel: 477954/5402.
* 6 177, Raja Dinendra Street, Opp. Deshbandhu Park, Shyam Bazar, Tel: 555624.
7. 1st Floor, 19 N.S. Road, P.S & Dist. Howrah.

DELHI:
* 8. 402, Archana Commercial Complex, Greater Kailash Part I. Tel: 6416143.
* 9. 12/4, Asaf Ali Road, Mittal Bldg. Tel: 278055/270523.
* 10. M/37, Greater Kailash II Market Tel: 6449727/6433827.
* 11. 203-204, Jamuna House, 2nd Floor, Municipal No. 10203, Padam Singh Road, Karol Bagh. Tel: 5717722/5442.

MADRAS:
* 12. 733, Anna Salai, 2nd Floor. Tel: 869846/861413.
* 13. East Coast Chambers, 2nd Floor, 92.G.N. Chetty Road, T. Nagar. Tel: 446610/17.

AHMEDABAD:
* 14 15, Madhuban Society, Opp. Gujarat Vidyapith, Ashram Road. Tel. 446982/466821/465320.

ASANSOL:
15. 76/1, Apcar Garden.

BANGALORE:
* 16. Farah Commercial Complex, 68, J.C. Road Tel:224453/225673.
* 17. 4305, High Point-4, 3rd Floor, 45, Palace Road. Tel: 27746

BARODA:
* 18 Deep Jyoti, 75, Suvarna Puri Society, Chickoowadi Tel: 322681/322289.

BHUBANESHWAR:
19. 16/8, Behind Bhubaneshwar Hotel, (Cuttack Road).

CALICUT:
20. 'Ayodhya', 1/3698, East Hill Road.

CHANDIGARH:
* 21. Sector 7-C, S C.O. No. 14, 2nd Floor, Madhya Marg. Tel. 26735.

COCHIN:
* 22. XXXV/1448-2, Nandanam, Church Landing Road Ernakulam. Tel: 352736/362752.

COIMBATORE:
* 23. No 61, West, T.V. Swamy Road, R.S. Puram. Tel: 23180.

DHANBAD:
24. Bindra Bhawan, Jamunabai Road.

FARIDABAD:
25 House No. 328, Sector No. 16A. Tel. 22645.

GHAZIABAD:
26. 204-B, New Gandhi Nagar. Tel: 40359.

HUBLI:
* 27. C.T.S. No. 4569-B, Hubli Dharwar Municipal Corporation No. P. 28/1, Ward No. 11, Vidya Nagar.

HYDERABAD:
* 28 403, Kala Mansion, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad. Tel: 844128
* 29. No. 10, Ground Floor, Progressive Towers, Khairtabad.

JAIPUR:
* 30. C-39, Lajpat Marg, Bhagwan Das Road. Tel. 70205

JALANDHAR:
* 31. C/o. Hotel Gagandeep, G.T. Road, Near Narinder Theatre.

JAMMU:
32. 39-A/C Ground Floor, Gandhi Nagar.

JAMSHEDPUR:
* 33. Talwar Bldg., 1 Inner Circle Road, C-Block, P.O. Bistipur Tel: 24470.

JODHPUR:
34. 39, Bakhat Sagar Colony, Nehru Park

LUCKNOW:
35. C-414, Sector B, Mahanagar. Tel 77296

LUDHIANA:
* 36. 23, Red Cross Bhavan, The Mall.

MADURAI:
* 37. 290, K.K. Nagar. Tel: 45328

MANGALORE:
* 38. 3-33-2951/52, Pinto's Lane, Kadri Kambla. Tel: 32445.

MYSORE:
39. 443/1, Ramaswamy Circle, Chamaraja Double Road. Tel: 27124.

PUNE:
* 40. Mubarak Manzil, 1, Dhole Patil Road. Tel: 667968.

RANCHI:
41. Lower Peepee Compound, Behind Gurunanak School. Tel: 27681.

SALEM:
42. 19-C, Saradha College Road.

SURAT:
* 43. 31, Vijay Nagar Annex, Ring Road, Majura Gate. Tel: 34224/53200.
* 44. 9, Seventh-Day Adventists Extension Bldg., Athwa Lines.

TIRUCHIRAPALLI:
* 45. 'Cauvery', 79/80, Raja Colony, Behind Sangam Hotel, Cantonment.

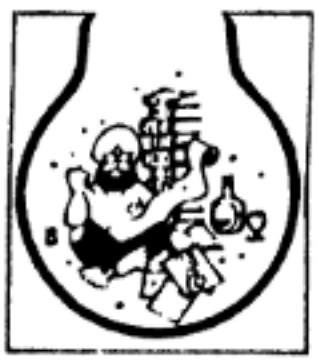
TRIVANDRUM:
* 46. T.C. No. 42/88, Pankaja Bhavan, Kalipankulam Road, Manacaud. Tel: 79570.

VIJAYAWADA:
* 47 33-13-14, Venegellavari Street, Seetarampuram, Tel: 65964/68742.

VISAKHAPATNAM:
* 48. 50-50-46, Balayasastri Layout, Seethamadhara West, Opp. Maria Red Convent. Tel: 53009.

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Exposure to the occult



I have always been fascinated by occult phenomena. So far whatever I have been exposed to has left me baffled but totally unconvinced. My first exposure was within a few months of my joining college in England. A Maharashtrian couple (I think they were a Doctor and Mrs Shastri) who claimed to be able to communicate with spirits. He showed me a photograph of himself and his wife with another lady standing behind them. The lady, he said, was his first wife who had died some years before the photograph was taken. The photographer's attestation bearing a date certified that he had taken the photograph of only Dr and the second Mrs Shastri but when he developed it, the first Mrs Shastri had mysteriously appeared on the negative. The Shastris took me to many seances. At each of them a medium went into a trance and delivered messages from dead people. The one thing that baffled me was the way the voice of the medium suddenly changed as he or she went into a trance. The messages were usually a lot of gibberish but the ventriloquism was most impressive.

Last year my security guard, Sita Ram, a UP Jat, gave me some tapes of *pravachans* (sermons) by a man he held in great reverence. Sita Ram belongs to a class of Indians who are firmly convinced that all the developments in science ranging from faster-than-sound aircraft, rocketry, hydrogen bombs *et al*, were known to our Hindu ancestors. His guru's pronouncements confirmed his convictions. I heard the tapes; they were in high-falutin Hindi which I could barely comprehend. I dismissed them as an aberration. I did not then realise how large a following this *guru ji* had. Now I know. Hence this introduction.

Brahmachari Krishna Dutta(47) is from village Khurrampur Salemabad not far from Muradnagar in Meerut district. His father is a poor weaver. Dutta apparently never went to school. According to his mother, he started talking in strange tongues from the time he was two years old. The parents regarded him as a wastrel and often chastised him. At the age of 15 he ran away from home and settled down with a distant relative in village Barnawa. He was taken more seriously. Then in 1961 a branch of the Arya Samaj in Delhi brought him to the capital. Since then he has been delivering *pravachans* in many parts of the city to large audiences. The pattern is the same. He lies down on a *charpoy* and goes into a trance. His head turns violently from one side to the other as he speaks. In the hour or so he talks, his voice changes two or three times. He may not have received any formal education, but he quotes Sanskrit scriptures extensively, and is fully conversant with Hindu mythology. He claims the knowledge from an earlier *rishi* incarnation which comes back to him only when he is in a trance. Even a sceptic would concede he is a master ventriloquist.



Illustration: Debasish Deb

Last year my security guard, Sita Ram, gave me some tapes of *pravachans* (sermons) by a guru he held in great reverence. Sita Ram belongs to a class of Indians who are firmly convinced that all developments in science were known to our ancestors. I dismissed the tapes as an aberration, only to realise later how large a following this guru had

What he says warms the hearts of his audience: Narantak, son of Ravana, and Ghatokach, son of Bhima, had machines that took them to the moon. Also television. Lord Krishna endowed the blind Dhritrashtra with inner vision and he could see the battle between the Kauravas and Pandavas as clearly as the current serial on Doordarshan. He has his own interpretation of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. He says that wicked *pandits* were employed to malign characters in the two epics. Every Vedic *mantra* has 24 kinds of sciences hidden in them. Lord Krishna acquired his knowledge by repeating these *mantras*. Kumbhkaran did not sleep for six months. Like other members of Ravana's family he was a highly learned man trained in the science of weaponry and nuclear warfare by Maharishi Bharadwaj, the greatest scientist of all times. He built a large laboratory in the Himalayas where he researched for six months of the year. And so on.

Amongst Krishna Dutt's followers are doctors, lawyers, and professors. Who am I to question their convictions?

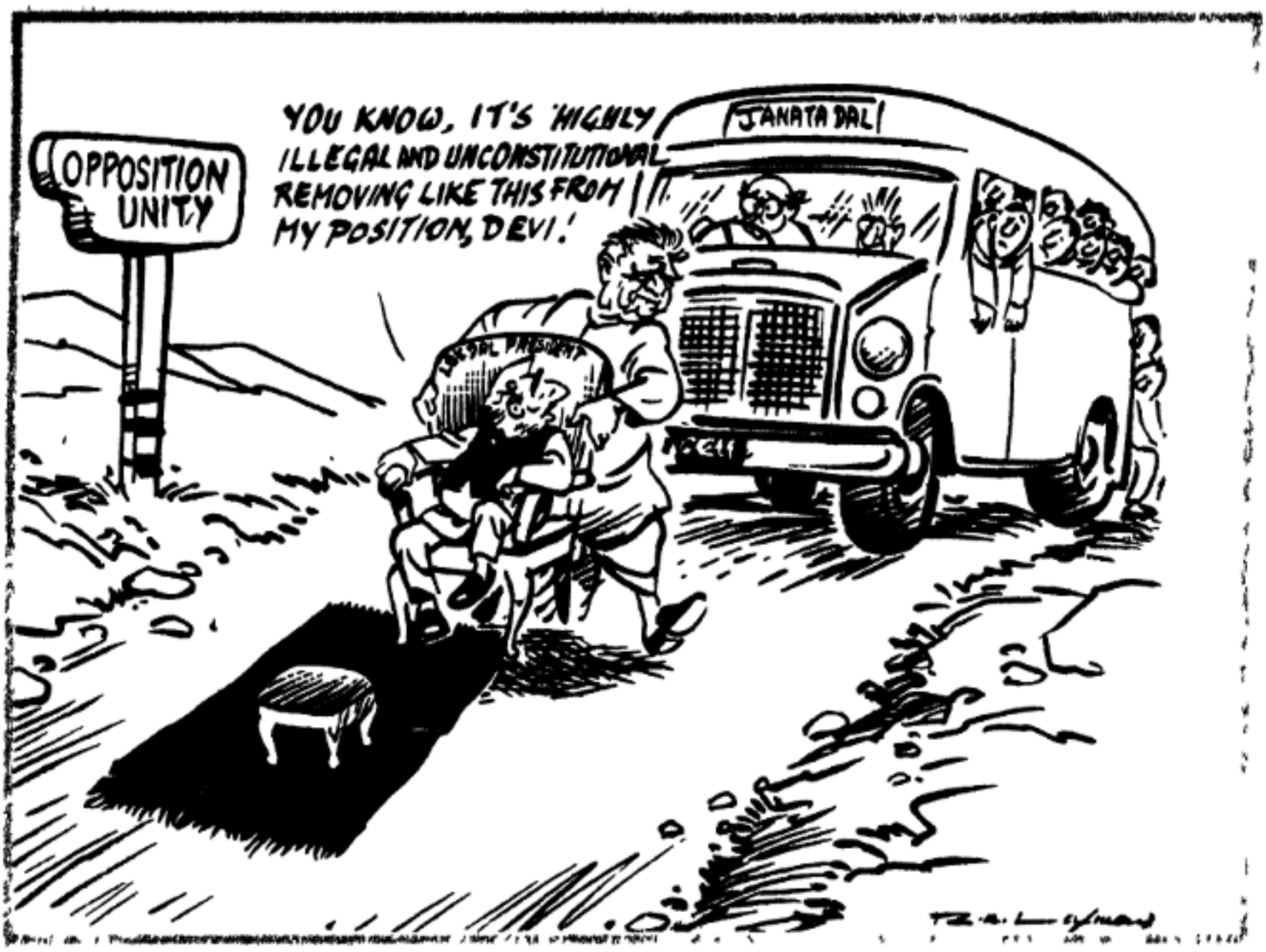
YOUR FATHER'S PROPERTY

J. L. Manwati lives on Dr Peter Dias Road in Bandra, Bombay. One day a smart Alec pulled up his car in the middle of the road and began a loud dialogue with his girlfriend, standing on the balcony of the fourth floor of a building. An elderly gentleman stopped his car a few yards from the youngman's, walked up to him and asked very politely: "Could you tell me how to get to Dr Peter Dias Road?"

"This is it," replied the youngster cheerfully.

"Tell me, does Dr Peter Dias happen to be your father?"

The message got home. ■



R K Laxman *The Times of India*

"

We are not a dead party like the Congress(I) where there is no debate on issues

CHANDRA SHEKHAR, *former Janata president, on the internal disputes on unity*

So the first issue that the confirmation of the first (Bofors) report raised was whether Mr Rajiv Gandhi would conclude that the actions of Bofors had compromised him to a point where he should seriously consider and offer his resignation. Apparently he did not take such a view.

EDITORIAL, *in* The Times of India

If I cannot prove my allegations, I will take *sanyas*.

V.P. SINGH, *after alleging that Rajiv Gandhi has a Swiss bank account*

I think the time has come for him to take *sanyas*.

K.C. PANT, *on V.P. Singh's inability to prove his charges*

Bhag gaya, bhag gaya.

Chorus by CONGRESS MPs in the Lok Sabha when V.P. Singh did not turn up on the second day of the Bofors debate

What does it matter what this government says? The people of Agra believe me.

V.P. SINGH, *at a National Front rally in Agra*

It is Mr V.P. Singh, to save a few acres and a few trees, he has disowned that great person to whom he was born.

BUTA SINGH, *defending the government on Bofors*

Far from having swimming pools in their houses, most Indian Airlines pilots can't even afford houses.

C.P. GUPTA, *president of the Indian Pilot's Association, on Rajiv Gandhi's claim that many Indian Airlines pilots can afford pools and that Satish Sharma is not an exception*

This has nothing to do with Bofors. Can you imagine a cabinet minister sinking to this level?

MADHU DANDAVATE, *interrupting Buta Singh*

That he takes money for himself? No I don't think so.

RAJIV GANDHI, *on Jyoti Basu and the corruption allegations surrounding his government*

I didn't come to power because of Rajiv Gandhi and I don't need a certificate from him now.

JYOTI BASU, *responding to Rajiv's affirmation of his personal honesty*

I and not Mr Devi Lal, will have the last word in my politics.

H.N BAHUGUNA, *responding to Devi Lal's statement that he was a discredited opportunist*

"

WHAT NEXT?

Benazir wins. But only just. Will the army let her govern?

A dead dictator's promise, army guns and the authority of a military commander do not normally make for democracy. But, in Pakistan it was this unlikely combination that oversaw the 16 November national elections and the hesitant return to democracy. In the country's largest metropolis, Karachi, armoured carriers mounted with heavy machine-guns crunched through the streets on polling day, men in pill boxes guarded polling stations and vans crammed with soldiers patrolled the main roads. In other cities, soldiers stayed on alert while armed policemen kept vigil on the streets. At each of the 33,300 polling stations spread across the country. the presence of armed security personnel reiterated the will of the military leadership: the determination to return the country to civilian rule.

And Pakistanis responded with natural flair. For days before the elections, thousands turned up at rallies, processions and street-corner meetings organised by the political contestants. Voters listened to charges and countercharges, considered the promises and manifestos, and silently made their own decisions. On polling day, contrary to expectation, there was not a single killing, no violence, not even signs of tension—only patient, determined queues before voting booths. Even women in *borkhas*, the old and the infirm made it a point to exercise their franchise. In Pakistan, where the last proper elections were held 11 years ago, the right to vote is a coveted thing.

This time it was especially precious. And when the poll results were announced the next day, it was clear that Pakistan had voted for democracy: it had buried the ghost of Zia, defeated the *mullahs* and most of the important collaborators of the dictatorship, including former Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo. The people had resurrected the country's only true national party, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Benazir Bhutto Zardari, the daughter of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, whom General Zia-ul Haq had sent to the gallows on 4 April, 1979.

The irony lay in the fact that it was the dead dictator, General Zia, who had paved the way for the resurrection of his enemy's party. Before his death, Zia had promised to hold elections and the military commander, General Mirza Aslam Beg, who succeeded him, fulfilled Zia's promise. The polls were an invitation to the Pakistani people to offer their verdict.

As it turned out, it was a remarkable verdict. For, the dice had been loaded against Benazir and the PPP right from the start. The surprising part was not that the PPP failed to secure a clear majority in the 237-member National Assembly but that it managed to win 92 of the 204 seats for which results were announced. No party emerged with a clear majority. The Islamic Jamhooree Ittehad (Islamic Democratic Alliance), a conglomerate of rightist forces which had collaborated with the Zia regime, got only 54 seats, despite the fact that it held the trump card: control of the administrative apparatus. The IJI's failure demonstrated the sheer strength of popular determination. It also marked the beginning of the battle between popular aspirations and the interests of a small clique that usurped most powers and benefits over the last decade.

In the elections to the four Provincial Assemblies held on 19 November, the PPP did not perform as well. The party did sweep Sind though, where it won 67 seats in the 100-member Assembly. The IJI proved its hold over Punjab by winning 108 seats, barely short of a two-thirds majority. It emerged as the single largest party in Baluchistan and



the NWFP too.

For the average Pakistani, the poll process provided a chance to express outrage. The target was the dead dictator Zia, who had seized power 11 years ago, and his collaborators—united under the IJI banner—who want to perpetuate his legacy. In Lahore, the capital of Pakistan's most populous and powerful province, Punjab, the rejection of the Zia legacy was expressed in the celebration of Benazir and the PPP. In the pre-poll days, loudspeakers at every corner of the city boomed insults against Zia and his lackeys. "Zia betrayed the *Quran*, his God and his country," thundered PPP labour leader, Ashraf Muhammad Butt. "He was the man who took freedom away from us on a dark night and in the end he was cut into pieces and these pieces burned for four long hours."

The PPP articulated the feeling that the poll was the people's last chance to reassert themselves. "Don't vote for the *chamchas* of Zia," PPP leaders urged. "The IJI is offering Rs 3,000 for every vote. But don't take that money. The PPP's projected anger was personified in the form of Benazir Bhutto

The PPP articulated the widespread feeling that the poll was the people's last chance to reassert themselves. "Don't vote for the *chamchas* of Zia," PPP leaders urged. "The IJI is offering Rs 3,000 for every vote. But don't take that money. Because that money is a small part of what they have sucked from us during the last 11 years. Now is the time when they will be forced to account to the people." The PPP's projected anger was personified in the form of 35-year-old Benazir Zardari, née Bhutto.

If there was any indication about the future of Pakistani politics, it was in





Women voters: unexpected turnout

Lahore, on a chilly night, three days before polling day. Since the afternoon of 13 November, Lahore had been abuzz with rumours that Benazir was coming to the city. By early evening, the armed police was out on the streets. By 8 pm PPP supporters had put up loudspeakers at street-corners, blaring songs in praise of Benazir. The tunes were of favourite Bombay hit songs but the lyrics referred to the future *wazir-e-azam* (Prime Minister) Benazir. At about 10 pm, Benazir entered Lahore and it seemed that a human tide had flooded the city.

She came in through the old part of Lahore and was greeted by an awesome collective roar. The minarets of mosques stood out against a sky lit by fireworks and rocket flares. Marchers chanted slogans and the procession behind Benazir grew and grew. People had been joining her throughout her journey from the Punjab towns of Gujranwala and Sialkot. By the time she reached Lahore, the procession of buses, trucks, tractors, vans, cars and motorcycles behind her had grown several kilometres long. And it took her more than five hours to cross Lahore and reach the



Nawaz Sharif: projected as the Prime Minister by the IJI

rally ground. At 3.30 in the morning, a triumphant Benazir declared that the people had proved that "no star can face the rising sun of democracy".

Benazir's rhetoric could not have been more apt. For the guardians of the star of Pakistani politics were the motley collection of leaders of the IJI, an alliance whose green flag was studded with nine stars to represent its nine constituents. The sun was Benazir and her party symbol was an arrow that would put the stars to flight. And the IJI made every attempt to ensure that the arrow did not penetrate its last defences.

Before the elections, the IJI candidate and local thug, Salman Batt, had boasted that he would reserve two rooms in the famous *baiji* quarters of Lahore's Heeramandi area, for Nusrut and her daughter Benazir to stay after the poll. The *baijis* had protested by putting up posters saying that the rooms would be more appropriate for his mother and sister. It is quite another matter that the PPP candidate Jehangir Badr finally trounced Batt in the polls. The point, however, is Batt's pre-election confidence. The

The army, for the moment at least, wants internal stability. So, it is unlikely that Nawaz Sharif and his IJI will be given the chance to form the government and thereby plunge the country into yet another political crisis

IJI candidates had been a little too smug and Nawaz Sharif, an IJI leader of a Muslim League faction, who was projected as the future Prime Minister, had declared that his party was certain to take control of Islamabad.

Nawaz Sharif's confidence stemmed from the fact that his party represented the ruling powers in Pakistan—the military, the bureaucracy, the industrialists, a few feudal families and the *mullahs* who have emerged as the ruling forces in the Pakistani polity. Benazir and her party have championed the fight against these forces for the past nine years and none of them can ever be too comfortable with her in power. The representatives of the IJI, on the other hand, are themselves members of the ruling elite. Nawaz Sharif, for instance, is a rich Lahore industrialist who was Punjab's chief minister during Zia's rule. The IJI supremo in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), Fazle Haq, is a retired lieutenant general. Mohammad Khan Junejo as former Prime Minister has obvious links with the elite. Another dominant group in the IJI is the Jaamat-i-Islami, represented by fundamentalists who have a stake in keeping the system restrictive and tradition-bound.

The present President, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, was a member of the Zia coterie and is an IJI sympathiser. He rose from the ranks of the NWFP administration and was chosen by Zia to be the finance minister and later governor of the country's Central Bank. After the 1985 non-party election, which was stagemanaged by Zia, Ishaq Khan was nominated to the Senate (Pakistan's equivalent of the Rajya Sabha) and appointed its Chairman. He was inducted into Zia's caretaker

A pre-poll PPP rally at Karachi: overwhelming support



Cabinet after the dismissal of Junejo and the dissolution of the National Assembly in May this year. With the death of Zia, he became President in accordance with the constitutional provisions.

Initially considered a straight-forward, no-nonsense type of man, Ishaq Khan proved to be a disappointment when he refused to dismiss the four caretaker chief ministers (of Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province). By this act of omission, the President ensured that all the four chief ministers, all IJI leaders and Zia followers, retained control of the administrative apparatus at the time of the polls. Moreover, it was Ishaq Khan's personal intervention that is reported to have brought together the two principal Muslim factions. The two factions, one led by former Prime Minister Junejo and the other by Punjab chief minister Nawaz Sharif, came together about a month before the elections and succeeded in roping in the Jamaat-i-Islami, former PPP leader Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi's National People's Party (NPP), the Hizbe Jihad led by newspaper tycoon Agha Murtaza Poova (of the Muslim group) and five other smaller parties. Incidentally, President Ishaq Khan's own son-in-law, Anwar Saifullah Khan, contested the polls on an IJI ticket and won from the Bannu constituency. Saifullah's brother is a member of the Senate.



When the poll results were announced, it was clear that Pakistan had voted for democracy: it had buried the ghost of Zia, defeated the *mullahs* and most of the important collaborators of the dictatorship, including former Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo

The most significant decision taken by President Ishaq Khan's caretaker Cabinet was on voting rights. A month before the elections, the government suddenly announced that a registered voter would be allowed to cast his ballot only if he could produce his national identity card. The order, the government said in justification, was motivated by concern about bogus voting. The PPP, however, pointed out that a large percentage of rural voters did not possess identity cards and that it was mainly the urbanites and the affluent section of the rural population which required them. The need for ID cards is not felt in the rural areas as identification is required only for getting passports, government jobs, bank loans and other government facilities.

The ID card stipulation effectively disenfranchised a significant percentage of rural voters—traditionally the PPP's main base. This rural support was largely the creation of the late Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, whose populism and generous use of government resources benefited millions. The PPP tried to fight the government order by appealing to the Lahore High Court, which ruled that identity cards were not the only proof of identity and that people who produced any other form of identification would be allowed to vote. The Supreme Court, however, nullified this order without giving a final judgment on the issue. The establishment clearly was in no mood to accept opposition to its plans.

To fend off accusations of foul play, the government declared that fears of large-scale disentranchisement were unfounded as about 93 per cent of citizens above the age of 18 possessed ID cards and the rest could get them before the elections. According to non-official estimates, on the other hand, less than 50 per cent of rural voters had ID cards and on the day of the polls, thousands of applications for them lay pending. Not surprisingly, despite the tremendous enthusiasm, actual voter turnout on 16 November was just about 50 per cent. In contrast, the 1985 polls, despite generating widespread cynicism, witnessed a turnout of 52.9 per cent. Voter turnout in the 1977 elections was 55 per cent and in 1970, about 58 per cent. This time, out of an electorate of 48 million, only about 24 million voted.



Yet, the conspiracy to legitimise the cosy nexus between the pro Zia collaborators and the ruling clique did not come off. Everything had been set to ensure that the poll pointer stopped at the IJI. But the force of popular pressure proved too much and the electoral counter crossed the IJI, passed by most of its stalwarts, and turned in favour of the PPP, stopping just short of granting Benazir a majority.

The most humiliating consequences were suffered by the prominent collaborators of the Zia regime. Former Prime Minister Junejo lost both the constituencies he contested. The head of the IJI, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, suffered a similar fate. Senior ministers, including Aslam Khankhattak, Naseem Aheer, Wasim Hassannadvi and a host of others, were trounced. One former minister, Elahi Buxsoomro, secured as few as 147 votes. The IJI's pretensions to being a national party were shattered. It failed to win even a single seat in the

country's second largest province, Sind (46 National Assembly seats).

Almost all Jamaat-i-Islami members of the IJI lost. In retrospect, it seems that Nawaz Sharif's tirade against India, his attempts to paint Benazir as a person who wants to downgrade Pakistan's defence establishment and compromise with the Soviets in Afghanistan had impressed only a section of traditional Punjabi voters—especially those in the so-called military belt of northern Punjab. Nawaz Sharif himself could win only two of the four seats he contested. Benazir, in contrast, won all the three seats she contested—Larkana, Karachi and Lahore—with resounding margins. In Larkana, the home constituency of the Bhuttos, she secured a record 97 per cent of the total votes.

The overwhelming mandate for Benazir threw the establishment's plans into total disarray. Before the polls, regime supporters had made no secret of their belief that President Ishaq Khan would invite an IJI leader to form the government even if the party did not secure a majority in the National Assembly. The Pakistani Constitution, rewritten by General Zia, allows the President to exercise his discretion in choosing a National Assembly member whom he considers most capable of forming a government. General Zia in the past had always insisted on holding elections on a non-party basis because this helped in the selection of a pliable Prime Minister who could then choose his supporters from an Assembly of Independents. But this time as Benazir managed to command the support of the largest single group in the National Assembly, nominating Nawaz Sharif became something of a problem.

However, even after the announcement of poll results, an unfazed Nawaz Sharif continued to insist that the IJI should be given the chance to form a government. Sharif claimed that the IJI had the support of another six Independents. The party's general secretary, Iqbal Ahmad Khan added that all the eight tribal members and the Independents from Karachi and Hyderabad had announced their support for the IJI. These claims were at best plain wishful thinking. The arithmetic of the poll results was overwhelmingly in favour of the PPP.

Benazir could almost unthinkingly count on the support of two parties that had been with her during the tumultuous days of the MRD (Movement for Restoration of Democracy) agitations of 1983-84. Of the two former MRD constituents, the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islami led by Fazlur Rahman had bagged seven

The conspiracy to legitimise the cosy nexus between the pro-Zia collaborators and the ruling clique did not come off. Former Prime Minister Junejo lost both the constituencies he contested. The head of the IJI, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, suffered a similar fate. Senior ministers were trounced. The IJI's pretensions at being a national party were shattered

seats and the Awami National Party (ANP) of Khan Abdul Wali Khan had won three seats in the North West Frontier Province. With these 10 seats, a few minority seats, half of the nominated women's seats and the support of the 13 members of the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM), Benazir could comfortably claim that she had the requisite 119 supporters in the Assembly and thereby the right to form the government.

President Ishaq Khan, however, refused to hint at who would be allowed to form the government. He continued to reiterate that the choice would be made in accordance with constitutional provisions. The Constitution, however, merely states that the National Assembly shall meet on the 13th day after the polls and that a Prime Minister shall be appointed by the President. It does not say anything about the leader of the biggest group in the National Assembly being given the first chance to form a government. The appointed Prime Minister has, however, to prove his majority on the floor of the House within 60 days. And thanks to yet another amendment made by Zia, the Pakistani President also reserves the right to dismiss a Prime Minister before March 1990.

The choice of Pakistan's next Prime Minister in the ultimate analysis depends on how seriously the country's military leadership wants the restoration of democracy. It was the military that granted the elections and it is the military that will determine its final outcome. A great deal hinges on Pakistan's key military leader, Chief of Army Staff General Mirza Aslam Beg, the man

Nusrat and Benazir Bhutto: will they form the government?



who scrupulously implemented Zia's promise to hold elections on 16 November.

Till the very end, General Zia had held on to the crucial post of Chief of Army Staff. When he was killed in the aircrash, General Beg was his deputy. At that juncture, General Beg could have imposed martial law and taken up the reins of government. He chose instead to convene a meeting of senior army commanders and the chiefs of the other two services. It was decided then that the military would not take over. The Senate was informed of the decision and Ishaq Khan made President. Ishaq Khan, in turn, called an emergency meeting of the caretaker Cabinet and decided to make General Beg the Chief of Army Staff.

Observers in Islamabad feel that had it been any other General and not Beg, the country may not have witnessed elections. Most of Zia's closest cronies perished with him in the aircrash. Most important of them was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Akhtar Abdul Rehman, the man credited with building the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) into the most formidable covert organisation in Pakistan. General Rehman is believed to have been responsible for planning and implementing covert operations in Afghanistan, Kashmir and in the Indian part of Punjab. Another Zia supporter who died in the crash was the Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General Mohammad Afzaal. It is believed that had either of them survived, the history of Pakistan would have been another story.

General Beg, as destiny would have it, proved very different. Even Benazir Bhutto was forced to welcome his categorical assertion that he would not impose martial law but would ensure that constitutional procedures were followed. He also repeated on several occasions that he would make sure that "free and fair" elections were held. Others less charitable to the military argue that the army's decision to allow elections was not so much because of individuals like General Beg but the result of the growing strength of democratic forces within the country. According to this view, the Generals did not wish to risk another bout of political turmoil and felt that they could allow a form of parliamentary democracy while indirectly influencing the political party in power.

At any rate, the prospect of the army losing its clout is remote. The power of the army is acknowledged by the citizenry, by the national press (which cannot imagine being critical of the armed forces) and the politicians. Even Benazir has had to woo the army—carefully stressing that her fight was against Zia and not the patriotic armed forces, that she will not cut defence expenditure or let up pressure against inimical external forces, and that she endorses the country's present policies on Afghanistan. What more can the Generals want with even Benazir having recognised the army as the most important constituency in Pakistan's polity.

The Pakistan National Assembly

Party's name	Seats
Pakistan People's Party	92
Islamic Jamhooree Ittehad (IJI)	54
Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM)	13
Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islami (Fazlur Rahman group)	7
Awami National Party (ANP)	3
Pakistan Awami Ittehad (PAI)	3
Baluchistan National Alliance (BNP)	2
Pakistan Democratic Party (PDP)	1
Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islami (Darkhasti group)	1
National People's Party (NPP)	1
Independents	27
Results declared	**204**
Women's seats (to be nominated)	20
Minorities' seats (results expected later)	10
Countermanded	2
Withheld	1
Total seats	**237**



No party emerged with a clear majority. The IJI, a conglomerate of rightist forces which had collaborated with the Zia regime, got only 54 seats, despite the fact that it held the trumpcard: control of the administrative apparatus. The IJI's failure demonstrated the sheer strength of popular determination

The army, for the moment at least, wants internal stability. General Beg, in a recent lecture at the Quetta Staff College, spelled out three major internal problems confronting the nation: political dissent, the emergence of the heroin-Kalashnikov culture and economic disparities between classes and ethnic groups. The General pointedly expressed the hope that the new government would address and successfully tackle these problems. The army is clearly not up to such a task. In other words, by holding elections, the military leadership has shrewdly shifted the responsibility to the politicians while retaining ultimate power, inoluding the power to dismiss any civilian government.

Given the army's objectives, it is unlikely that Nawaz Sharif and his badly battered party will be given a chance to form the government and thereby plunge the country into yet another political crisis. The extent of nationwide support for Benazir has been proved only too well by the elections. And Bhutto's daughter, after struggling for nine years to regain her father's political legacy, is in no mood to see her



President Ishaq Khan is an IJI sympathiser. He refused to dismiss the four caretaker chief ministers, ensuring that the administrative apparatus remained in the hands of Zia followers during the poll. Also, the ID card stipulation introduced by his Cabinet disenfranchised a large percentage of rural voters—traditionally the PPP's main base

ambition thwarted. One of her first post-election moves was to threaten to challenge the results in several Punjab constituencies, where her party candidates had been defeated. Denying her the right to form the government would have meant precipitating another crisis, another round of agitation that would only have served to strengthen Benazir's hand.

While President Ishaq Khan greeted the poll results with ambiguous platitudes, General Beg accepted the verdict with apparent nonchalance. A couple of days after the polls, he telephoned Benazir's mother, Begum Nusrat Bhutto, who as chairperson of the PPP contested and won from two constituencies, and warmly congratulated her. Significantly, the General also called JUI leader Fazlur Rahman, a potential PPP partner. Nawaz Sharif was not accorded similar treatment and there could be no broader hint on whom the army favoured.

Benazir is best fitted to be the country's next premier, not by virtue of her personal qualities but because she is Bhutto's daughter. Years of military rule, the failure of politicians to build national institutions and inherent ethnic contradictions have left the average Pakistani bereft of national symbols. The memory of Bhutto, his empty populist slogans and the dream of democracy are all Pakistanis are left with. And Benazir, in the process, is faced with a challenge even greater than the one her father faced and ultimately lost.

The small print in the manifestos did not seem to matter. Consequently, Benazir watered down much of her party's commitment towards socialism, non-alignment and economic development. She further compromised by inducting members of the ruling clique and pro-Zia people into her party. She concentrated on Punjab and Sind, the country's two largest provinces. Even then she could not address much of the frustrations and schisms in the polity. While the PPP's populist image succeeded in capturing the support of the lower classes, it failed to a large extent to enamour ethnic groups that feel dispossessed.

General Zia: the elections were his idea



In the vast arid province of Baluchistan, which has not entirely reconciled itself to being part of the larger Pakistani nation, the PPP could secure only one out of 13 seats. In the Pathan-dominated North West Frontier Province, the PPP got just seven of the 26 seats.

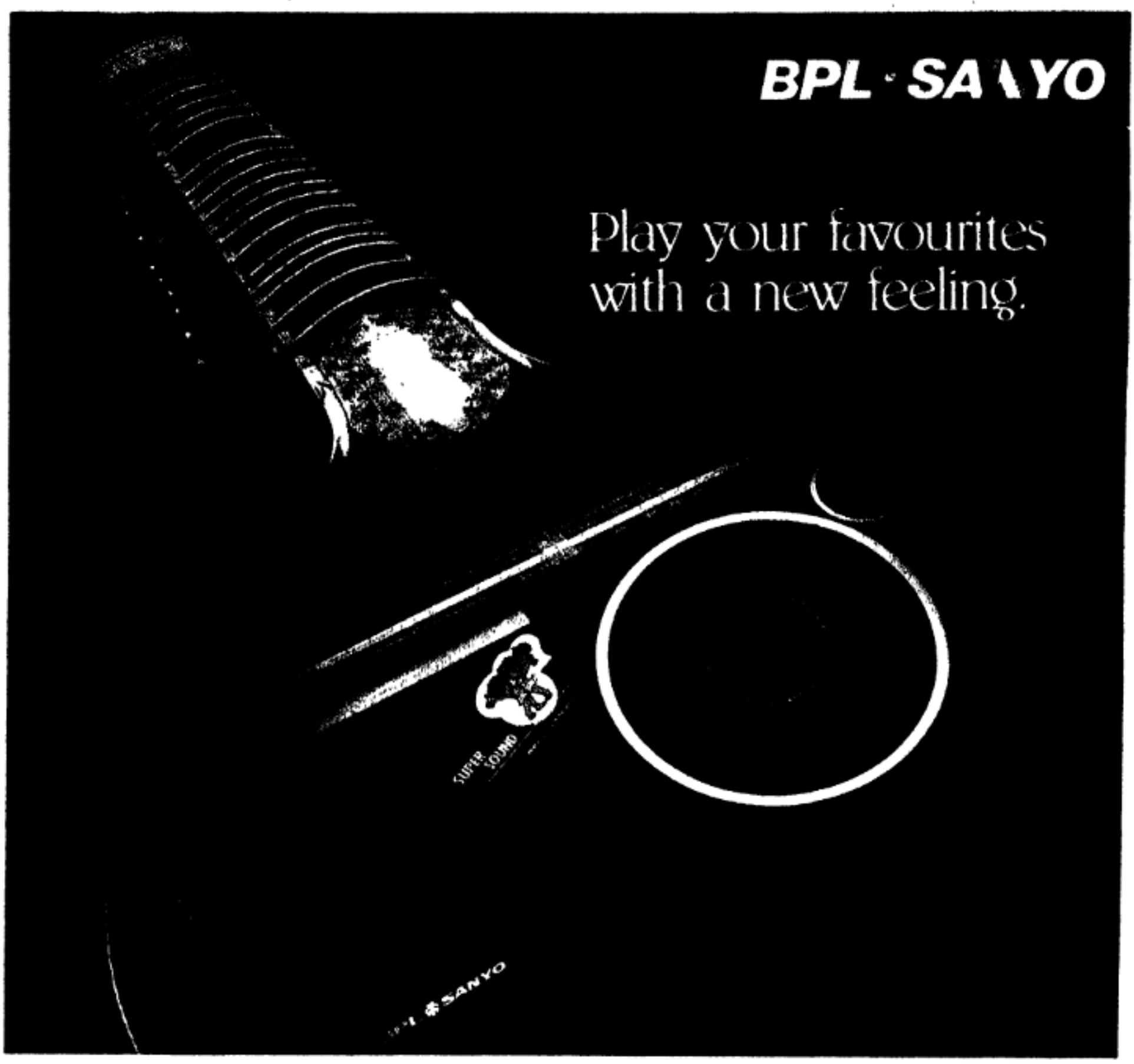
The most dramatic and disconcerting development was, however, the alienation of the Mohajirs, the Muslims from India who had opted for Pakistan. The disenchantment of the Mohajirs with the national political mainstream was perhaps the most dismaying and tragic aspect of the elections. Candidates under the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) banner wrested as many as 13 out of the 15-odd seats they contested in the cities of Karachi and Hyderabad. *"Jive Mohajir"* became the refrain in the two cities during electioneering and after. The MQM victory, while a cause for celebrations for its leaders like Altaf Hussain, should really have been interpreted as a defeat for Pakistan. For, it was the Mohajirs, including Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who had dreamt of and created Pakistan. After 41 years, the assertion of a separate Mohajir identity was a testimony to the malaise afflicting the nation.

It was the Mohajir who sacrificed the most—his roots—to make Pakistan a reality and today it is the Mohajir who feels the most betrayed. For Benazir, such feelings could be impossible to assuage. She has to address her principal constituents: the Punjabis and the Sindhis. The Mohajir is pitted against both these large communities in the fight for educational facilities, jobs and a say in the destiny of Pakistan. Squabbles over sharing the nation's resources are only going to intensify.

The country's population is growing at the rate of over three per cent per annum and with each year, the aspirations of the people are mounting. Pakistan has become a net international debtor: external debt amounts to more than US $14 billion and exports stagnate at a pathetic US $ 3 billion. To make matters worse, there is the constant perceived threat from the Indian giant

No small wonder then that the power of a dictator, army guns and the orders of military leaders offer little salvation for Pakistan. The burden now has fallen squarely on Benazir. If she fails to deliver, it may mean the end of a brief return to democracy for Pakistan. After all, it was the army that granted Pakistan the democratic reprieve. And what the army has given can always be taken back.

Indrani Banerjie/*Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore*



BPL-SANYO music makers.

At last! A world class choice.

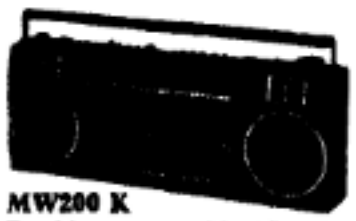
Mono or stereo, cassette recorder or 2-in 1, BPL-Sanyo calls the tune. Stylish. Packed with features. And surprisingly affordable Take your pick... today!



M7740 K
Ultra-sleek 6-speaker 'Boom Box' Feature-packed model with big sound that surrounds you. The only one of its kind



M7010 K
Slimline attraction with 4-band radio. 10-watt stereo sensation at a sensational price



MW200 K
Double cassette 'Mini Studio' with high-speed dubbing and 4-band radio Compact model with high-impact sound Affordably priced.



C1 K
Mini compo system with detachable speakers for true stereo effect. 4-band radio with FM. Excellent bargain.

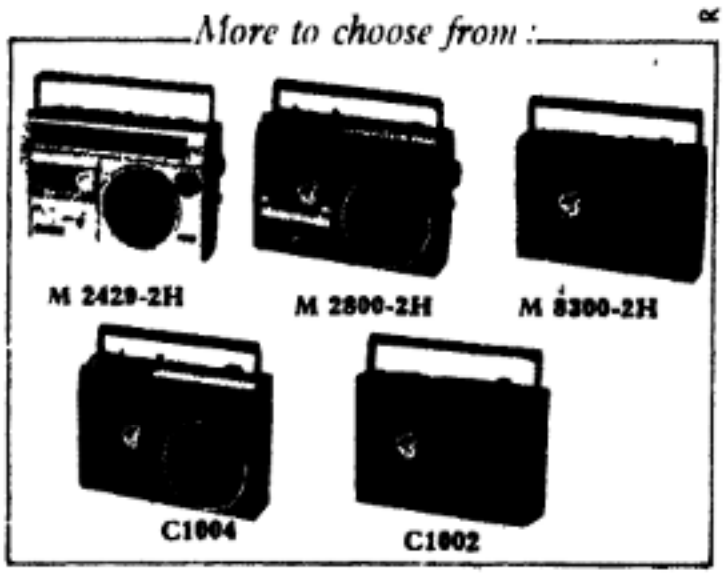


M9903 -2H
2-way, 4-speaker marvel. Surprisingly affordable Makes more sense than a mono in its price range



M1700 H
Mini and slim international favourite Small on size, big on sound. Unique styling. Ideal all-time companion.

More to choose from :



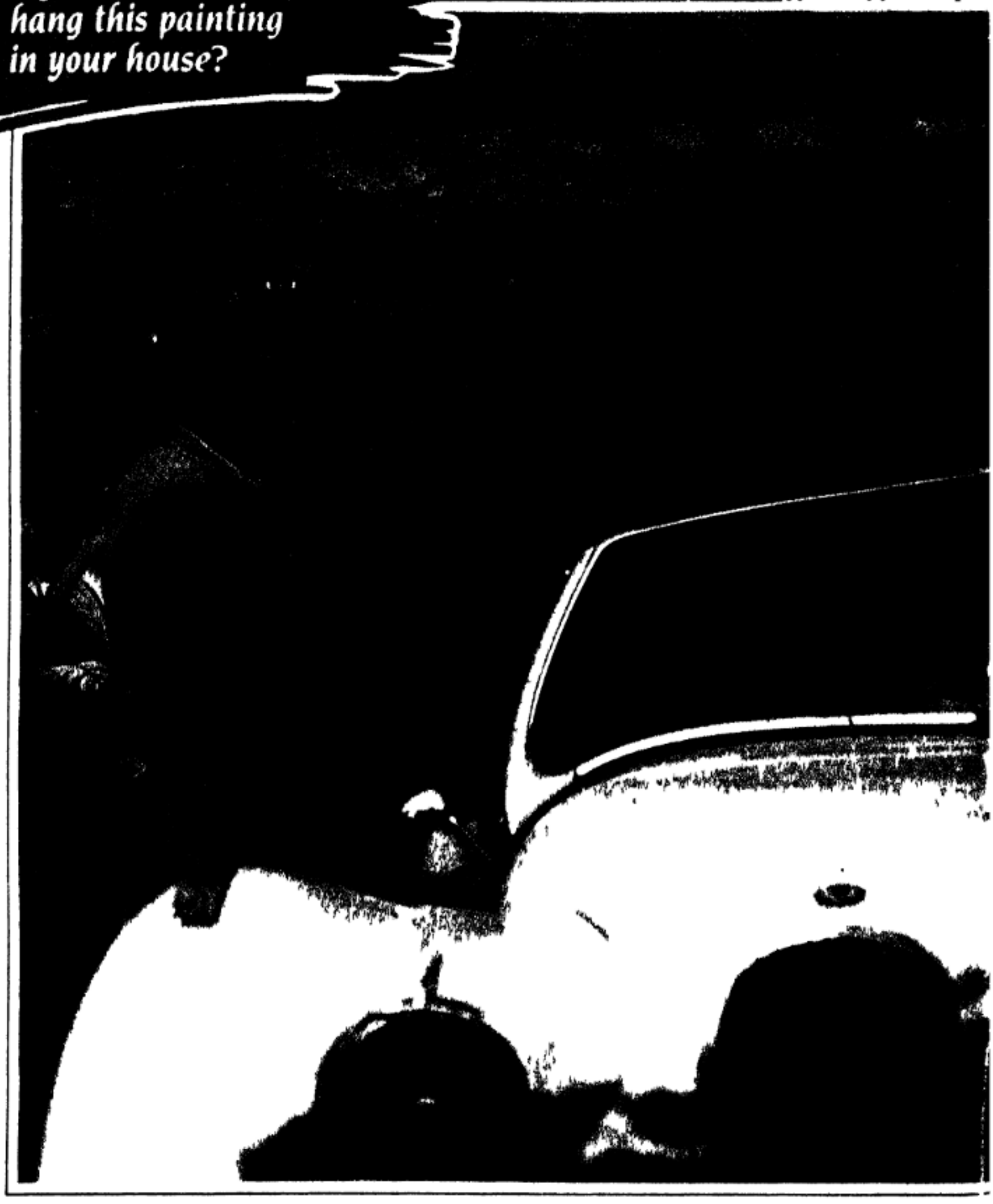
BPL-AUDIO

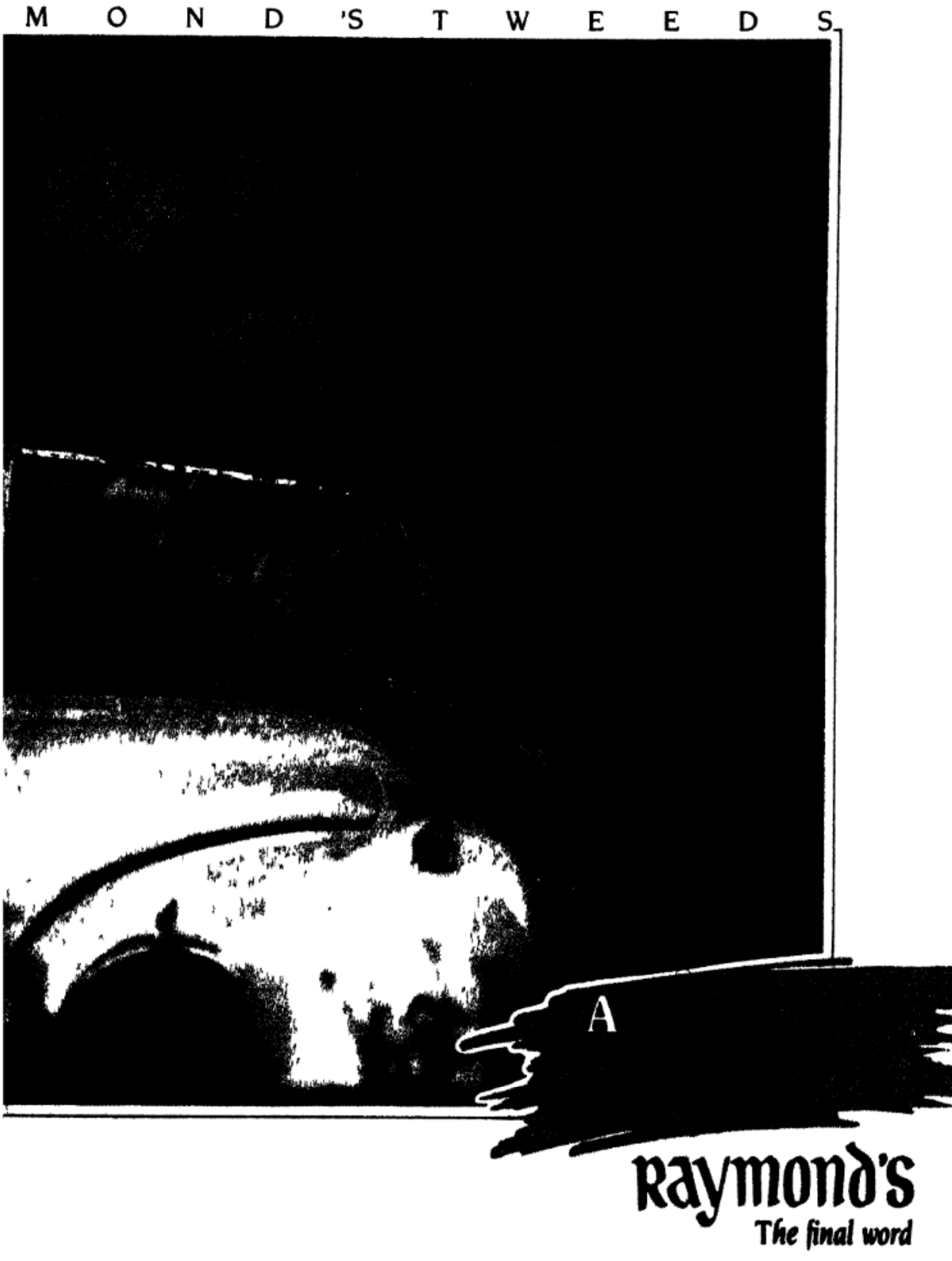
Always the best!

R K SW/BPL 3617

Q *Are you going to hang this painting in your house?*

R A Y




M O N D 'S T W E E D S
A
Raymond's
The final word

In your concern for their happiness



You deserve a bank which equally cares – VYSYA BANK

Their happiness — your concern, it is intense. Setting your children in the right direction — guiding and supporting to ensure success. We care. Relating ourself to your need, with experience and foresight.

That is — through the varied and flexible schemes of Vysya Bank — designed to support success to sustain.

And this has been the secret of our success — in being responsive, in being proactive to challenges, in going beyond banking through equipment leasing and credit cards, in occupying the premier position in the private sector.

In your pursuits, team up with the winner — Vysya Bank.

Come, let us grow together.

THE VYSYA BANK LTD

Regd. Office: Avenue Road, Bangalore 560002
Admn. Office: 22, St. Marks Road,
Bangalore 560 001.
Chairman: [illegible]

KIRON/VB/Corp. 887

From the ravines of Chambal to the Nilgiris



... the future is green.

Vayudoot has been extending its unique range of services towards the country's socio-economic growth. Now with a full fledged Agro Aviation Division, Vayudoot can undertake aerial seeding and spraying of pesticides besides aerial surveillance.

Specialised Vayudoot aircraft will sow seeds throughout the length and breadth of India. Thus helping to grow trees in remote areas, otherwise not easily accessible. The National Wasteland Development Board plans to plant 200-300 crore hectares of land with a variety of trees. Vayudoot will play a crucial role in this effort.

Aerial spraying of pesticides

As a service to farmers, Vayudoot will soon undertake the aerial spraying of crops with pesticides. This scheme is partly subsidised by the Government and the farmer has to pay only a small amount. Thus, 400 hectares of land can be sprayed in a single day. As a result, not only is the quantity of pesticide required much less than in manual spraying but the effectiveness, per hectare, is also much higher. Plantation owners and those who have large farms and orchards can also avail of this scheme.

For further details contact Vayudoot's Agro Aviation Division.

The Vayudoot spectrum of services

An Ultra-Fast Courier Service, to and from over 80 destinations all over India.

The 'Rent-A-Plane' Service, bringing a whole new dimension of convenience to the business traveller.

The Himalayan Air Trek, which offers a breathtaking flight over the Himalayan ranges, every Sunday.

Holiday Package Tours, which enable groups to travel to various shrines and tourist resorts.

Poised for take off into a promising future

Vayudoot

AGRO AVIATION DIVISION

Vayudoot Limited
Safdarjung Airport, New Delhi - 110 00
Tel: 611978, 618647. Telex: 031-61052

First lessons in politics

Benazir Bhutto on her childhood and the influences that shaped her future



My mother and I were released from Sihala at the end of May, 1979, seven weeks after my father's death. We returned to 70 Clifton, our family home in Karachi.

Everything was the same. But nothing was the same. 'Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Bar-at-Law' read the brass nameplate beside the gate to 70 Clifton. Above it was another



Benazir Bhutto: tutored by her father

brass plate, faded with time, inscribed with my grandfather's name, Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto. My grandmother built this two-storey sprawling bungalow shortly after I was born in 1953 and my brothers, sister and I grew up here in the cooling breezes from the Arabian Sea just a quarter of a mile away. Who could have foreseen the tragedy and violence that would overtake this peaceful family compound?

Every day hundreds of wailing mourners mass in the garden of coconut palms, mangoes, and red and yellow flowering trees coaxed from the desert of Karachi. Hundreds more wait patiently outside the gates to pay condolence calls to their leader's family. My mother is still in *Iddat* and can't receive outsiders. She sends me to greet them instead.

At night I immerse myself in organisational matters, policy matters, complaints, and political arrests, having summaries prepared for my mother to read. I feel I'll never catch up and probably wouldn't have without the help of my schoolfriend Samiya and also of Amina and Yasmin.

To calm the people before he ordered my father's death, General Zia had again promised elections that would return the country from his military dictatorship to civilian rule. But was he going to let the PPP (Pakistan People's Party) win? He had publicly declared that he would "not hand power to those he had taken it from", and that only elections with "positive results" would be acceptable to him.

On 15 October , 1979, a month before the elections are scheduled to take place, the PPP reconvenes at the request of some high-ranking party officials. The question of fighting the elections is reopened, and the party splits down the middle. "Boycott!" "Boycott!" several of the party officials urge my mother in the dining room of 70 Clifton now serving as a conference room. Some of them, I know, have called me "a silly little girl" in private, but I speak up again. "By continually changing the rules, Zia has lost his confidence," I argue. "We must not lose ours. We swept the local bodies elections and we will sweep the general election too." It is late at night before the PPP decides by a narrow margin to uphold the decision to contest.

When Zia hears of our intention the next day, his nerves crack. The Chief Martial Law Administrator repeats the pattern of 1977, cancelling the elections altogether and once again sending his soldiers to 70 Clifton. "The house is surrounded," one of the staff tells me in the middle of the night. Quickly I gather all the political papers I had laboriously collected—party papers, membership lists, letters, lists of those in jail—throw them in the bath, and burn them. I don't want to make the regime's persecution easier. Minutes later the soldiers enter the house to take my mother and me at gunpoint to Al-Murtaza, our country home in Larkana. We will be imprisoned there for six months.

I pace the corridors of Al-Murtaza. Though this is my mother's ninth political detention and my seventh since the coup two years ago, I still can't adjust to the forced isolation. Each incarceration is just adding another layer of anger. Perhaps at 26, it is my age. But I don't think I would feel differently at any age, especially being detained at Al-Murtaza.

Al-Murtaza was the heart of our family, the house to which we always returned from the four corners of the earth to pass our winter vacations, to celebrate *Eid* at the end of the holy month of Ramazan as well as my father's birthday, to attend family weddings or pay condolences to our many relatives living on the lands that had been in the family for hundreds of years. Now the regime has declared Al-Murtaza a sub-jail for my mother and me.

The Western press is being told by the regime that we are under "house arrest". But that is inaccurate. "House arrest" in Pakistan is quite informal, the detained person being allowed visits from friends and family, press interviews, local and long distance telephone calls, books, and sometimes even a quick drive or outside meetings. Under sub-jail rules, Al-Murtaza has been deemed a prison where the Jail Manual Regulations prevail. Our telephone is disconnected. My mother and I are confined to the compound and allowed no visitors except for an occasional visit from Sanam.



Benazir Bhutto celebrating her birthday with friends: moments of joy

The house both inside and outside the walls is surrounded by soldiers from the Frontier Force, a paramilitary group of Pathan tribesmen from the Northwest Frontier Province. In my father's time, special commandos were posted at Al-Murtaza to keep intruders out. The Frontier Force is here now for the sole purpose of keeping his widow and his daughter in. Zia wants the country, even the world, to forget that there was ever a family named Bhutto.

In Pakistan, the papers hardly even mention our names. From 16 October, 1979, the day Zia cancelled the second elections and arrested my mother and me, he added to his burgeoning list of

Tiles with a splash of romance



SPARTEK SENSATIONS

Attractive new size
305 mm. × 152.5 mm.

INTRODUCING

THE Rain Song

SERIES

Soft, gentle hue. Sensuous. Evocative.
The romance of rain, captured on a tile.
The Spartek Rain Song Series in three
subtle shades to add magic to the mood.

SPARTEK

India's largest selling ceramic floor tiles.

Martial Law regulations by imposing total censorship on the press. Under Martial Law Order No. 49, the editor of any publication deemed dangerous to the "sovereignty, integrity and security of Pakistan, or morality and maintenance of public order", is now subject to ten lashes and 25 years of rigorous imprisonment.

Our party newspaper, *Musawaat*, with a circulation of over 100,000 in the city of Lahore alone, has been closed down, and its presses seized. Other newspapers are being threatened with closure or the cut-off of government controlled newsprint and advertising if they do not comply. For the next six years, pictures of my father, mother or me will rarely appear in any newspaper. Nor will there be any favourable mention of our names. If the military censors find any story even slightly sympathetic, they will cut it out of the galleys each newspaper is required to submit for approval. At times, whole newspaper columns will run blank, the journalists' method of letting the reading public know that news worthy of being printed has been removed by the censors.

Education was top priority. Like his father before him, my father wanted to make examples out of us, the next generation of educated and progressive Pakistanis...I was to be the first woman in the Bhutto family to study abroad

The strength of the PPP has also forced Zia to tighten his already oppressive political restrictions. Since the imposition of Martial Law in 1977, anyone participating in political activity had been subject to imprisonment and whipping. But from 16 October, 1979, the military regime decreed that political parties themselves were illegal, a clear attempt to kill popular support for my father's policies once and for all. "All political parties in Pakistan with all their groups, branches and factions...shall cease to exist," General Zia's Martial Law Order No. 48 stated bluntly. Any member of a political party, or anyone who even calls himself one in private conversation, is now subject to 14 years rigorous imprisonment, the loss of his property, and 25 lashes. From that moment on, any mention of the PPP in the press will be preceded by the word "defunct". My mother and I are thus reduced to the "defunct" leaders of a "defunct" party in a defunct democracy.

Before the first land reforms in 1958, the Bhuttos were among the largest employers of agricultural workers in the province. Our lands like those of other landowners in Sindh were measured in square miles, not acres. As children we loved to hear the story of the amazement of Charles Napier, the British conqueror of Sindh in 1843. "Whose lands are these?" he repeatedly asked his driver as he toured the province. "Bhutto's lands," came the inevitable response. "Wake me up when we are off Bhutto's lands," he ordered. He was surprised when some time later he woke up on his own. "Who owns this land?" he asked. "Bhutto," the driver repeated. Napier became famous for his dispatch in Latin to the British military command after he conquered the province: *"Peccavi*—I have sinned." As children we thought it a confession, not a pun.

* * *

I saw my father as much on the front pages of the newspapers as in person—arguing for Pakistan and other Third World countries at the United Nations, negotiating financial and technical assistance agreements with the Soviet Union in 1960, returning from forbidden Peking in 1963 with a border treaty peacefully ceding 750 square miles of disputed territory to Pakistan. My mother usually travelled with him, leaving the children at home with the household staff—and me. "Look after the other children," my parents would charge me. "You are the oldest."

Benazir with her father Z.A. Bhutto at the Simla Summit in 1972: a source of inspiration



I was only eight or so when I was left nominally in charge of the house when my parents were away. My mother would give me the money for food and household supplies which I hid under my pillow. Though I was just learning my sums at school, every night in her absence I would climb on a stool in the kitchen and pretend to go over the accounts with Babu, our long-time, loyal major domo. Whether the figures tallied, I have no recollection. Luckily very small sums were involved. At that time, rupees ten, about two dollars, bought food for the whole household.

In our house education was top-priority. Like his father before him, my father wanted to make examples out of us, the next generation of educated and progressive Pakistanis. At three I was sent to Lady Jennings' nursery school, then at five to one of the top schools in Karachi, the Convent of Jesus and Mary. Instruction at CJM was in English, the language we spoke at home more often than my parents' native languages of Sindhi or Persian or the national language of Urdu. And though the Irish nuns who taught there divided the older students into houses with inspirational names like "Discipline", "Courtesy", "Endeavour" and "Service", they made no effort to convert us to Christianity. The school was too good a source of income for the missionaries who ran it to risk alienating the small numbers of Muslim families rich enough and far-sighted enough to educate their children.

"I ask only one thing of you, that you do well in your studies," my father told us time and again. As we grew older he hired tutors to instruct us in Maths and English in the afternoons after school, and he kept track of our school reports by phone from wherever he was in the world. Luckily I was a good student, for he had great plans for me to be the first woman in the Bhutto family to study abroad.

"You will all pack your suitcases and I will take you to the airport to see you off," he started saying to the four of us as early as I can remember. "Pinkie will leave as a scruffy little kid and come back a beautiful young lady in a sari. Shah Nawaz will pack so many clothes his suitcase won't close. We will have to call Babu and ask him to sit on it."

There was no question in my family that my sister and I would be given the same opportunities in life as my brothers. Nor was there in Islam. We learned at an early age that it was men's interpretation of our religion that restricted women's opportunities, not our religion itself. Islam in fact had been quite progressive towards women from its inception: the Prophet Mohammed had forbidden the killing of female infants common among the Arabs of the time, and called for education for women and their right to inherit long before these privileges were granted to them in the West.





Benazir Bhutto: groomed by her father

My father was determined to bring his country and his children—into the twentieth century. "Will the children marry into the family?" I overheard my mother ask my father one day. I held my breath for his answer. "I don't want the boys to marry their cousins and leave them behind our compound walls any more than I want my daughters buried alive behind some other relative's compound walls," he said to my great relief. "Let them finish their education first. Then they can decide what to do with their lives."

When I was ten and Sanam seven, we were sent north to boarding school in the pine-covered former British hill station of Murree. Our governess had given very short notice and was returning to England. Boarding school seemed the quick solution and my father was in favour of it, thinking the experience would toughen us up. For the first time I had to make my own bed, polish my shoes, carry water for bathing and tooth-brushing back and forth from the water taps in the corridors. "Treat my children like the others," my father had told the nuns. And they certainly did, laying the brush on Sunny and me for any infringement of the strict rules.

At Murree my father continued our political education by mail. Shortly after he returned from the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries in Jakarta, he wrote us a long letter elaborating on the self-interest of the superpowers in the United Nations and the resulting neglect

We learned that it was men's interpretation of our religion that restricted women's opportunities, not our religion itself. Islam in fact had been quite progressive towards women from its inception



Bhutto with General Zia: a trust betrayed



The Bhutto family house in Karachi

of Third World countries. One of the nuns sat Sanam and me down on a bench in the school garden and read the letter to us in its entirety, though we understood little of its content.

During our second and last year at Murree, Sanam and I learned some political lessons at first hand. On 6 September, 1965, India and Pakistan went to war over Kashmir. While my father flew off to the United Nations to argue for the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir and against the aggression of India, the nuns at the Convent of Jesus and Mary prepared their students for the possibility of an Indian invasion. The road to Kashmir ran right through Murree, a clear invitation most people thought, for Indian troops to use it to march into Pakistan.

Where once we had played "jacks" with goat bones after dinner, or read Enid Blyton books, now suddenly we had air raid practices and blackouts. The nuns made older girls responsible for getting their younger sisters into the shelters, and I made Sunny tie her slippers to her feet at night so she wouldn't lose time in looking for them. Many of our schoolmates were daughters of prominent government officials or army officers, and with excitement we gave each other false names and practised them in case we fell into the hands of our enemies. In the flush of adolescence, we were all quite dramatic about the possibility of being kidnapped and carried off into the hills. But for the 17 days of the war, the threat of invasion was quite real and frightening.

Safely back at home, the talk turned to politics even more. Terms such as "cold war" and "arms embargo" had already become part of our dimly understood vocabulary as small children. We were as familiar with hearing the results of roundtable conferences and summit meetings as other children were with World Cup Cricket scores. But after my father broke with Ayub Khan in 1966, the words "civil liberties" and "democracy" were the ones that came up most, words which were mythical to most Pakistanis, who had only experienced restricted political participation under Ayub. Until my father formed his own political party in 1967, the Pakistan People's Party.

Roti, Kapra, Makan. Bread. Clothing. Shelter. These simple promises became the rallying cry for the Pakistan People's Party, fundamentals which the millions of poor in Pakistan did not have. Whereas all Muslims prostrated themselves before Allah, the poor in our country still prostrated themselves before the rich. "Stand up! Do not grovel before others! You are human beings and have rights!" my father exhorted the crowds in the most remote and forlorn villages of Pakistan where no politician had travelled before. "Call for democracy, where the vote of the poorest carries the same weight as the vote of the richest."

Bread. Clothing. Shelter. These simple promises became the rallying cry for the Pakistan People's Party, fundamentals which the millions of poor in Pakistan did not have

Daughter of the East: An Autobiography by Benazir Bhutto. Published by Hamish Hamilton, London, and distributed in India by Rupa and Company. Price Rs. 175.

Where to read the news

Preliminaries on a remarkable interview

"Almost like in an uncivilised manner"

By ARUN SHOURIE

PM wants an open Doordarshan

Sharma's lifestyle hasn't changed : PM

Bofors may have paid for 'genuine work': PM

Basu not corrupt, says PM

Govt rejects demand for new JPC probe

Rajiv Bofors 'agent': VP

PM's remark on Hegde 'baseless'

VP fails to press charge against PM

I have taken political beating for security of nation, says P.M.

Furious debate in both Hous

Money paid for ge work is above-boa

PM's stand ultimate in falsehood: Reddi

'Doordarshan must allow dissent'

-before it becomes the news

'Scandal has destroyed PM's credibility'

VP-Rajiv slanging match gains decibels

Basu: No need for clean chit from PM

I have taken a beating for nation's security:

Uproar in LS as Opp. seeks fresh Bofors probe

Cornered VP refuses to repeat charge against PM

PM admits oversight in Doordarshan over projection

Rajiv vs. Swedish, offi

No Italian marble, says Rajiv

Satish Sharma's farm house

'...ns could be 'genuine'

It is the single most significant interview given by an Indian Prime Minister. What Rajiv Gandhi said to SUNDAY in November 1988 set off storms in Parliament and throughout the nation.

Six months earlier, Giani Zail Singh had told SUNDAY how he had been offered Rs 40 crores to dismiss Rajiv. That interview, too, had rocked the nation.

Because SUNDAY probes deeper than the rest.



SUNDAY

Getting Behind The News



NEWSWATCH

How green is his valley?

Farooq Abdullah faces a growing threat from terrorism inspired by pro-Pakistan elements

This is one 'accord' that Rajiv Gandhi has stopped talking about. On 7 November, two years ago, Gandhi and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah agreed to bury the hatchet and team up to form a coalition government. Abdullah thought he was buying the Centre's crucial support for his shaky government. Gandhi hoped he was shoring up his party's position in Jammu and Kashmir and ensuring the good behaviour of the state government.

How quickly perceptions change! Farooq Abdullah celebrated the approaching anniversary by savaging the central government. On 2 November he told a startled audience at the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry: "If we speak frankly it is construed as if we are speaking against the Centre. At times we are left with no alternative but to speak openly." The two years of the National Conference (Farooq) and the Congress(I) have not done anyone any good -- not the NC(F), not the Congress(I), and certainly not the people of Kashmir. Farooq committed the cardinal sin of appearing to be too close to the central government and his popularity has taken a beating as a result. The Congress(I), for its part, has seen its own base eroded and war erupt amongst its factions.

But the biggest sufferers have been the state and its people. During the last two years the 'Kashmir situation' has spun frighteningly out of control. For the first time this year there were bouts of sporadic violence of the kind which Kashmir has never seen before, a series of bomb blasts in the heart of Srinagar, gun-toting assassins who tried to shoot down a senior police officer and ex-sessions judge, and riots that have broken out with alarming frequency.

But it is the sporadic outburst of terrorist violence which has really put the wind up the state and the central governments. On one single day, 27 October—the anniversary of Kashmir's accession to India—the newly-formed terrorist gangs made their first show of strength, launching a series of machine-gun and bomb attacks. The onslaught began early in the morning when three young men on a scooter fired a couple of rounds at a bus belonging to the Hindustan Machine Tools. Soon afterwards a bomb planted inside a Maruti van parked in Lalchowk, the crowded town centre, went off, injuring 11 people. The terrorists struck again the same day, machine-gunning a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) guard house near the Srinagar High Court. And to cap it all, rioters shouting anti-Indian slogans threw a grenade at a squad of policemen. Late on the same night, another bomb went off and the target, apparently, was the Srinagar station of All India Radio.

The rash of violence had begun in full

swing three days earlier, on 25 October, when the terrorists made a rather half-hearted attempt to blow up the Budshah Bridge in the Civil Lines area of Srinagar. And that was only the prelude to what was to follow. On 26 October, three bombs exploded in different parts of the city, the first destroyed an empty tourist coach. On the same night, a group of youngsters tossed a grenade into the Srinagar Doordarshan complex and another at a police station in the city.

The spurt of terrorism in October came at the end of a long, tense summer. For months the terrorist threat had been building up. The first indications of what was ahead came on 1 August when two bombs exploded harmlessly at the Srinagar telegraph office and another went off at the Srinagar Club. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) claimed responsibility for both blasts. And at the end of August, another bomb went off in Anantnag killing one person and injuring another.

In between the terrorists tried to pull off a daring—though not ultimately successful—attempt to kill the deputy inspector general of Srinagar, Ali Muhammad Watali, one of the strongmen of the Kashmir police. But the raid backfired and one of the terrorists, Aijaz Ahmed Dar, was shot dead in the process. Undeterred by the earlier failure, a gang of youngsters tried to pull off a similar feat, attacking a former sessions judge, Neelkanth Ganju, who had sentenced JKLF founder Maqbool Butt to death.

All fingers point across the border at the moment. The terrorists have surfaced, equipped with the most sophisticated weaponry possible, including Kalashnikov guns, and they have mastered the use of sophisticated explosives with equal ease. It is only a matter of luck that the casualties in the attacks have been relatively low till now.

Intelligence officers, now pursuing the trail diligently, say that for the last one year they have been getting indications that the Pakistanis are stepping up efforts to promote an armed insurrection in Kashmir. During the last few months the Pakistanis are said to have set up at least seven training camps close to some of the main towns of Azad Kashmir, where new recruits can be given a thorough grounding in terrorist techniques. And, apparently, the flow of youngsters, heading in small groups to Pakistan, for military training is on the increase.

The police have so far arrested around 50 people and they are vigorously combing the state for others. Amongst those arrested or wanted so far are former political activists who are thought to have moved closer to the JKLF in recent years. One man recently arrested, Abdul Ahadwaza, is a former government servant and a former member of the People's Conference. Police claim that arms were stored at his house near the border and distributed by him. A former general secretary of the People's Conference, Shabir Shah, is absconding and is wanted by the police. Ajaz Ahmed, who was shot during the attack on DIG Watali was a former security guard of a Muslim United Front (MUF) member.

Two years ago, Rajiv Gandhi and Farooq Abdullah formed a coalition government in Kashmir. Abdullah thought he was buying central support, and Gandhi, that he was ensuring good behaviour of the state government. But perceptions changed quickly



Rajiv Gandhi and Farooq Abdullah addressing a joint public meeting: uneasy alliance

What spurred the new recruits to terrorism is a complex mix of political, social, economic and, inevitably religious factors, which are combining to turn the already tricky situation into a positively explosive one. This year riots and demonstrations have started time and again with remarkably little prompting. When Pakistan President Zia-ul Haq died, it was the signal for an outburst of rioting triggered off by the rumour that he had been killed by India. Worse trouble was avoided because of prompt action by Shia leaders who called off the Moharram processions which were scheduled to be held at the same time. Moulvi Ifthikkar Ansari, one of the most senior Congress(I) leaders in the valley, who was mainly responsible for the cancellation of the procession, said: "I believe there would have been serious trouble that day if we had taken out the procession."

The city has been equally combustible at other times, too. The charismatic Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq, who commands considerable clout in the valley, was able to whip up strong sentiments after the government tried to double the power tariff. The move touched a raw nerve because successive governments have failed to tackle the abysmal power situation. Moulvi Farooq's anti-power hike agitation lasted over two months and in mid-June, five people were shot dead in Srinagar when police opened fire on a violent mob. The Moulvi is still bitter about the way the government tried to put down his agitation and the fact that people were killed by the police.

The government ran into trouble yet again when, in the middle of August, some agitators decided to observe Pakistan's independence day. On 27 October, too, while the terrorists were moving into high gear, part of the city was observing a *hartal* called by the Islamic Students League.

At the heart of the problem is the fact that Farooq Abdullah is rapidly losing his grip on the state. His popularity is now probably at its lowest ever. His reputation as a dilettante chief minister—whether deserved or not—is firmly established and will be difficult to dispel.

Farooq's diminished standing is hardly

surprising in many ways. His government has been inept; the leading partners, the Congress(I) and the National Conference, have been squabbling bitterly; and there has never been the slightest sign that the government is even beginning to tackle the key economic problems that affect the Kashmir valley. The power situation, for instance, is dismal and probably equals the worst anywhere in the country. On two days a week the lights go off at 7 am and return only at 10 pm. On other days there are lengthy power cuts that stretch throughout the afternoon. Many of the giant hydel projects which were supposed to get under way have been stalled and the chief minister has been unable to persuade the Centre into pushing ahead with them.

Srinagar needs a facelift in a lot of other ways as well and there is no sign that the government is even starting on the task. The sewerage system of the city is positively medieval, and there is no indication that the government intends to do anything about it. On the other hand, the government is seriously contemplating setting up a second golf course in Srinagar at an anticipated cost of over Rs 5 crores. Says Moulvi Abbas Ansari: "The basis of the current controversy is economic. This crisis has been created by the ruling clique."

The government has also been pursued by a host of corruption charges which are sullying its reputation. Some of the most serious allegations have been against the Congress(I) members of the coalition. The son of the Congress(I) food and transport minister, Mir Lasjan, is alleged to have collected more than Rs 1 crore from a government department by setting up a shell company. Another Congress(I) minister, Mula Ram, is at the centre of a messy and well-publicised rape case. And Farooq's shuttling between Srinagar and New Delhi has shown that he does not have a free hand when it comes to chopping and changing his Cabinet.

The charismatic Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq was able to whip up strong sentiments after the government tried to double the power tariff. His agitation lasted over two months and in mid-June five people were shot dead in Srinagar when police opened fire on a violent mob



Moulvi Farooq: whipping up strong sentiments



(From left) Ali Gilani, Moulvi Abbas Ansari and Kazi Nisar: increasing fundamentalism

It was perhaps only to be expected that both sides would be pulling in different directions. Each has a strong vested interest in staying as far apart as possible. For the National Conference it would be disastrous to move too close to the Congress(I), and Farooq knows this. Which is why he is always trying to ride two horses. At times he is the star player at Opposition jamborees. At others, as when he made his recent speech, he is bitterly critical of the Centre. And yet, the truth is that his future depends on the moods of the Centre. Says Moulvi Farooq, the one-time ally of Farooq Abdullah, who is now one of the leading lights of the Opposition: "They are making the chief minister dance to their tune."

This is not the way it was supposed to work. When the two parties joined hands two years ago, the idea was that they would form a bulwark against the forces which have always threatened to tear the state apart. But from the start it was obvious that the attempt was doomed. At almost every turn the two sides did their level best to outwit each other. And neither made the slightest effort to see that the spirit of the Rajiv-Farooq accord filtered down to the lower levels of the parties. Admits Moulvi Iftikkar: "We have never tried to explain the alliance to our rank and file."

But if the ruling parties have their problems, they are nothing compared to the travails of the Opposition. Like elsewhere in the country, the Opposition parties in Kashmir are at sixes and sevens. Farooq's estranged brother-in-law, Ghulam Mohammad Shah, leads a rump party of the National Conference. He is bitter about the past and is doing his level best to scheme his way back to power.

Even the major Opposition groupings have fallen apart very rapidly. The Muslim United Front which put up 40 candidates in Kashmir during the last elections, has now split along fairly clear lines. The faction led by Shia leader Moulvi Abbas is the more moderate one. The other led by Ali Gilani is the more fundamentalist grouping and takes a



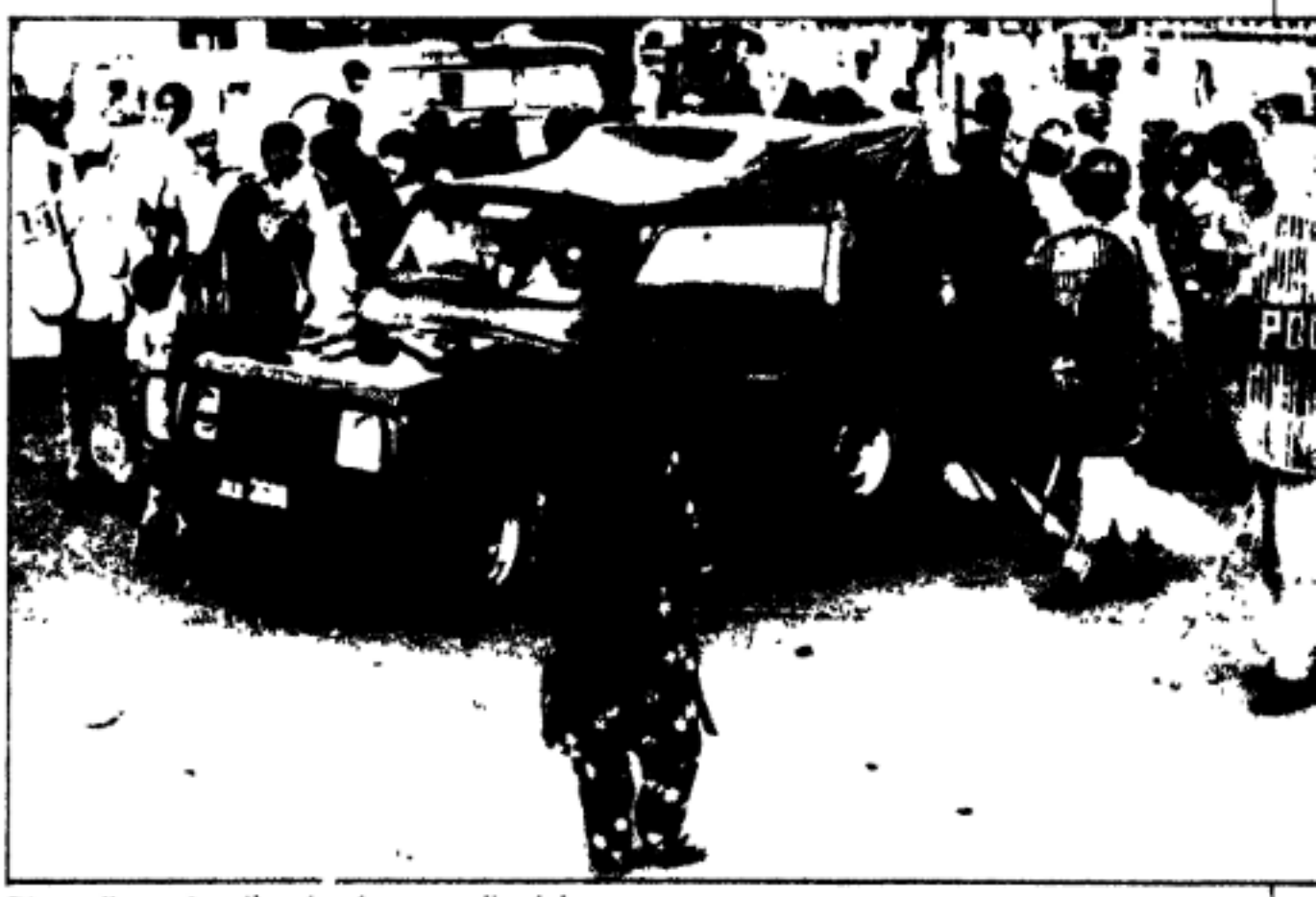
harder stand on religious issues particularly. Other individual leaders, too, who have built up their positions over the years are struggling in the wilderness. Abdul Gani Lone, who heads the People's Conference, has lost both in the 1983 and the 1987 elections. And his election petition filed after the 1983 election is still pending in the state High Court. Lone has filed another petition protesting the results of the latest elections, but he sees little likelihood that it will ever be considered in the near future. He is, consequently, a very bitter man. Moulvi Farooq, of all the Opposition leaders, still retains his *elan* but even he knows that he could never win an election without the right alliances.

The leaders of the Congress(I), too, are busy fighting each other. One faction is led by the party president, Ghulam Rasool Kar, and the other is led by Ifthikkar. Both sides do not hesitate to abuse each other publicly.

The widespread feeling throughout Kashmir—that elections were rigged by the ruling coalition in collaboration with the bureaucracy—has added considerably to the strong sense of discontent in the Opposition. Lone, for example, has two election petitions pending—one from the earlier 1983 elections. In all, six election petitions are pending in the High Court disputing the results of the last elections. All are in the preliminary stage even though they are supposed to be decided—as far as possible—within six months. The MUF, which put up 40 candidates but won only four seats, has not bothered to file petitions as it believes it will be a pointless exercise.

Over the last two years the 'Kashmir situation' has spun frighteningly out of control. This year there were sporadic bouts of violence of the kind that have never been seen before: a series of bomb blasts in the heart of Srinagar and riots which have broken out with alarming frequency

And there is no doubt that many of the Opposition's frustrations are shared, to some extent, by the people of the state. Though Farooq is still the only leader of any stature in the state, his government is seen as a non-performing one. On key economic issues it has not been able to make the slightest dent.



Riot police out on the streets: sporadic violence

Farooq, by all indications, understands the problems but is still searching for a formula to re-establish his credentials with the people. But there are formidable stumbling blocks. The entrenched bureaucracy is by far the biggest hindrance. Recently, Farooq attempted to make changes by shifting 27 senior bureaucrats. But even in this move he, apparently, faced heavy pressure and was forced to leave most of the senior secretaries in place. Besides that, Farooq also has to deal with the old problem of the unending rivalry between Indian Administrative Service officers and their counterparts in the Kashmir Administrative Service.

The chief minister's problems are compounded by the fact that the Centre has never been certain about its Kashmir policy. In the last few years they have made major errors and have dithered in an effort to retrieve the situation. They deposed Farooq and brought in his brother-in-law Gul Shah. But before long they realised that they had made a mistake and placed the state under President's Rule which was followed by a spell of Governor's Rule. In the long run, they realised, that there was no real alternative to Farooq and, rather ungraciously, mended their fences with him. One reason for the confusion is that the Congress(I) has had a series of advisers handling Kashmir. Amongst others, there have been M.L. Fotedar, Ghulam Nabi Azad and even Najma Heptullah.

But now the crunch has come and the confusion has to end. So far the police have been working round the clock to nab the terrorists. They have requested CRPF backing to support their efforts and are also asking for modern equipment. In addition, they are questioning large numbers of youngsters in the effort to round up the terrorists. Inevitably, the police moves have provoked resentment and protests amongst the Opposition parties.

However, the answer does not lie in police action alone. And the central government and Farooq are going to have to look smart to ensure that Kashmir does not go up in flames.

Paran Balakrishnan/*Srinagar*

A state of terror

After a brief lull, the dreaded NSCN has unleashed a fresh wave of violence in the border areas of Manipur

They come. They strike at will. And they vanish. In the picturesque Ukhrul district of Manipur bordering Burma, the spectre of death haunts everyone, all the time. During Diwali this year, the nondescript Ukhrul town was dressed up for the occasion and residents had turned out on the streets in all their finery, but beneath the veneer of mirth and merriment lurked a hidden fear: will the guerrillas of the dreaded National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) strike again?

Diwali passed off peacefully but the people were not reassured. For, the insurgents had unleashed a fresh wave of violence in the last few months, gunning down innocents, ambushing security patrols and escaping with arms and ammunition.

Manipur has lived with insurgency since its birth. A lot of hopes were raised when the much touted Shillong Accord was signed in November 1975 between a section of the Naga insurgents and the Government of India. But peace proved elusive as leaders like Muivah and Isac Swu openly defied the accord, fled to Burma, formed the NSCN and began their long and violent search for a sovereign land of the Nagas.

When Rishang Keishing came to power in Manipur, it was believed that he was appointed chief minister with the sole objective of taming the NSCN as he belonged to the same tribe as a majority of the underground activists: the Thangkul Nagas. He failed and had to go.

The government then found an easy way out. It decided to crush the NSCN with the help of the army and the paramilitary forces. Force was met with force and every rebel strike was followed by additional deployment of security personnel. But the insurgents, more at home in the hilly tracts and dense jungles, virtually made the armymen look like a bunch of fresh recruits. Frustrated, the local people allege, the security forces turned their wrath on the innocent people. Today, more than a rebel strike, it is the prospect of an army reprisal that instil fear in the minds of the masses.

On 7 July this year, an army major and a doctor who had come down to Ukhrul from Dimapur on recruitment work were shot dead by suspected NSCN activists in broad daylight at Viewland Bazar—the heart of Ukhrul town. The two were travelling in an army Jonga with full security protection when the insurgents struck. After the daring shootout, curfew was imposed and people indiscriminately rounded up for interrogation, a ritual that has alienated the security forces from the masses. "To the army, every Thangkul is an NSCN activist," complains Sompem Lungleng, a local student leader, bitterly. In insurgency-ridden Ukhrul district, there are a large number of Thangkul Nagas, and the fact that a majority of the NSCN cadre is also from the same clan, makes their activities somewhat suspicious in the eyes of the security forces. (One of the reasons for Rishang Keishing's sudden exit from the chief ministership of Manipur was his alleged "links" with the underground. Keishing, of course, scoffs at the charge by recounting how he almost died in an NSCN ambush in 1984.)

Lungleng was only one of the victims of the security forces' highhandedness. On 9 July, two days after the shootout at Viewland Bazar, a jawan from the Assam Rifles came to Lungleng's house. Recalled the student leader, "It was 3 pm. The jawan said an officer wanted to see me. I was taken to the nearby Assam Rifles post, given a cup of tea, blindfolded and packed off in a car. I believe I was taken to Somsai—the 20 Assam Rifles base. There I was stretched out on a makeshift bed and interrogated. They charged me with killing Major R.P. Singh and asked me to confess my links with the underground. ..When they did not get the response they wanted, they subjected me to third degree methods. Eventually they released me when they knew they will not get the answers they wanted..."

The security forces' desperation is understandable. The sudden spate of killings, particularly in the Ukhrul

Mike Tharmi outside his house: shot down by NSCN extremists?



Securitymen on patrol: losing the people's faith



district, has totally unnerved the administration. And the daring with which the insurgents are striking have only heightened tension. On 31 October, for example, two youths entered the house of Mike Tharmi, the 36-year-old president of the district Congress, on the pretext of collecting donation and fired at him in front of his wife. And, before Tharmi's family could react, the assailants escaped.

On the same day, the killers struck again. This time they gunned down the manager of a local hotel on the doorsteps of his house. The bloodbath continued and on 2 November, another hotel manager, Yushi Varah, was found dead on the road under mysterious circumstances. The villages adjoining Ukhrul town too have witnessed a series of gory killings in the last one month. And, in almost all the cases, the security forces have failed to nab the assailants.

But the administration is more than sure regarding the identity of the killers: the diehard guerrillas of the NSCN. Intelligence reports had indicated that a number of NSCN activists had entered the border areas of Manipur from their hideouts in the dense jungles of Burma. Their objective: collect money and recruit youngsters. After a long break, NSCN pamphlets were being cladestinely distributed among the people. Said Ajai Naram Jha, deputy commissioner of Ukhrul. "The pamphlets are usually scattered on the roads at night. No one gets to see who scatters them." But Jha admits that so far the administration has very little hard evidence to link the NSCN with the recent killings. However, argues Jha, the tone and content of the pamphlets makes it clear that the NSCN is here with a mission to kill and incite the people against the state.

An NSCN activist who came overground





The NSCN itself is fighting a battle for survival and the wanton killings are only an indication of desperation. Muivah, the charismatic supremo of the NSCN, seems to be losing control of the guerrilla outfit as the Thangkuls are waging a bitter war with the other tribes in the NSCN ranks. Moreover, the Burmese army, which has so far played the role of a hospitable host, has suddenly turned hostile. Vareyo Thangkul, an NSCN activist who recently surrendered before the authorities in Manipur, told the police that in the first week of November, the Burmese army had surrounded the NSCN headquarters in Upper Burma and destroyed it in three days.

NSCN guerrillas: a committed lot



But despite definite intelligence reports suggesting that the NSCN is behind the recent killings in the border areas, there is very little that the government or the security forces can do. The reason, as Manipur home minister Tompok Singh so crisply put it, is the "lack of actionable information".

The security forces raided two suspected NSCN camps—one in Shiroy, about 8 km from Ukhrul town, and the other in Poi Huisu, north-east of Ukhrul—in September but the rebels got wind of the impending swoop and fled. Tompok Singh, a hardliner on the NSCN problem, feels that the forces are handicapped because of non-cooperation from the local people. "If there was resistance from the local people they (the NSCN) could not kill and get away," he said.

But as Shangreiso Shimray, convener of the Thangkul Peace Initiative Body, so eloquently put it, "No one is above suspicion in the eyes of the security forces. To them, every Thangkul is an NSCN activist...Every time there is a killing, we live in fear because we know that the security forces will come knock-

NOW

Horlicks WITH EXTRA CALCIUM





"That means extra health for everyone."

Horlicks is now enriched with extra Calcium—vital for strong teeth and healthy bones in growing children, and for the good health of the entire family. It also helps provide the additional Calcium essential for expectant and breast-feeding mothers.

Horlicks is full of natural nutrients—protein, vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates—that provide energy and vitality. And now, extra Calcium means extra health.

The Great Nourisher



HTA 6038

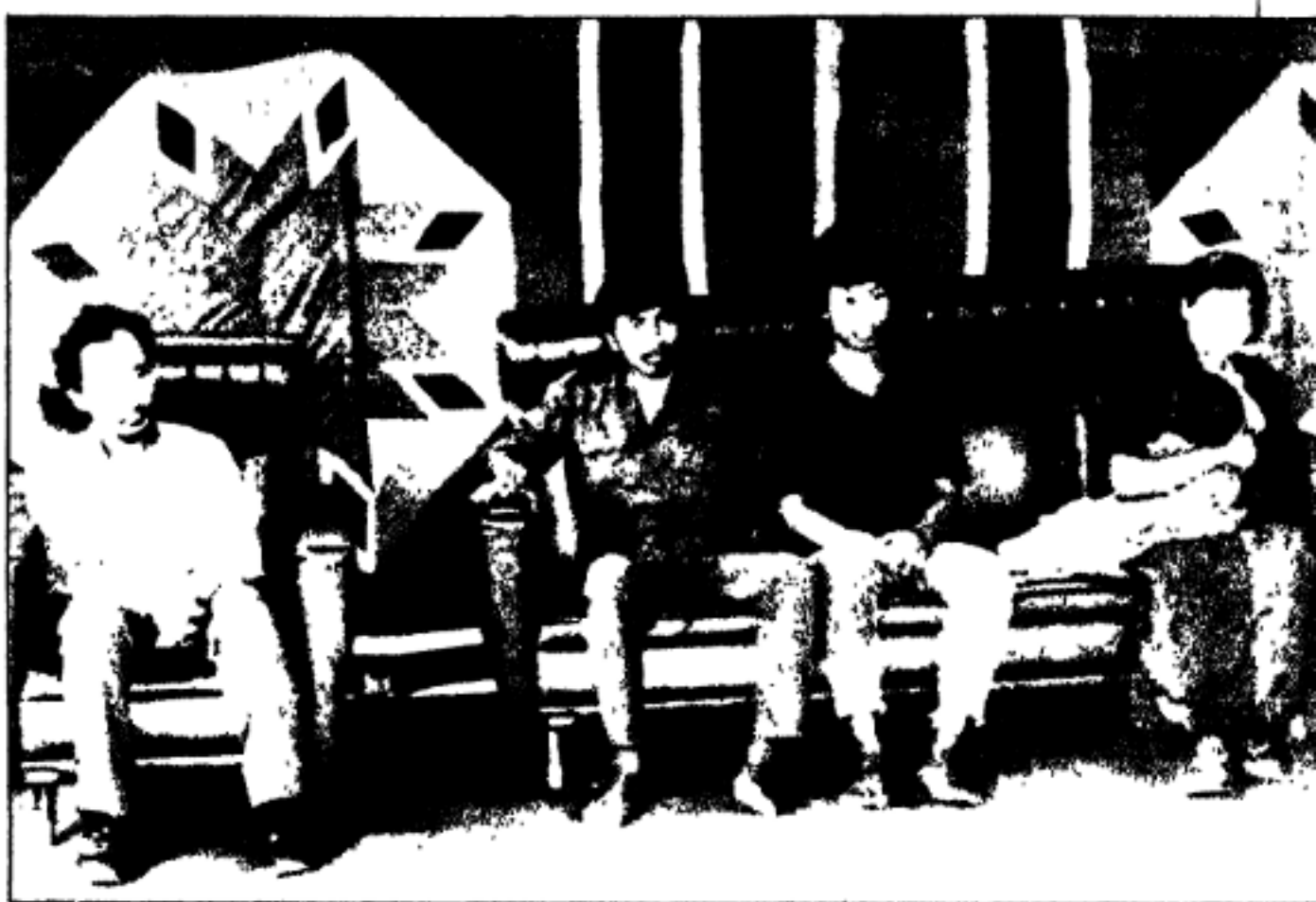
ing at our doors and harass us."

The peace initiative body was formed on 16 August this year, after prominent members of the Thangkul community in Ukhrul were tortured by the security forces following the killing of two army officers in July. "We are doubtful if the insurgency problem can be solved by deploying security forces. We want peace and we feel that the government should open a dialogue with the NSCN," said Shimray.

The Ukhrul deputy commissioner perhaps understands the problem best. According to him "there is very strong kinship between the NSCN activists and the local Thangkuls. Rightly or wrongly, they feel that the NSCN members are their brothers and sisters. The only way to wean them away from the rebel influence is through trust. People will inform the security forces or the authorities of underground activists only if they have complete faith in the authorities. To that end, building this faith should be the major thrust of our counter-insurgency operations."

But it is this "mutual trust" between the locals and the law enforcing agencies that is proving to be elusive. What the Assam Rifles personnel did in Oinam village in the Senapati district of Manipur last July in the name of counter-insurgency operations is still fresh in the minds of the people.

In July 1987, the Assam Rifles camp at Oinam village was attacked by suspected NSCN guerrillas. In the sudden assault nine Assam Rifles jawans were killed and three others were seriously injured. The raiders also walked off with a large quantity of arms and ammunition. Operation Bluebird was ostensibly launched to recover the arms



A group of NSCN activists who surrendered: division in the ranks?

but what followed was a reign of terror. The report prepared by the Coordination Committee severely indicts the Assam Rifles: "In the course of a few weeks the Assam Rifles shot dead 15 people after subjecting them to inhuman torture. All villagers including pregnant women, the sick and paralysed, were made to stand in the playgrounds and expose themselves to torrential rain and scorching heat...Churches were used as concentration camps..."

The incident took place more than a year back. But memories have not faded. Nor have the security forces changed their mode of operation. Recalls former chief minister Rishang Keishing: "When Major R.P. Singh was killed by the extremists in July this year, the Assam Rifles picked up a lot of people for interrogation. Among them was a Congress(I) activist from Ukhrul. He was taken inside a jungle and next morning his dead body was discovered. Many others who were detained for interrogation are still missing."

Such excesses coupled with a growing feeling among the masses that the government, after all, is not "serious" about tackling the insurgency problem in Manipur has complicated the NSCN tangle further. Half-hearted measures taken after every strike just won't do. As Keishing asks pointedly: "Why doesn't the government ban the NSCN just as it banned a number of underground organisations like the PLA and the PREPAK." Others, of course, are not as forthright but they have an interesting argument: the Centre is opposed to any ban on the NSCN as it helped the Congress(I) to come to power in Nagaland. Perhaps, but the time has now come to sink all differences, put heads together and evolve a strategy to bring about lasting peace in the region.

Patralekha Chatterjee/*Imphal*

Despite intelligence reports suggesting that the NSCN is behind the recent killings in the border areas of Manipur, there is very little that the government or the security forces can do. The reason according to Manipur's home minister Tompok Singh is the "lack of information" about the activities of the extremists

Manipur home minister Tompok Singh: advocating a hard line



Death in the family

How did Devi Lal's granddaughter-in-law, Supriya Singh, die?

The Teja Khera farmhouse, Sirsa, Haryana. The evening of 11 November. The silence is shattered by the sound of gunshots and Supriya Singh, granddaughter-in-law of Haryana chief minister Devi Lal, lies dead. Sixteen hours later, the body of the pregnant 17-year-old, riddled by three bullets, is cremated.

Accidental death, said Devi Lal and his family. Murder, charged others, prominent among them Congress-women in Parliament.

The circumstances surrounding the death of Supriya - the daughter-in-law of Om Prakash Chauthala, Devi Lal's eldest son- were suspicious, to say the least. The morning of that fateful day, Supriya and other members of the family had attended the wedding of a niece of Karam Veer Singh, Devi Lal's special duty officer, at Dabvali. The visit over, Supriya and her husband Abhay Singh went to Chauthala to attend the engagement of their cousin Jitender Singh, before returning to the Teja Khera farmhouse in the evening. Soon after, according to family members, Abhay left the farmhouse. It was in his absence that the death occurred.

Devi Lal's version of events was trotted out the next day (12 November) by the Haryana Public Relations Department. The statement said: "Supriya was taking out some clothes from a briefcase when a pistol went off suddenly and Supriya died instantly." According to the press release, Abhay Singh was at the Asha Khera Tourist Resort, along with Devi Lal, at the time of Supriya's death, but rushed to Teja Khera on hearing of the incident. So did Devi Lal's wife, Harkhi Devi, who was staying at the family's home in Chauthala. What the statement did not explain was why Supriya should have been carrying a weapon in her briefcase and, more importantly, why she was handling the gun. Nor did it explain how three bullets had entered her body. A gun accidentally misfiring once is possible. But three accidental misfires?

The statement of Ajay Singh (Abhay Singh's brother), recorded by the police after the death does not explain this, either. It merely relates how Ajay, along with a group of people, among them Ram Kumar Bishnoya of Chauthala village, Karam Singh Nain, the deputy excise and taxation commissioner, Sonepat, Prahlad Singh, the *tehsildar* of Rohtak, was sitting in the drawing-room of the guest house when the sound of gunshots rang out. They rushed out, to be met by the servant Durga at the door, who told them: *"Biloo ki patni ko goli lag gayee."* (Biloo's wife has been shot.) Ajay says he went into the room and saw his sister-in-law lying dead on the ground, with a .32 bore pistol beside her, with clothes scattered all over the room.

Ajay Singh's testimony makes the accident theory appear less than credible. If the gun that went off accidentally had been inside the briefcase, how was it lying on the floor beside Supriya? Also, why were there clothes flung all over the room?

The post-mortem conducted on the morning of 12 November at the Chauthala Civil Hospital also seems to suggest foul play. The report says that Supriya suffered three bullet injuries and that the death was "due to haemorrhage shock as a result of the injuries". The report goes on to state that all the injuries were ante-mortem.

According to Shiv Kumar Bhola, a criminal lawyer of Hissar, the blackening around the injured areas proves that the shots were fired from close range. Forensic experts hold that the nature of her injuries (on the left side and nape of the neck) do not bear out the accidental death theory. The angle at which the shots entered the body makes it impossible for Supriya to have shot herself in the manner suggested by her family.

Devi Lal: In the eye of the storm



Pawan Kumar

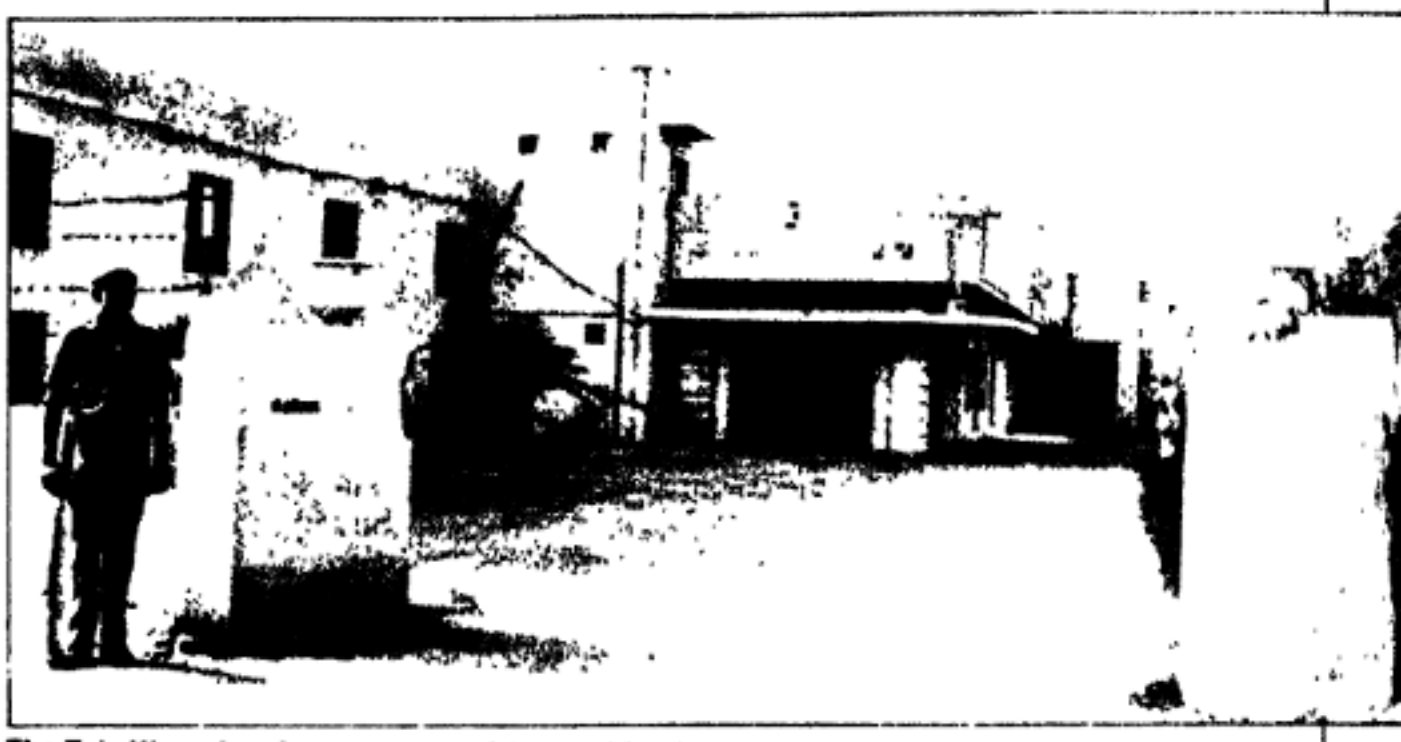
The Lals' version is also contradicted by an eye-witness, (a resident of Chauthala village). According to him, he entered the room on hearing the shots and saw Supriya sitting with her back against the wall and her legs stretched out. Blood was oozing from her neck. The steel almirah in the room was open and clothes scattered all over. This completely blows apart the accident theory.

Ram Chander Matoria, Supriya's father and a rich transporter of Rawatsar, Rajasthan, has a different story to relate. He says that his daughter was asked by her husband, that evening, to pack his briefcase as he wished to go hunting. She was taking out his clothes from the almirah to do this when a gun went off at her touch and killed her. The tearful father does not voice any suspicions that his daughter was done in by her in-laws. Some say that Devi Lal has bought his compliance by getting Abhay engaged to his younger daughter, 15-year-old Kanta, a mere five days after Supriya's unfortunate death.

But not everyone was willing to buy facile explanations. For Devi Lal's political opponents this was manna from heaven and their questions flowed thick and fast. Why was the pistol that caused Supriya's death not seized? Why was the weapon not examined for fingerprints? Why wasn't it sent to ballistic experts to ascertain whether the shots that killed Supriya were fired from it? Where are the shells of the bullets which killed her? Why was the room where the incident occurred not sealed off immediately afterwards, to facilitate investigations? Why wasn't the statement of the policeman on duty at the Teja Khera farmhouse recorded by the police?

It is only to the last question that the police have an answer. The SSP of Sirsa, Kartar Singh Tomer says that this was considered unnecessary as this was not a case of murder, but merely an accident. How the police had arrived at this conclusion, he was not willing to say. The police have, furthermore, only registered a case under Section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which means that the investigations will be restricted to the *cause* of Supriya's death. The police will not, say legal experts, be bound to investigate *who* killed her.

In Sirsa, the terror of the Lals prevails. Nobody is willing to go on record about the incident. But rumours there are aplenty. Among them, those suggesting that Supriya and Abhay did not have the most cordial of relationships. That Abhay was a "colourful young man"



The Teja Khera farmhouse: scene of the 'accident'

and that Supriya often took offence at his "behaviour". Some said that the couple had quarrelled at the wedding they attended that day. Family sources, however, deny these rumours strenuously.

The death caused waves further than Chauthala. It was a subject of heated discussion in Parliament, too, with Congress(I) women MPs walking into the well of the House demanding a CBI probe into the 'murder'. The Opposition vociferously opposed the demand on the ground that this was a "state subject". Proceedings were livened up by the intrepid Mamata Banerjee of the ruling party who placed a bangle near Inderjit Gupta's (CPI) table, suggesting that he was a coward. Telugu Desam members retaliated by leaving a *chappal* near Banerjee's table, to Speaker Balram Jakhar's horror.

The Rajya Sabha also witnessed uproarious scenes, with enterprising Congress MPs managing to wangle the right to raise the issue through a special

Questions flowed thick and fast. Why was the pistol that caused Supriya's death not seized? Why was the weapon not examined for fingerprints? Why wasn't it sent to ballistic experts to ascertain whether the shots that killed her were fired from it? Why was the site of the accident not sealed off immediately afterwards?

mention. Sudha Joshi demanded a parliamentary probe into the death as there were several unexplained factors in the accident theory. Mahendra Singh Lather of the Lok Dal (and a relative of Devi Lal's) took up cudgels for the beleaguered chief minister. This was no dowry death, he maintained. There was no dowry system in Haryana and Devi Lal, who earns nearly Rs 15 lakhs from his farms, does not need to accept dowry. Supriya's was a happy marriage, he told the members, the couple having returned from a holiday (to Badrinath) only the day before the unfortunate event. Defences such as these, notwithstanding, Congresswomen demonstrated in front of the home minister, Buta Singh's house, demanding that the central government investigate the death.

Some saw this as political vendetta against Devi Lal. And with some justification. Ruling party MPs were not totally innocent of trying to derive political mileage from the incident. But their demands, even if motivated, did have some substance to them. And so, when the issue was raised in Parliament the second day, the Opposition was not quite so combative. Gita Mukherjee of the CPI was even heard to remark that she supported the demand (of a parliamentary probe) as the matter involved a woman.

But will investigations yield anything? The eye-witnesses are not willing to speak, the body has been cremated, the weapon that caused the death remains in the custody of the Lals, the scene of the incident had not been sealed off and the clues, if any, have almost certainly disappeared. All the trails are very, very cold. Even if the Centre were to put its foot in and order a probe, the truth may yet remain elusive.

Anil Tyagi / *Chauthala*



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

Let the armed forces be

Rajiv Gandhi must be a desperate man. Within a span of five days, he has twice dragged the armed forces into his duel with the Opposition. First, he chided the Opposition—and dutifully Doordarshan highlighted the statement—for not responding to his praise of the armed forces over the action in the Maldives. Later, during his pre-election campaign in Tamil Nadu, he went even further and accused it of "denigrating the armed forces".

The Prime Minister is not known for discretion in his remarks. But his effort to score a point by injecting politics into a field which has been kept free of it is crude and clumsy. What he wants to prove is that he and his party, the Congress(I), are the best friends of the armed forces, and, unlike the Opposition, they appreciate what the forces do.

I am only trying to point out that Rajiv Gandhi, with an eye on the next elections, need not become so desperate as to create bad blood between the armed forces and the Opposition, which incidentally may well be in power in a year's time



Indian soldiers in Sri Lanka: splendid job

While gloating over the operation, Rajiv Gandhi has repeatedly said that there was no casualty on the Indian side. What he should have also told the nation is that there was no armed resistance, not even a skirmish. Since the armed forces know that the entire operation turned out to be only an exercise in rapid deployment, and will accept credit for proving their capability to act quickly and effectively, they are likely to be embarrassed by such lavish praise.

In India itself, the armed forces have been conducting far more difficult operations, especially in the north-eastern states. Did the government praise the army every time they cleared a village of insurgents or captured some of them? I am not minimising the job the armed forces did in the Maldives; I am only trying to point out to Rajiv Gandhi and his advisers that with their eyes fixed on the coming elections, they need not become so desperate as to create bad blood between the armed forces and the Opposition, which incidentally may well be in power in a year's time.

The Opposition has never been niggardly in paying tribute to the defence services. After the 1965 war against Pakistan, it responded to the *Jai Jawan, jai kisan* slogan of Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Prime Minister. The Bangladesh operation in 1971 called for kudos, and Atal Behari Vajpayee became so emotional that he praised Mrs Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, and likened her to Goddess Durga.

The armed forces in India have a long tradition of being apolitical. They have strengthened the democratic system but have never sat in judgment over it, leaving that to the people. This is what people's rule means.

Whether on the nation's borders or inside the country, Indian soldiers are fulfilling their duty. Indeed they have been doing more than that: combating communal riots, drought, floods and other extraordinary situations. It would be better if they were not employed for such purposes because the other institutions which are meant for such duties become complacent, knowing that there is someone to cover their lapses. And some in the army often tend to compare their performance with their civilian counterparts. This is an unhealthy trend.

It is clear from Rajiv Gandhi's attitude that he expects the people to give him much credit for the Maldives action. The official media have been trying to present him as a quick-thinking Prime Minister and highlighting his unwarranted criticism of the opposition. Their aim is to prove that if any of the Opposition leaders had been in the Prime Minister's chair, he would have been found wanting.

True, the Opposition has been critical of the action in Sri Lanka. But pointing out the difficulties faced by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) is not to show the weakness of the Indian army. The nation appreciates the onerous task that they have been burdened with. The criticism is of the Rajiv Gandhi government, which has embroiled the army in a situation which called for a political and not a military solution.

The traditions and training of the defence services are such that they are kept away from politics. This has paid dividends to the country because even when many countries in the region have come under military rule, our soldiers have remained committed to their role of defending the nation, and have never sought any other role. Never has there been any talk or demand from the army for a role in the country's administration.

The politicians—both in government and in the Opposition—have all this while respected the convention of keeping the armed forces out of politics, defining their task as that of safeguarding India's frontiers and giving them all help in that respect. Even though the country has always felt the crunch of limited resources, the budget for defence has seldom been pruned. There are some who think that the defence budget is too big for a poor country like India. Besides, there has been a persistent demand for a parliamentary probe into the way the money is spent. Despite all this, defence has always been given topmost priority.

Trying to win a point is probably what politics is all about. That is the reason why politicians do not stop at anything—violating norms, diluting institutions and weakening traditions. Putting down an opponent in the eyes of the people is all that matters. Lacking sensitivity for institutions and not realising the possible repercussions his remarks may have, Rajiv Gandhi has tried to expose the army to raw politics. This can harm both—the Prime Minister as well as the armed forces. ■



We'll deliver. Wherever on earth. SKYPAK The worldwide couriers.
Skypak House, Off M. Vassanji Road, Marol Naka, Andheri (E), Bombay 400 059.

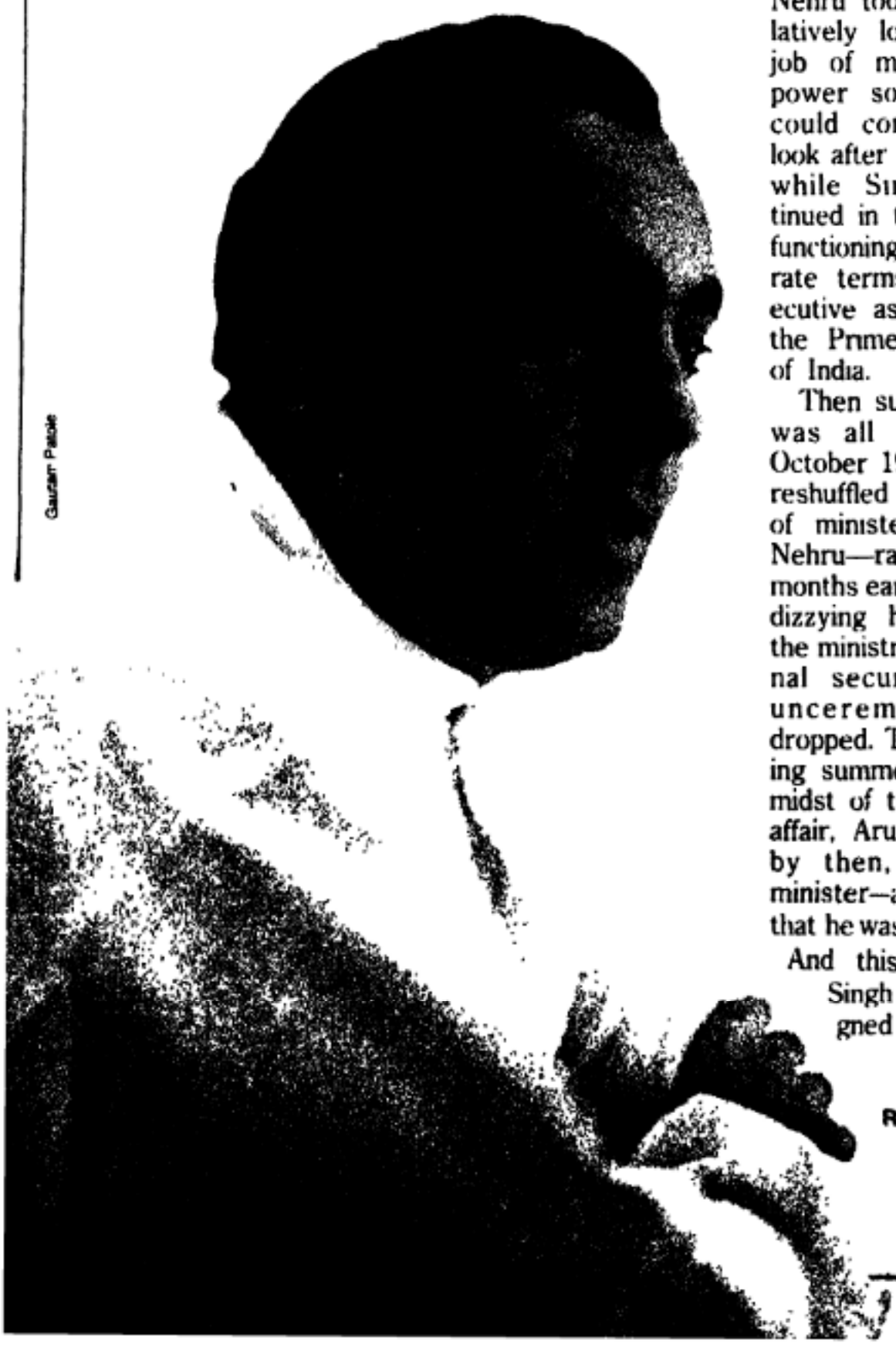


The fall of the two Aruns

Why did Arun Nehru and Arun Singh fall out with Rajiv? A detailed reconstruction of what really happened

It is one of the enduring mysteries of modern Indian politics. When Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister on 31 October, 1984, he raised two close friends to positions of immense influence and power. Arun Nehru, his jowly cousin, took his place as general secretary of the Congress(I) and set about organising the forthcoming general election. Arun Singh, his taciturn Doon School and Cambridge buddy, became his parliamentary secretary, moved into the Prime Minister's office (PMO) and all but ran the government on his behalf.

After the Congress(I)'s landslide victory in the December 1984 election, Rajiv formalised this arrangement. Arun Nehru took the relatively low profile job of minister of power so that he could continue to look after the party, while Singh continued in the PMO, functioning, in corporate terms, as executive assistant to the Prime Minister of India.



Gautam Patole

Rajiv Gandhi

Then suddenly, it was all over. In October 1986, Rajiv reshuffled his council of ministers. Arun Nehru—raised some months earlier to the dizzying heights of the ministry of internal security—was unceremoniously dropped. The following summer, in the midst of the Bofors affair, Arun Singh—by then, defence minister—announced that he was resigning. And this summer, Singh even resigned his seat in the Rajya Sabha and gave up on Indian politics for good.

What had gone wrong? Even after he was sacked, Nehru maintained a hurt silence. Rajiv, of course, took the line that it was his prerogative to drop whoever he liked. Arun Singh has always refused to talk to the press. After he resigned, he turned down innumerable requests for interviews and kept his peace. Rajiv, too, would only let on that he felt 'betrayed' by Singh; no other details were forthcoming.

Then, last month, the Prime Minister broke his silence in his SUNDAY interview. About Nehru he said that he had heard the stories that he was conspiring against him but while he didn't believe them then, now he was not so sure. About Singh, he said, that he regarded the reasons his friend offered for his resignation as unconvincing, that "there was something that was not coming out".

Off the record, he was more forthcoming. So was Nehru, who, only six months ago, had first touched on the delicate subject of his resignation in a lengthy interview to SUNDAY. Only Singh remained silent and unreachable. Nevertheless, by talking to those who knew him well and others who had a ringside view of the events of 1985-86, SUNDAY was able to reconstruct the fall of the two Aruns.

Even in those heady days of 1985, those who saw Arun Singh and Arun Nehru as sharing the same kind of relationship with Rajiv Gandhi were seriously mistaken. Arun Nehru was not a childhood friend of the Prime Minister's. A distant cousin, his earliest links had been with Sanjay and he owed his first taste of power to Indira Gandhi, not her son. From 1981 onwards, he functioned as one of her advisers, helping orchestrate such moves as the toppling of Farooq Abdullah and supervising UP politics. He worked closely with Rajiv but was never his protégé.

Arun Singh, on the other hand, was in politics simply to help Rajiv. The Singhs and the Gandhis had been close friends for many years, taking annual holidays together and so, when Mrs Gandhi asked her son to succeed his brother as heir-apparent, Rajiv insisted that Singh shift to Delhi to help him. Initially, Singh was reluctant to give up his job with Reckitt and Coleman in Calcutta and enter politics. Moreover, he also had doubts about Mrs Gandhi's style -- he had been a vocal critic of the Emergency. Finally, however, the obligation to help an old friend coupled with the opportunity to create a new, technocratic India proved irresistible. Singh came to Delhi, was elected to the Rajya Sabha and began to operate out of Rajiv's office at 2A Motilal Nehru Marg.

After the assassination, Nehru moved quickly to secure the succession by bulldozing Giani Zail Singh into swearing Rajiv in and once he became Prime Minister, it was Nehru he turned to for political advice. In a sense, Rajiv was merely preserving the role his mother had created for his cousin. Nehru's grasp of *realpolitik*, his shrewdly manipulative nature and his ability as a fund-collector were all qualities that Rajiv lacked. However, for the real work of recasting the government in his own image, for creating the new India of the 21st century, it was his friend Singh he turned to.

Throughout 1985, Nehru looked after party affairs. He was consulted, too, on all major decisions but -- it soon became clear -- his advice was not always followed. An instance is the Punjab accord. If you believe Rajiv's friends, then Nehru was never for the accord, which he regarded as a sign of weakness. According to Nehru, however, he supported an accord but not this version which he thought was doomed to failure because it ignored Prakash Singh Badal. Rajiv disregarded his reservations, preferred Arjun Singh's advice that the accord was certain to stick and went ahead anyway.

By the time the Prime Minister was ready to sign the Assam accord, he had decided to exclude the 'negative' Nehru from the negotiating process entirely. The first Nehru learnt of the accord was when he got a call from the Prime Minister's house early one morning, asking him to drop in for a cup of coffee with Rajiv to celebrate the accord which had been finalised the previous night. Nehru's support of Hiteswar Saikia was totally ignored.

Arun Singh had few policy differences with Rajiv. He agreed with the government's direction and was filled with hope. The problem here was one of style. As Rajiv's parliamentary secretary, he became his minder, a kind of P.C. Alexander and R.K. Dhawan rolled into one. This meant that he controlled all access to the Prime Minister and fixed his appointments. Even Rajiv's best friends will concede that he is a bad manager of his own time and so the task of handling his appointments soon became fairly traumatic.

One instance was a meeting with former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger. After Kissinger asked if he could pay a courtesy call on the Prime Minister, Singh gave him 45 minutes with Rajiv. As it turned out, Rajiv enjoyed the meeting so much that he kept talking for two hours, throwing all his other appointments out of gear. Singh was livid. Rajiv was unrepentant. Why should he, as Prime Minister of India, not spend time talking to somebody he found interesting? Nonsense, said Singh, ever the proper executive, a schedule is a schedule. Even the US President does not arbitrarily prolong meetings.

Rajiv clearly began to tire of having to run his life according to Singh's rules. Says a friend of both: "The turning point was the US trip in 1985. Till then, Rajiv had been sceptical of the euphoria in India. But once he saw that even the West perceived him as being a terrific Prime Minister, he began to wonder why he needed to be guided by the Aruns."

Rajiv's first move was to shift Arun Singh out of the PMO. He says now -- on the record -- that he thought it was wrong to have key advisers. But that, in any case, this was a promotion because though technically, Singh's new designation was minister for defence research and organisation, he was, effectively, the defence minister of India. He concedes, however, that Singh didn't see it that way. He sensed that moving him out of the PMO was an attempt to diminish his authority and Rajiv tried to make him feel that he was still part of the inner circle by giving a telephone that was connected through the PMO's switchboard.

Arun Singh (left) and Arun Nehru



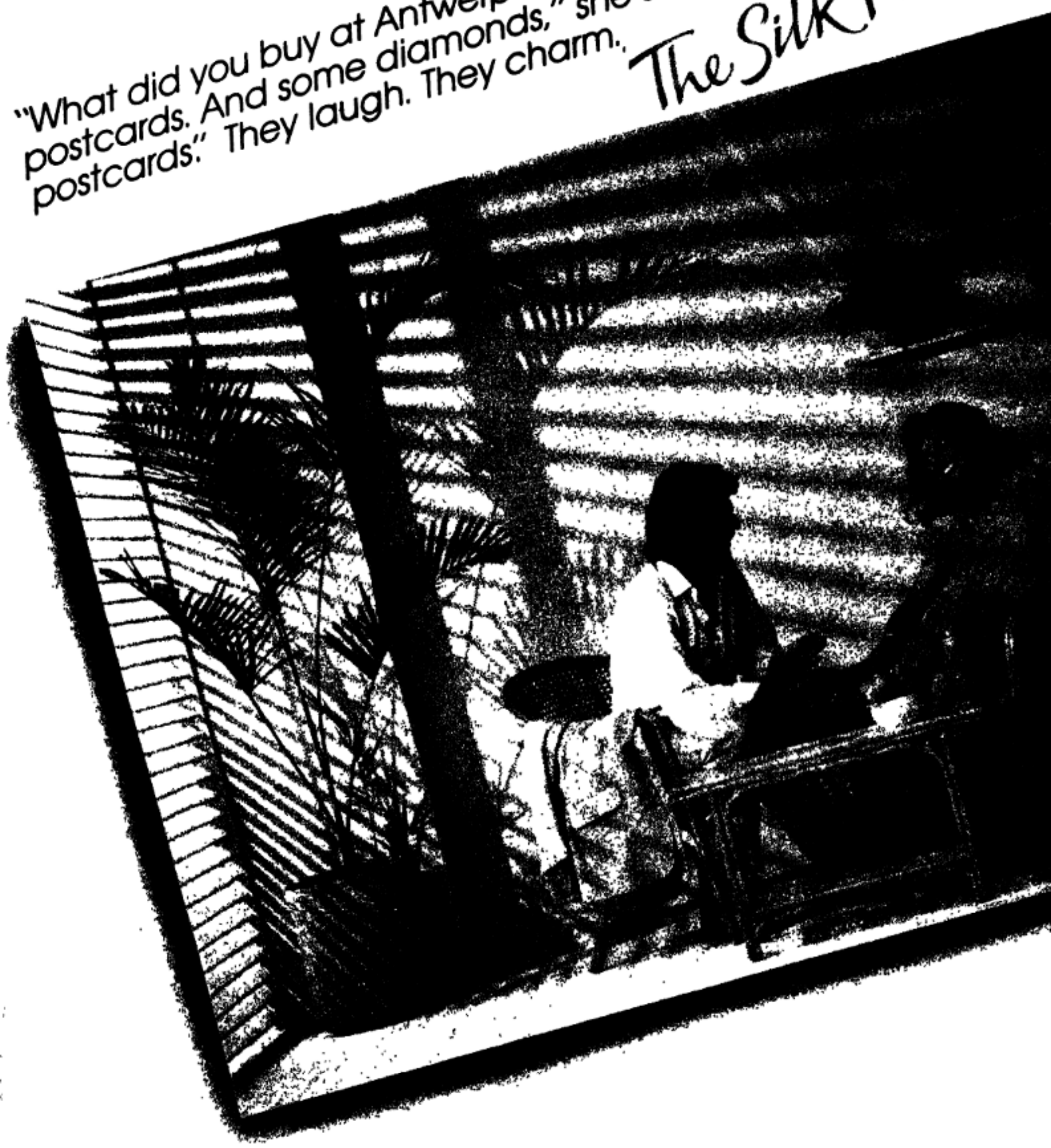


Rajesh Kumar

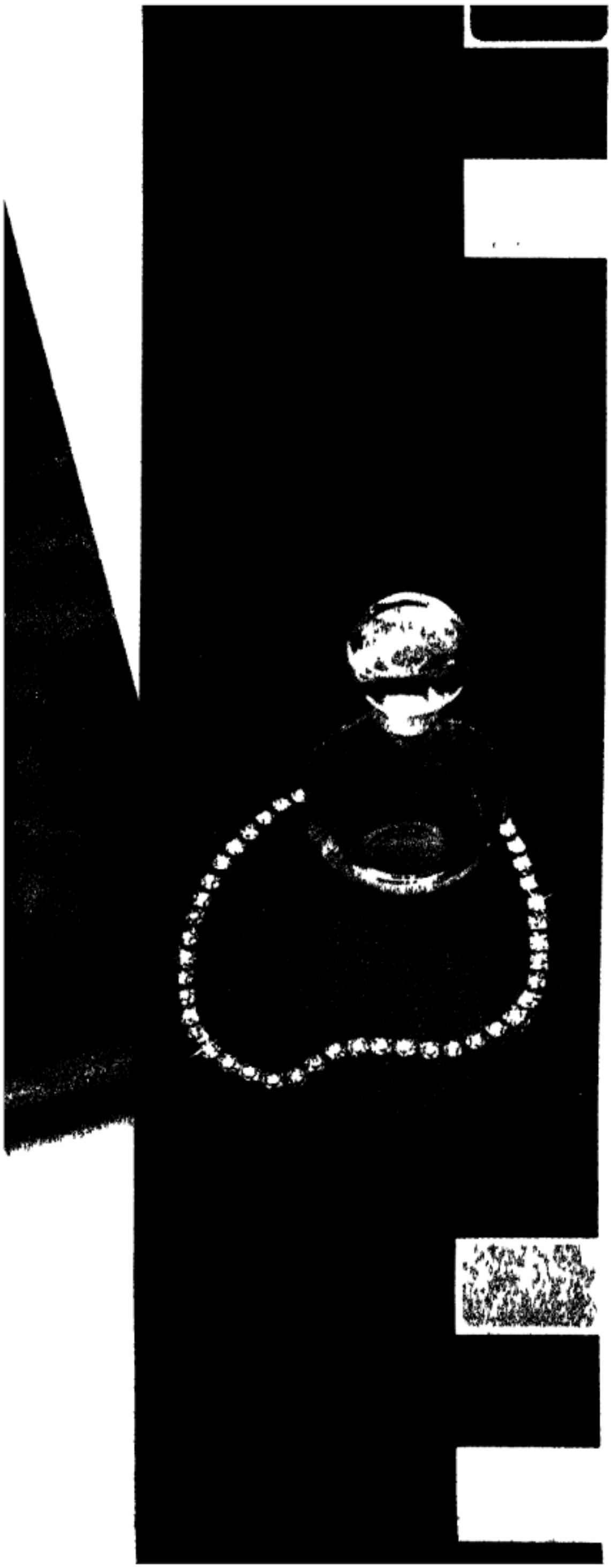
After the assassination, Nehru moved quickly to secure the succession by bulldozing Zail Singh into swearing Rajiv in. Once he became Prime Minister, it was Nehru he looked to for political advice. But for the real work of recasting the government in his own image, it was his friend Arun Singh that he turned to

"What did you buy at Antwerp?" he asked. "Picture postcards. And some diamonds," she said. "Here's to the postcards." They laugh. They charm.

The Silk People



(LINTAS (CAL)/BPLB/43 A/2739



Elegant Exclusive. Enchanting
The Silk People

And the wall finish to
complement their style.

Luxol Silk.

The softest sheen In shades
of sophistication With a feel
richer than ever before.

Luxol Silk.

For walls that are Silk to the
touch.

Drape your walls with Luxol Silk
— the richest emulsion in the world.



Luxol Silk

from **BERGER PAINTS**



Whatever Nehru's differences with Rajiv over policy, the Prime Minister still thought highly of his cousin's ability. In late 1985, he made Nehru minister for internal security with responsibilities that were so vast that comparisons with Beria (Stalin's henchman) became inevitable. And, while he was glad to be rid of Singh's control at the PMO, Rajiv gave his friend a totally free hand at the defence ministry--"I rarely interfered," he says now.

Both the Aruns enjoyed their new ministerial responsibilities: perhaps they enjoyed them too much. Arun Nehru certainly set himself on a collision course with Rajiv. The differences were minor but they began to add up.

In early 1986, he forwarded several reports from the Intelligence Bureau (IB) to the Prime Minister.

Many of the reports focused on the bureaucracy's disillusionment with Rajiv. "The bureaucrats feel that he has failed the examination of governance," said one. Another noted: "IAS officers feel that the Prime Minister's lips get tired even before he has read half a page of a report." Then there were reports on his personal life. One went so far as to suggest that too many 'undesirable' foreigners were visiting Race Course Road.

Rajiv didn't find any of this amusing. He told Nehru that the IB was lying, and perhaps it was lying at his behest.

Then, there was the matter of the Pope's visit. Sonia Gandhi wished, quite naturally, to receive the Holy Father at the airport. Nobody found this at all objectionable till it dawned on them that she would have to kneel on the tarmac and kiss his ring. So, Arun Nehru advised against it. The domestic political consequences of such an action, he argued, were totally unacceptable. Arun Singh agreed. So finally, did Rajiv. But Nehru's friends feel that this turned Sonia against the two Aruns.

It didn't help when Nehru acted against Christian missionaries. He took the line that as the missionaries received Rs 230 crores annually from abroad without submitting any accounts, they ought to be booted out. To his critics, the move smacked of xenophobia and Hindu fundamentalism. A Belgian priest wrote a personal letter to Sonia begging her to urge her husband to reconsider. Rajiv summoned Nehru who refused to yield. (Another version of this encounter has it that when Rajiv raised the subject, Nehru said, "Oh, you are referring to the letter from that Belgian." "How do you know what's in the letter?" asked a suspicious Rajiv. "Oh," said Nehru blandly, "it's the home ministry's job to keep an eye on your mail." Nobody will confirm this version on the record.)

Finally, Rajiv had the order rescinded by home minister Buta Singh when Nehru was down with a heart attack in Srinagar.



The last straw, apparently, was the Muslim Women's Bill. Initially, Rajiv had supported the Shah Bano judgment and asked Arif Mohammad Khan to defend it in Parliament. Then, as pressure from the Muslim community mounted, he changed his mind, asked another minister to attack the judgment and drafted the Bill.

Arif regarded this as betrayal; Rajiv, on the other hand, held that he was merely being responsive to public opinion. Nehru took Arif's side, said that he regarded the turnaround as a sign of weakness and berated Rajiv for letting Arif down. The Prime Minister was peeved. Why, he wondered, was Nehru getting so worked up over Arif?

Arun Nehru took Arif Mohammad Khan's side over the Muslim Women's Bill issue. He regarded the government's turnaround as a sign of weakness and berated Rajiv for letting Arif down. A peeved Rajiv wondered why Nehru was getting so worked up over Arif

There was a background to this doubt. For much of 1986, Rajiv had been hearing many stories about Arun Nehru and his protégés. The gossips said that Nehru regarded Rajiv as a naive and inept politician whom he had raised to the prime ministership. Now, he was planning to topple him. His strategy was simple: he would install his own men in key positions in the Cabinet and in the states and then, at the first sign of trouble, Nehru's protégés would vote Rajiv out and put their mentor in.

Rajiv says now that he didn't believe the stories. Nehru says he did—he is very susceptible to conspiracy theories, he suggests. But despite the fact that Nehru's critics came from all over (Congress vice president Arjun Singh was a prime mover of the conspiracy theory; so was *Blitz* editor R.K. Karanjia and—oddly enough—so were press baron Ramnath Goenka and Parsi-British textile magnate Nush Wadia), Rajiv insists that he refused to believe them.

However, there were other problems. Nehru had long been the party's unofficial fund-collector. He could call up industrialists at will and demand money in the Prime Minister's name. Now, Rajiv began to hear that not all the money reached party funds. Some of it, said Nehru's enemies, went towards building up his own power base.

This criticism was delivered most forcefully by Ottavio Quattrochi, the Delhi representative of Snamprogetti, the Italian multinational. Quattrochi is a close friend of Rajiv's and Sonia's. In 1986, he was negotiating on behalf of Snam (and Saipem) for the contract to build the HBJ pipeline. Arun Nehru had been put in charge of the deal in 1985 and Quattrochi had assumed that this meant that Snam would get it.

But by the summer of 1986, Quattrochi was nervous. Every single committee recommendation had gone against Snam and in favour of Spie Capag, a French contender. It was a plot, he feared. Nehru had rigged the committees by using trusted minions like Cabinet secretary P.K. Kaul. What's more, Nehru began to treat Quattrochi in an off-hand manner.

The Italian went to Sonia and Rajiv and suggested that Nehru had been paid off by the French. I don't mind if Snam doesn't get the contract, he said, but you should be aware that your trusted friend is stabbing you in the back. By then, Rajiv had been advised by everyone—Arun Singh, V.P. Singh, Gopi Arora, etc.—that it would look bad if Snam got the deal, so he let it go to Spie Capag. But he began to have real doubts about Arun Nehru.

Rajiv's friends say that there were other such instances. Goenka told him that Nehru had used a BSF plane to collect two steel trunks loaded with currency notes from Dhirubhai Ambani. Who was the money meant for? The Congress(I) or Arun Nehru?.

Nehru noticed the signals. He sensed that Rajiv had ceased to trust him though, he says, he couldn't figure out why. In May, he says, he sent Rajiv a note offering to quit. The Prime Minister sent for him and told him he wouldn't accept the resignation: why didn't Nehru become UP chief minister, instead? Nehru refused.

Nehru then began to go to the home ministry for only a few hours a day, citing ill health. But by then, Rajiv had given P. Chidambaram additional charge of the internal security portfolio with the specific brief of cutting Nehru down to size. In August, Nehru tried again to leave. M.L. Fotedar, the Prime Minister's political adviser called him and told him that Rajiv would not accept his resignation.

In September, faced with rumours that he no longer enjoyed Rajiv's trust, Nehru sent in a third resignation. This time Rajiv called him and suggested he become high commissioner to the UK for six months. The offer was insulting and Nehru proudly refused, saying that he preferred to remain an ordinary MP.

What happened next depends on whom you believe. Rajiv says he called Nehru over again. Apparently, he told him that there were too many stories about him raising money in the Prime Minister's name and that he couldn't continue in the government. Nehru says this meeting never took place. (A third interpretation is that Rajiv is referring to the meeting where he offered him the high commissionership.)

In any event, one fine morning, Rajiv reshuffled the Cabinet. And Nehru was no longer a member. Since then, both men have hated each other, though of course each is too well brought up to express it that crudely.

"I don't like saying this," says Arun Nehru today, "but Rajiv Gandhi's coterie is dominated by people who are not in the country's best interests. Just look at the records of those who went to Race Course Road in 1986 and you'll see what I mean."

Perhaps. And then again, perhaps not. But there's no doubt that by 1986, Arun Nehru and his wife Subhadra had become infrequent visitors to the Prime Minister's house. Strangely enough, so had Arun Singh and his wife Neena. This was unusual becuase Neena and Sonia had been virtually inseparable between 1982 and 1985. But some time in 1986, they fell out: a squabble that nobody

Sonia Gandhi's desire to receive the Pope at the airport meant that she would have to kneel on the tarmac and kiss his ring. Arun Nehru objected, arguing that the political consequences of such an action were unacceptable. Nehru's friends feel that this turned Sonia against him



Ashok Vaity



involved wants to talk about. The gate that separated Arun Singh's house from Rajiv's was locked and the close relationship dissolved.

For all this, Rajiv did not allow their wives' problems to affect his professional relationship with Arun. But even there, professional differences had crept in. A bone of contention was the controversial speech at the Congress centenary in December 1985. The original draft was worked out by Sharada Prasad, Gopi Arora and Mani Shankar Aiyar. It then went to the two Aruns. Nehru thought it was 'weak', but Singh was more specific in his criticisms. It lacked substance, he said. Where was the vision of the new India that Rajiv had entered politics to create? This was the same old rubbish. So, the PMO's drafting committee was given a new brief: attack the power-brokers, say you are going to change things, etc. The civil servants protested that it was not in the best taste to abuse Congressmen who were celebrating a centenary. "Look," said Singh, "Rajiv Gandhi is not just another Prime Minister. He will either break the mould or the mould will break him. So let's not waste time worrying about being nice."

The speech was rewritten to Singh's brief. He still did not approve till a final para outlining a vision of a new India was added. Rajiv went with Singh's recommendations and delivered the speech only to find himself accused of doing exactly what the PMO had warned Singh against: abusing his followers.

The experience made him think again about the value of Singh's advice. And if the truth be told, confronted by the realities of governance, he was beginning to lose some of his enthusiasm for 'breaking the mould'. "The Prime Minister of India," he told friends, "cannot afford to be a yuppie."

Aware that Rajiv was trying to break free of his influence and conscious of the strains in their personal relationship, Singh decided to make the most of his new assignment at the defence ministry. It helped that he had always been fascinated by warfare. And it helped also that the Chief of Army Staff was General K. Sundarji, a bright, sophisticated, articulate officer who got on with Singh.

While Singh was defence minister (technically, Rajiv was the Cabinet minister and Singh only a minister of state but this was a formality), Sundarji received the kind of official sponsorship that no army chief had ever received before. He had a direct link to the minister and saw no need to waste his time on the civil servants who were supposed to be a buffer between ministers and soldiers. And Rajiv allowed this relationship between Singh and Sundarji to flourish.

By late 1986, after Arun Nehru's ouster, Rajiv's relationship with Arun Singh was merely that of a Prime Minister and his defence minister. The two now rarely met socially. Singh and Neena felt that they had been elbowed out by Amitabh and Ajitabh Bachchan and their wives, Jaya and Ramola. The Bachchans, Singh told Rajiv on more than one occasion, were vulgar and would ultimately embarrass him. When Rajiv refused to listen, Singh put his objections in writing. The Bachchans retaliated by telling Rajiv that Singh was unduly possessive. And as for the allegation that they were crooks from the Bombay film industry, who was Singh to get so self-righteous? After all, hadn't he rented his farmhouse to Ajitabh Bachchan? And wasn't he accepting a portion of the rent in black?

By late 1986, the Gandhis and the Singhs rarely met socially. Arun and Neena felt that they had been elbowed out by Amitabh and Ajitabh Bachchan and their wives. More than once, Singh told Rajiv that the Bachchans were vulgar and would ultimately embarrass him

The real break, however, came over Operation Brasstacks. The operation, on the Pakistan border, had been Sundarji's dream. It was among the biggest and most extensive exercises ever launched by the Indian army and had made the Pakistanis extremely nervous. Rajiv is said to have told the Pakistani foreign ministry that India would scale down the operation though he now denies it. In any event, Brasstacks went ahead pretty much as planned.

To the Pakistanis, the decision to proceed with Brasstacks amounted to a tacit declaration of war. What better cover could there be for an attack than a massive military operation that was already underway? They reacted accordingly. After their own exercises, they instructed their troops not to withdraw from the border and put their army on alert:

The Indian army saw things different-



ly. It took the line that military exercises were routine matters that should not have unduly worried the Pakistanis. The fact that Pakistani troops were on alert meant that *they* were preparing to attack, using the alleged provocation of Brasstacks as an excuse.

In this atmosphere of mutual suspicion, it was only inevitable that tempers rose and both countries went to the brink of war.

Arun Singh was sent for. He echoed the army's line that Pakistani fears over Brasstacks were bogus and that the whole thing was just an excuse to justify an attack on India. Sundarji added his own two bits. Pakistan, he maintained, clearly wanted war. Well, he said, he would give it to them. India was now ideally placed to thrash the Paks and teach them a lesson they would never forget.

Rajiv was appalled. Was the military trying to push him into a war he did not want? He ordered Sundarji to withdraw troops at once, called Zia and began to talk peace. The crisis was defused.

Rajiv blamed Arun Singh. How had he let matters get to this stage? Civil servants, envious of Sundarji's access to Singh, told Rajiv that their minister had demolished the civilian authority of the defence ministry. He was like a little boy playing with toy soldiers, they suggested.

All of this overstated the case somewhat. Rajiv was defence minister: he could not escape responsibility by blaming it all on Singh. But perhaps subconsciously, it was what the Prime Minister wanted to hear: the man who had tried to tell him what to do had, left on his own, nearly taken the country to war!

The defence crisis was used to shift V.P. Singh from finance (where he had become something of a nuisance) to defence as Arun Singh's Cabinet minister. Rajiv took the unusual step of writing the Raja a letter, saying that he felt that the civilian authority of the defence ministry was being undermined and that it was V.P. Singh's job to restore it.

By the time V.P. Singh resigned from the Cabinet, relations between Arun Singh and Rajiv were at an all-time low. The two hardly spoke and if Singh wanted an appointment, he had to do it through official channels.

Once V.P. Singh quit, Rajiv gave K.C. Pant the defence ministry and wrote him a letter identical to the one he had written the Raja. Unlike V.P. Singh, Pant took the letter seriously and cut off Sundarji's access to the ministry. Now,



Former army chief K. Sundarji

Arun Singh became just another minister of state, working under a Cabinet minister he did not respect.

It was all a far cry from the days when he had come to Delhi to create a new India or 'break the mould'. He asked for and was finally granted a meeting with Rajiv. It was no good, he said. This wasn't why he had joined politics. He would like to return to his old job at the PMO or, better still, if Rajiv had no further need for him, he would give up politics altogether.

Faced with this difficult decision, Rajiv stalled. Let me think about it, he said.

Three weeks after that first ultimatum, Rajiv met Arun again. No, he said, there was no room for him at the PMO. Fine, said Arun, then I quit. Why, Rajiv wanted to know, was he so set on resigning? Singh spent an hour explaining that the reason he had joined politics no longer applied. There was no move to break the mould or to create a new India. Well, said Rajiv, what did he think had gone wrong? Singh tried explaining. Rajiv disagreed. Later, the Prime Minister was to say of the meeting: "He just said that things are not going as he imagined and things should have changed like this. I said: 'You tell me what.' And there was not anything really substantial that we could go on bargaining over."

And so, Rajiv Gandhi lost his second Arun. And his erstwhile best friend.

What do you do when you are perceived as one of India's most powerful persons and then suddenly, lose all your power? Partly, you realise how much of your status depended on the whims of one man. And then, you decide whether you want to stick around now that you've fallen out with that man and prove that you didn't really need him; or whether you want to call it a day.

Arun Singh has chosen the latter course: he has gone into self-imposed exile in the Kumaon Hills.

Arun Nehru, however, has chosen the former alternative. He believes that he has a future in Indian politics independent of Rajiv. His cousin doesn't think so. Asked about Arun Nehru's status as an Opposition leader, he sneered: "Is he? I don't know. Let's see him win an election. From anywhere."

Nehru is distressed by this smirking. He refuses to defend his electoral credentials, such as they are. "Basically, Rajiv will indulge in falsehoods as he has to justify his own position," he maintains. "Now, why he is making statements on what happened three years ago is best known to him. Maybe he feels there is a need to justify his actions. But the fact of the matter is that he has made a mess of things."

The personal relationship is in tatters. Many of Rajiv's advisers thought it would be a nice touch for him to attend

The real break with Arun Singh came over Operation Brasstacks. Singh took the army's line that Pakistani fears over the Operation were bogus. General Sundarji added that India was ideally placed to thrash the Paks. Rajiv was appalled and blamed Singh for letting matters get to this stage

the wedding of Nehru's daughter, Radhika, but the Prime Minister was adamant. Says Nehru bitterly: "If you analyse the last three years, they are full of petty acts. It is unfortunate that he did not attend the wedding. It was a family occasion. There was no question of politics. He was invited just as other members of the family were invited and it is very sad that he neither acknowledged the invitation nor came to the wedding."

Obviously, Rajiv doesn't think it sad, at all. He feels some regret about Arun Singh, but seems to have only loathing for Nehru. As he says: "Arun Singh resigned from the ministry. Arun Nehru, I just dropped. They are two different things."

But are they, really?

Seema Mustafa with SUNDAY bureaus

The Kirloskar Electric Challenge Series

Anybody who has even a passing acquaintance with electrics knows that Kirloskar Electric is a leader in specialist welding equipment.

But did you know that we are the first Indian company to design and develop a tyre flange re-building plant that increases the life of a railway wheel by at least a 100%?

Railway wheels account for a major part of the inventory of rolling stock as well as costs in the Indian Railways. The tyres of wheels are made from alloy steel, a substantial part of it imported. The cost of a wheel is thus very high. Because of the heavy load while negotiating curves, the flange wears out much faster than the tread. In the past the only method of salvaging such wheel sets was to give a substantial cut to both the tread and the flange and get the required profile. This not only consumed costly lathe man hours but also reduced the life of re profiled wheels.

In 1979, the railway authorities asked Kirloskar Electric if, based on the initial work done by RDSO Lucknow, we would design and develop a machine for re-building flanges. The process would use submerged arc-welding techniques and increase the life of a wheel from eight years to almost twenty. We were highly excited but the problems involved were truly daunting.

The welding knowhow required for the job was not only advanced but depended on a complex set of electrical and electronic parameters. The client wanted to maximise automation to ensure almost assembly line re-building speeds, as well as operator safety. Were we then rushing in where angels fear to tread? Quite likely. But, we reckoned, nothing ventured, nothing gained. We said yes.

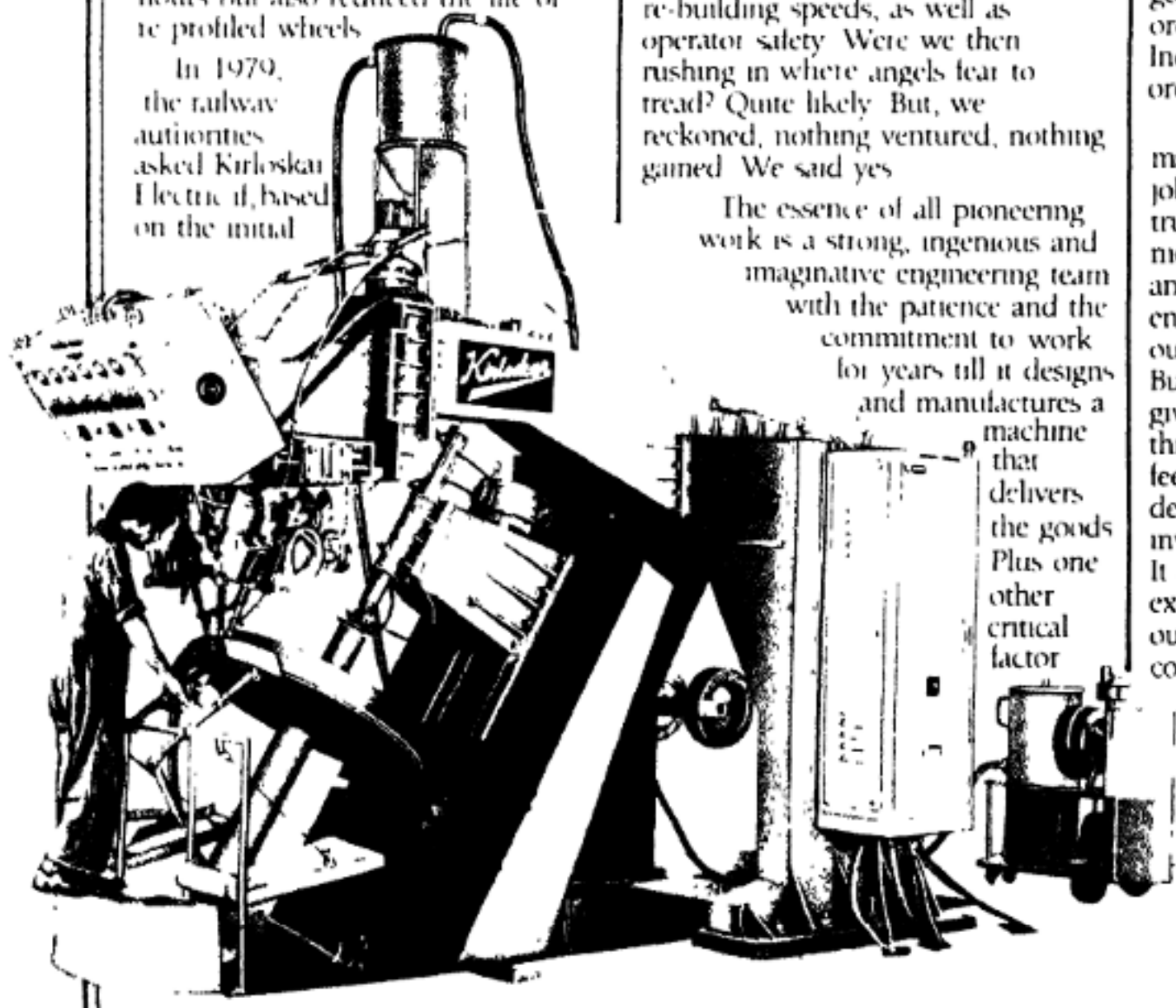
The essence of all pioneering work is a strong, ingenious and imaginative engineering team with the patience and the commitment to work for years till it designs and manufactures a machine that delivers the goods. Plus one other critical factor the total involvement and continuous guidance and insights of the client. We were lucky. We had both.

Here are some examples of the special demands in this job.

- Difficulties involved in re-building flanges of special high carbon steel.
- Re-building flanges without preheating.
- Automating the entire process with electronic logic and also using three welding heads simultaneously for high productivity.

We must have done a pretty good job. Because after the trial order of 5 machines in 1979-81, Indian Railways placed another order for 13 more machines in 1984.

What, you may well ask, makes us take on such challenging jobs that others won't touch? The truth is standard motors - - small, medium and large -- are our bread and butter. We make them with an enormous amount of care because our livelihood depends on them. But it's the really tough jobs that give us our kicks. We don't just thrive on them, we need them to feel alive. What we are doing is developing technological muscle and invaluable expertise and experience. It saves the country crores in foreign exchange. And it does wonders to our self-confidence and the confidence our customers have in us. They know that when nobody else can do the job, Kirloskar Electric will.



Kirloskar

KIRLOSKAR ELECTRIC COMPANY LTD

Regd. Office: Industrial Suburb, Rajajinagar, Bangalore 560 010

When nobody else can do the job, Kirloskar Electric will.

Prabha /KEC/27/08

Who missed Tripathi?

The absence of Kamlapati Tripathi at the recent AICC(I) session in Delhi went virtually unnoticed

The recent All-India Congress(I) Committee session in Delhi was the usual run-of-the-mill affair with sycophants mouthing the same platitudes in praise of Rajiv Gandhi and criticising the V.P. Singh-led Opposition. There was no introspection and no attempt to take stock of the situation as it existed. In short, it would not have been worth mentioning had it not been for one noticeable fact – the absence of veteran Congressman Kamlapati Tripathi. A few who were slightly more objective than the 'loyalists' who dominated the show, noticed that Tripathi was not present, but attributed his absence to his failing health. True, Tripathi was in Varanasi at the time, but on his return to Delhi last week, made it clear that he had deliberately "avoided" the session as he felt that he would be of no use.



Kamlapati Tripathi: working for his principles

This, coming from a man who has made it a point to attend every AICC session and Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting since 1922 (when he was in his mid-teens), amounts to a direct "censure" of the leadership, although Tripathi is not willing to say it in so many words. He agrees that he has never missed an AICC session, except for the last one in Madras when he was ill, and now the Delhi session which "I did not see the point of attending as I would have been a crane amongst the swans." He adds, "I thought I should not be there (for the session) as what was the point of plaving the *bagula*? One should just keep away."

A definte change in attitude, that. Ever since Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister, Tripathi's views have been fluctuating. He is not happy with the new leadership, he is unable to reconcile to the new style of functioning which he holds to be at variance with the traditional Congress norms and practices. Yet, he has been unable to break away from the party he sincerely believes is God's own "instrument" for keeping India strong and united. He has given vent to his frustrations in a series of letters to the Prime Minister, the first of the missives being on the issue of bogus membership and the state of the Congress(I). The last was against the Defamation Bill and, as Tripathi today says, "I was the only Congressman to speak out against the Bill."

His letters have elicited a mixed reaction. Initially, the Prime Minister decided to placate him, and the veteran leader was given a pride of place at the Congress Centenary Celebrations in Bombay where he was a visible presence on the dais. Some letters have been ignored, some have aroused a response but, of late, the reactions to this senior Congress leader from Varanasi have become feeble. As one Congressman said, "Panditji has cried wolf once too often." The leadership has now realised that Tripathi will not act against the Prime Minister or the Congress, and that his protests would be limited to letters and a few dissenting statements.

Tripathi's decision to stay away from the AICC(I) was not an easy one. It is a voice of protest which, he is the first to admit, will have little or perhaps no effect on the Congress. Tripathi affirms that it is his responsibility to ensure that the Congress follows the path of social and economic revolution laid down by Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, but adds realistically, "I don't know if anyone will follow me." The Congress has to continue "with these young men, they have to take on the full responsibility, but unfortunately, or fortunately, some *bagulas* like me are still living," he says in a lighter vein.

Tripathi has decided to keep "aloof", or so he says. As he points out, there is no place for "*nalayaks*" like himself who were turned out of the Rajya Sabha to make place for the *"layaks"* like Kalpnath Rai. Tripathi has limited his role to that of a watchman who, whenever he sees anyone deviating from the Gandhian path, will "try and tell them humbly not to do that as it will damage the country and it will damage the Congress".

All the same, Tripathi has realised that he can neither bring himself to leave the Congress, nor can he form a new party. "I will live and die a Congressman," he says, even though today it is the Congress of the Kalpnath Rais and K.K. Tewaris. His differences with V.P. Singh make it impossible for him to even begin to recognise the potential of the Opposition led by the Raja Saab. He describes Singh and the other leaders with him as *rakshas* who are throwing dust into the Congress' eyes in the hope of blinding the leadership and coming to power.

A politican since the age of 15, Kamlapati Tripathi recites a Sanskrit *shloka* stating that a person who works for his principles and beliefs without expecting anything in return is a *sanyasi* and a *yogi*. But he is not a *sanyasi*, he is a politician. Panditji disagrees. "I am not a politician," he asserts emphatically, putting an end to the conversation.

Seema Mustafa / *New Delhi*

Sound, fury and collapse

The government uses V.P. Singh's irresponsibility to exonerate itself on Bofors

PARLIAMENT

It was a valiant attempt to resurrect the Bofors issue and force an errant government to come to terms with its own deceptions and evasions. But finally, it failed because of the Opposition's own irresponsibility—or more specifically, because one member of the Opposition had levelled charges that he would not substantiate.

When Parliament reconvened on 15 November, after the Diwali break, Opposition MPs attempted to pin the government down on Bofors. They had plenty of ammunition. There were, first of all, *The Hindu* documents into which the regime had promised an investigation. Six months later, it had still not announced the results of this investigation. Then, there was Rajiv Gandhi's statement in Bangalore: "We have never denied that commissions were paid." As the government had spent 18 months insisting that Bofors had paid no commissions but had only doled out 'winding up charges', this was a disastrous admission and one that Rajiv's minders tried to gloss over by claiming that he had been misquoted. (He hadn't.) And finally, there was the Prime Minister's SUNDAY interview in which he made the remarkable claim that Bofors might have paid for 'genuine work' and the government could not grudge them that. In the same interview he had also stated that *The Hindu* documents were probably forgeries ("doubts about their authenticity", "some defects on them", etc.)



The Opposition attack was marked by a combative speech by the CPI(M)'s Somnath Chatterjee, who demanded to know how Rajiv had arrived at the 'genuine work' hypothesis and why he had kept this interesting theory from the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Bofors. Driving home the point, Janata's Madhu Dandavate tried to press a privilege motion against Rajiv. Both, Rajiv's statement in Bangalore and the SUNDAY interview, suggested that he now regarded it as clear that commissions had been paid and was even trying to find reasons to justify this payment. As Rajiv had told Parliament earlier that no commissions had been paid, he was clearly in breach of privilege.

It was an impressive assault and might have succeeded had it not been for Vishwanath Pratap Singh. A week or so earlier, the Raja had announced that he now possessed irrefutable proof of Rajiv's bank account. Asked to produce this proof, he handed out an old *Hindu* document relating to Bofors' payments to Svenska. Obviously, V.P. Singh had got it very wrong.

The Congress(I) wasted no time in hammering away at the Raja's blunder. Three senior ministers, Buta Singh, Vasant Sathe and H.K.L. Bhagat, asked the Raja to substantiate his charge. Two Congress(I) general secretaries, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Vithal Gadgil, taunted him for his irresponsibility. In response to these attacks, V.P. Singh rose to make a 30-minute speech during which he completely avoided any mention of his old allegations, refused to defend his earlier statements and tried desperately to change the subject.

Once the Congress(I) knew it had the Raja on the run, it turned the tables on the Opposition and ignored the several important questions that Somnath Chatterjee and Madhu Dandavate had raised. Instead, it became a 'get-VP' session with Buta Singh levelling abuse--the foulest ever uttered by a minister in Parliament—at the Raja and other Congress MPs joining the fray.

The following day when K.C. Pant, the defence minister, rose to launch a weak and ineffectual defence of the government's position, the Opposition had caved in. The Raja didn't even turn up ("*Bhag gaya, bhag gaya,*" chanted gleeful Congress MPs) because he had to go to Agra for a rally and his cohorts had lost their enthusiasm.

Consequently, Pant got away with this defence. In substance, this consisted of insisting that the government would not agree to a second JPC, would not cancel the contract and would continue to pursue its investigations. On the subject of Bofors' 'genuine work', he claimed the MPs had torn Rajiv's remarks out of the context in which he had uttered them to SUNDAY. After all, he said, the Prime Minister had described his remarks as 'hypothetical'. This was an absurd defence. (The quote Pant referred to: "hypothetically I am saying the whole amount could have been paid for genuine work. Then we can't question it.") The point is that India's deal with Bofors made it quite clear that there were to be *no* payments and that agents were not to be allowed to do *any* work at all—'genuine' or otherwise. To concede--even hypothetically—that there could have been legitimate payments makes a travesty of India's original position.

But by then, nobody was listening. V.P. Singh's irresponsibility had lost the country an opportunity to find out where Rs 64 crores of its money went.

Vir Sanghvi

Vishwanath Pratap Singh: Irresponsible behaviour



A crisis compounded

The Bommai government is on the brink of a financial crisis even as the party threatens to split

KARNATAKA

Even the most efficient chief minister would find the proposition of tackling 4,000 pending files daunting. But for S.R. Bommai, who has to contend with an administration that is slowly going to pieces, a financial crisis and a political imbroglio that refuses to go away, it would seem yet another insurmountable problem. While dissidence and political scandals have been the focus of all attention, the fact remains that the government looks more broke than it did ever before. It faces a Rs 300-crore cut in the annual plan size of a mere Rs 900 crores and the deficit threatens to cross the estimated Rs 327-crore mark. The Ramakrishna Hegde government had held the long drought responsible for the administration's dire straits but the good monsoons this year have deprived Bommai of even this excuse.

Bommai has said that he is not in favour of a reduction in the annual plan. But the state Congress(I) has been urging the government to declare a state of financial emergency. Congress leaders in the Legislative Council, T.N. Narasimha Murthy and K.N. Nage Gowda, accused the government of leading the state towards disaster. They pointed out that the government had even failed to meet its target in the vital area of tax collection.

The government has put a freeze on recruitment in all departments leading to strikes by employees. Uncertainty at the political level during the last seven months has virtually frozen the movement of files and a flurry of transfers at the top bureaucratic levels has only made matters worse.

The government is finding it difficult to meet even regular expenses. Police constables have even begun to expect delays in the payment of their salaries. And, in desperation, the government is considering ways and means of controlling expenses by cutting down on fuel consumption of departmental vehicles, etc.

Admitted a minister in the Bommai Cabinet, "We have managed to get away only because of the deterioration of debate in the legislative forum. If the Congress Opposition had been a little sharp in the state we would have been in real trouble." The Bommai government's vulnerability is obvious. Despite being in office for three months now, Bommai still is in charge of portfolios like finance, revenue, excise, health and labour among others. Bureaucrats are waiting for full-fledged ministers to take charge of departments. It is the same situation in the hundred-odd boards and corporations whose chiefs were asked to resign during the party crisis. It is said that legislators will be awarded these positions in return for a little peace.

With factional feuds threatening to wreck the party, the coming election year promises the worst: more power politics, more unproductive and populist expenditure and more election promises.

Prakash Belawadi/
Bangalore



S.R. Bommai: insurmountable problems

H.K. Dasgupta



Courtesy Udayam



Punjala Sudhir Kumar: pulling strings?

An heir is crowned

The appointment of P. Shiv Shankar's son as the state Youth Congress chief raises a storm

ANDHRA PRADESH

The appointment was bound to make waves. When 29-year-old Pujala Sudhir Kumar was made president of the Andhra Pradesh Youth Congress(I) on 7 November, soon after Janardhan Reddy's appointment as Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee chief, the repercussions were felt almost instantly. For, not only is Sudhir Kumar the progeny of Union human resource development minister P. Shiv Shankar but he is also a close friend of chief minister N.T. Rama Rao's actor-son Balakrishna.

The first Congressman to make his displeasure about the appointment known was Valina Surya Bhaskar Rao, the outgoing Youth Congress president. Kumar, he said, is a novice "who doesn't even know the boundaries of Andhra Pradesh". Rao charged that "both Sudhir Kumar and Balakrishna are partners in several firms and consult each other on several issues. Balakrishna has been named as NTR's political heir. How can such a close associate of the heir-apparent be expected to wage a relent-



P. Shiv Shankar: charged of nepotism

less battle against the TDP, by heading the APYC(I) which is in the vanguard of the APCC(I)'s activities?"

Bhaskar Rao and his supporters strongly believe that "some vested interests had misguided the high command" by recommending Kumar's candidature for the APYC(I) chief. But, in the same breath, he accuses Kumar of securing the post by pulling strings, courtesy his father.

The former APYC(I) chief even dragged the APCC(I) president into the controversy and alleged that Reddy had not been consulted about Kumar's appointment. An embarrassed Reddy, who is eager to make a good start as the chief of the party's state unit, was quick to declare that Rao's views were "intemperate". Whatever the provocation, Reddy said, expressing such an opinion in public "is highly objectionable and I am seriously considering disciplinary action against him".

But this too failed to quell the growing dissent. Rao was soon joined by APYC(I) vice-president, Achyutarama Prasad, and joint secretary, Venkateswara Rao, who demanded that Kumar's appointment be revoked

Even as Shiv Shankar and Kumar maintained a stoic silence, a counter campaign was launched by another group alleging that Bhaskar Rao had received Rs 2.40 lakhs from an oil dealer for favours. The statement was issued by seven APYC(I) leaders belonging to Kumar's camp. Meanwhile, Rao's followers failed to prevent Kumar from entering the Congress headquarters in Gandhi Bhavan as they had previously threatened. With both sides readying themselves for battle, the infighting within the Congress threatens to reach new heights.

Mukundan C. Menon/*Hyderabad*

NTR's best friends

The Marxists' unstinting support for the Telugu Desam draws flak from the CPI leadership

ANDHRA PRADESH

Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao's boast that he is the "biggest leftist in the country" now seems to be finding acceptance finally. The Marxists, who have always stressed on ideology-based politics, however, ignored the controversies that surrounded the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and stood by it during its six-year rule. So much so that they even alienated their leftist brethren in the Communist Party of India (CPI). The tussle between the two communist parties burst into the open during the 16th state conference held at Vijayawada in early November.

The issue was hotly debated with the Marxists arguing that to ditch the TDP now would amount to contradicting the CPI's national policy. Explained CPI(M) politburo member, M. Basavapunnaiah, "We have no illusion whatsoever about the TDP's class character and we do not treat NTR's government on par with the Left Front governments of Kerala and West Bengal. But Telugu Desam being the biggest anti-Congress force in Andhra Pradesh, we pursue the policy of friendship with them in the line with our consistent national policy of opposing the Congress." Lashing out at the CPI, he said that it should do some "urgent rethinking" and adopt a "practical approach" as its stance of opposing the Congress at the national level and non-Congress governments at the state level would only land it in trouble.

On the other hand, CPI state council secretary, N. Giri Prasad, questioned the wisdom of being merely anti-Congress at the cost of everything else. He said that the Telugu Desam's misrule in the state was reminiscent of the 1979 fiasco when the Janata Party regime came crumbling down. Instead Giri Prasad urged the Marxists to join the CPI-led front to fight both the TDP and the Congress(I).

Basavapunnaiah instantly ridiculed his suggestion by saying that the CPI-led front consisted of insignificant parties like the Lok Dal. "The CPI is trying to swim across the mighty Godavari river by holding a dog's tail," he pooh-poohed. To this Giri Prasad reacted that it was not the size and strength of the parties that mattered but the political line that they adopted.

The bickering did not stop at this either. The CPI leader pointed out that the Marxists had a lot of questions to answer to the public. For one, how could a left party support the "pro-feudal" NTR government which had opposed the implementation of land reforms; denied tenancy rights to lakhs of people; disregarded the rights of government employees, teachers and workers; and invoked the Anti-Terrorist Act against poor Harijans? And second, how could it continue to ally itself with NTR's party especially after the High Court had indicted the chief minister on charges of corruption and nepotism?

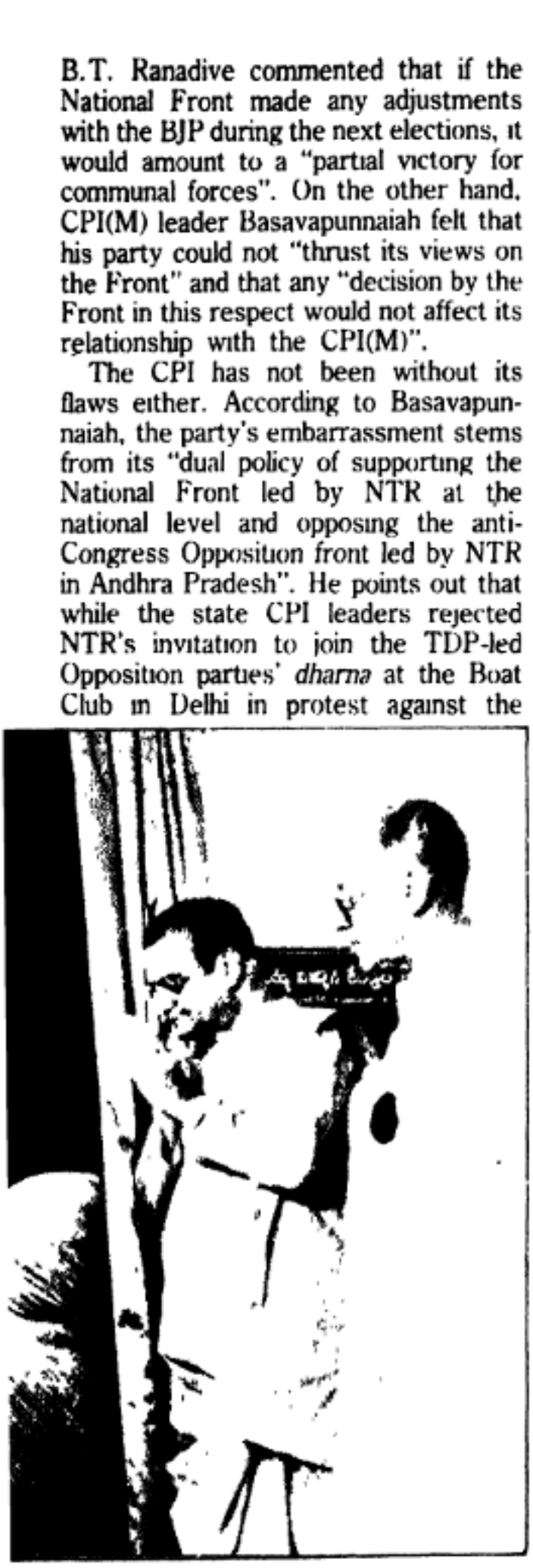


The Marxists failed to come up with a convincing reply to these questions and eventually, the CPI(M) in its resolution passed at the Vijayawada state conference, admitted that "though the TDP claims to be a leftist party, its actions reflect its feudalism". Moreover, the Marxists have also failed to justify its decision of opposing the Asom Gana Parishad government in Assam. Another embarrassing issue for the Marxists, is the CPI(M)'s relationship with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) which has emerged as the TDP's major partner.

The fact that there is dissension between the Marxists themselves became apparent when the veteran leader

B.T. Ranadive commented that if the National Front made any adjustments with the BJP during the next elections, it would amount to a "partial victory for communal forces". On the other hand, CPI(M) leader Basavapunnaiah felt that his party could not "thrust its views on the Front" and that any "decision by the Front in this respect would not affect its relationship with the CPI(M)".

The CPI has not been without its flaws either. According to Basavapunnaiah, the party's embarrassment stems from its "dual policy of supporting the National Front led by NTR at the national level and opposing the anti-Congress Opposition front led by NTR in Andhra Pradesh". He points out that while the state CPI leaders rejected NTR's invitation to join the TDP-led Opposition parties' *dharna* at the Boat Club in Delhi in protest against the



NTR with Jyoti Basu at a CPI(M) function: are the Marxists compromising their ideologies?

Centre's non-clearance of projects in the state, CPI leader Indrajit Gupta eventually participated in it. Of course, Giri Prasad painstakingly points out that Gupta was not representing the party but only participating in his capacity as a member of Parliament.

Nevertheless, the two left parties would do best to resolve their differences and evolve a policy which is consistent with their ideologies. But with the elections round the corner, will the communists succumb to the temptation of burying their ideologies?

Mukundan C. Menon / *Hyderabad*

Hitting out

Mohinder Amarnath calls the selectors a "bunch of jokers" for dropping him from the Test team

CRICKET

The selectors have done it again. Mohinder Amarnath, who is perhaps the only player to have been dropped by the selectors time and again only to make a comeback at a later date, was once again axed from the team that would play the first Test match against New Zealand in Bangalore. But the selectors were in for a surprise. The cricketer flew to Bangalore from Delhi, summoned a press conference, called the selection committee a "bunch of jokers" and ruined his chances of playing for the country again.

That he enjoyed the support of the rest of the team was evident: the journalists were briefed in vice-captain Srikkanth's room at the West End Hotel where both teams were staying. The following evening Amarnath joined the others during a workout and the next day he settled down to watch the match—from the selectors' enclosure, if you please!

Obviously, the heavyweights in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) were not amused. The Board president, Bishwanath Dutt, admitted that he had asked for a written report from the secretary in keeping with the rules. "Till I get the report," said Dutt, "Amarnath will be treated as not guilty." Raj Singh Dungarpur, chairman of the selection committee, refused to comment saying, "I will not stoop to his level." But later, he added, "If we have something against him then how did we allow him to make so many comebacks."

Mohinder Amarnath, however, insists that he has got a rough deal from the selectors. "They have always had one rule for me and another for the rest," he charged. "Even though I was dropped often in the past I did not say a word in protest. But for how long can one go on taking this rubbish?"

It was in 1969 that Amarnath first made his debut but he was dropped immediately after. Recalled in 1975, Amarnath remained in the team till 1979 when he was dropped again for his inability to face bouncers. Helmets came to the cricketer's rescue and he scored heavily in the domestic circuit, but he

Nikhil Bhattacharya



Amarnath: making his displeasure known

was not selected for the tour of England. The Pakistan series and another in the West Indies, where he faced some of the most feared pace bowlers, helped establish Amarnath's reputation as the best player of pace bowling—a recognition that was accorded by none other than Imran Khan.

Loss of form prompted the selectors to drop him once again in late 1983 for the India-West Indies series but he made it to Pakistan in October '84. "I was nowhere in the reckoning but Gavaskar fought for my inclusion," he remembers. And he acquitted himself by scoring a match-saving century in the Lahore Test. But when he was dropped for the Sharjah tournament in 1986, the reason given was that he had become too old for the limited overs game.

This season, however, saw Amarnath play for the one-day matches but not for the Test series. And even as Amarnath's remark about the selectors was making waves, there was another controversy in which the cricketer featured prominently. It was reported, in some newspapers, that Amarnath had been offered Rs 1 crore to recruit a rebel team to tour South Africa. Amarnath denied this but said he would consider the offer only when it came. He also made it known that he sympathised with the English cricketers who had been denied visas for the tour of India. "After all we would be playing England and not South Africa," he argues.

Though Amarnath is bitter about his exclusion from the team there were some who could still see humour in the situation. When selector Chandrasekhar jumped a queue for lunch at the Bangalore stadium a wag remarked: "Jokers can do exactly what they please."

Mudar Patherya/*Bangalore*

The angry employees

The indefinite strike launched by non-gazetted employees demanding central payscales paralyses the administration

BIHAR

Chief minister Bhagwat Jha Azad, it appears, can never do anything right. During the eight months of his reign, his critics have charged him of rude behaviour, damaging the party's goodwill in the state, creating dissidence as a result of his actions, and more. Now, they say, he is a heartless politician who has no pity for the plight of the non-gazetted employees. It was on 6 September, that eight lakh employees decided to go on an indefinite strike to demand that they be paid their salaries in accordance with the central government payscales.

Azad, who had angered a large section of the state's bureaucrats with his efforts to streamline the administration, suddenly found himself in an unenviable situation. Hounded by dissidents and financial problems, resulting from the large sums that had to be disbursed following the spate of earthquakes and floods in the state, he had little choice but to play the role of the tough chief minister. Moreover, he had hoped that his tough stand would make the employees see reason and return to their jobs before the festive season began.

But Azad's calculations were proved wrong when instead of admitting defeat more employees' unions, egged on by the Opposition parties and dissident Congressmen, joined the strike. The government appointed a Cabinet sub-committee to negotiate with the unions' leaders but the talks proved futile. In desperation, the government threatened to invoke the Essential Services Maintenance Act; to compulsorily retire all employees above the age of 50 whose service records were not flawless; and recruit retired employees in place of the striking workers. The union leaders were, however, undeterred. What came as a morale booster for them was the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to grant central payscales to its employees. The victory of their counterparts in UP only strengthened their resolve to continue with the agitation.

The UP government's move put Azad on the defensive and he tried to work his way out of the crisis by maintaining that though he did not object to any increase in payscales for employees, his hands were tied due to the non-availability of funds with the state exchequer. The Opposition parties plunged in with great gusto and before long they had convinced teachers and other employees to join the strike.

The administration, which was already in a shambles, came to a grinding halt as revenue collection stopped totally. This has only aggravated the delicate financial position of the state exchequer and even if the strikers abandon their agitation, it will be months before things are set right.

The behind-the-scenes manipulations soon became evident when on 3 November, the day the Prime Minister was scheduled to visit the state—the tour was later cancelled—the Opposition-sponsored joint coordination committee, formed to support the strike, called for a Bihar *bandh*. V.P. Singh descended on Patna and addressed a huge rally of striking employees. Besides, Rajiv Gandhi's decision to stay away was a godsend for the Opposition: its leaders took out processions through the streets of Patna saying that "Rajiv Gandhi ran away".

As for the striking employees the two-month-long strike has left them a miserable lot. Faced with hunger they have been forced to mortgage jewellery. And if an agreement between the government and the trade union leaders is not reached in the near future, they even face the prospect of mortgaging their houses.

The Opposition leaders have capitalised on the plight of the government and some legislators have even urged the Governor to convene a special session of the Assembly in view of the continuing strike. A writ petition has been filed by the Rashtriya Chetna Parishad seeking a solution to the crisis. "The Bihar government has failed to follow the laws made by the Parliament relating to public affairs as guaranteed under Article 256 of the Constitution," the petition states.

Dissidents too have found an opportunity to reiterate to the high command the need to seek an early solution to the problem. Dr Jagannath Mishra, in a telegram to the Prime Minister, added that the "continuation of the agitation is likely to mar the prospects of the Congress in the coming elections". Surely for any Congress chief minister there could be no greater indictment of his abilities.

Faizan Ahmad / *Patna*



The striking non-gazetted employees: bringing the administration to a halt

K.M. Krishan

A fiery outburst

N.K. Tirpude lashes out at Vasantdada Patil and Sharad Pawar at an MPCC(I) function

MAHARASHTRA

Even as Bombay ushered in Diwali with bursts of firecrackers on the eve of the festival, there were fireworks aplenty in the premises of the Bombay Regional Congress Committee (BRCC). The occasion was the function organised to felicitate the newly-appointed Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee chief, Mrs Pratibha Patil. But instead of the tame affair that most had expected it to be, the sparks flew as N.K. Tirpude, veteran Congressman and an aspirant for the post of the MPCC president, lambasted his detractors. Prominent among those who were at the receiving end of his tirade were chief minister Sharad Pawar and former chief minister Vasantdada Patil.



Pratibha Patil and Tirpude: likely opponents?

The so-called loyalist Congressmen had proposed Tirpude's name for the MPCC(I) presidentship. However, both Patil and Pawar strongly opposed his candidature on the grounds that "he was not competent to handle the job". Tirpude lashed out at Dada and warned that his brand of politicking would be detrimental to the party. Tirpude later gloated to SUNDAY that he had made his feelings known in Dada's presence but "he did not say anything when he spoke at the function later."

Though Tirpude is obviously miffed by the high command's choice of Pratibha Patil, he brushes off rumours about a possible rebellion as so much gossip. "They (Pawar and Patil) had expressed doubts as to whether I would support Mrs Pratibha Patil but when Mr Murli Deora invited me to be the chief speaker at this function for Mrs Patil, I readily agreed. After all I am a loyal Congressman...I said I am not like those who, after Rajiv Gandhi takes a decision, oppose it or question it."

"It is not over," he told SUNDAY, "I have not yet finished exposing the games that are being played by Dada and his group." Tirpude then aimed his guns at Sharad Pawar, who though not present on the occasion was represented by Ramrao Adik. Tirpude charged Pawar of deliberately ignoring the lowest category of government servants—the Kotwals—in the Rs 300-crore bonanza that he had announced.

Meanwhile, Pawar has used all his ingenuity to buy peace on the peasants front. The announcement that the government will waive the repayment of loans totalling Rs 200 crores was obviously meant to take the wind out of the sails of Sharad Joshi's proposed agitation. Moreover, as the announcement would affect nearly 64 lakh marginal and small farmers, the peasants leader had no choice but to laud Pawar's magnanimous offer, especially as it meant that the loans that have been pending with cooperative banks and development banks for nearly 30 years would now be wiped off. It was definitely more than what Joshi and his Shetkari Sanghatana had hoped for.

Nevertheless, Joshi plans to go ahead with his stir against levy sugar prices and has not yet called off the *gaon bandi* in the cotton belt to protest against Pawar's failure to ensure that farmers got remunerative prices for their produce.

Yet another populist scheme of Pawar's seems to be threatened with the arrival of Pratibha Patil on the scene: that of providing a job for every poor family in the villages. Mrs Patil, who is no confidante of Pawar, is unlikely to be helpful in this respect. And so, he will have to use the bureaucratic machinery to implement his ambitious project and hope that the bureaucrats do not let him down.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

In deep waters

An Indo-Pak dispute erupts over fishing rights in the maritime zone near the Rann of Kutch

GUJARAT

Jakhau is a remote little town on the Kutch coastline whose shores have still not been discovered by tourists. And not without reason: only a die-hard traveller would dare to set foot in this seaside town which lacks proper roads, electricity and even adequate supplies of potable water. But when it comes to fish and other sea food, Jakhau is a virtual goldmine. So, for four months, between October and January, a steady stream of visitors, comprising fishermen, flow into Jakhau, which is 100 km from Kutch's capital, Bhuj.

However, the fishermen got off to a disastrous start this year. On 26 October, just when the fisherfolk had started plying their trawlers in the waters, Pakistani marine securitymen seized eight trawlers and captured as many as 70 fishermen. Apparently, they had crossed into Pakistani territory. The Indian coast guards, who are supposed to be present to protect the rights of the Indian fishermen, were nowhere in sight and it was only after this incident that they were alerted. On 3 November, they seized three Pakistani fishing boats and detained eight fishermen, thus marking the beginning of a "fishing war".

According to Ashok Bhatt, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA, the poor fishermen who are captured for alleged violations of territorial laws, are tortured in Pakistani jails.

In January this year, nearly 145 fishermen were hauled up by the Pakistanis. It was only after the Indian coast guards, officials of the state department and representatives of various fishermen's federations arrived at an agreement on the fishing grounds, that the fishermen agreed to go to Jakhau. But the 26 October and 3 November incidents only indicate that the dispute is not likely to be resolved in a hurry. And at stake is not just the livelihood of thousands of fisherfolk but business worth crores of rupees in the shape of sea food exports.

Mahesh Trivedi/*Ahmedabad*

COCA-COLA

Back with a fizz

With Pepsi already in, India is set to witness a major cola war

With a fizz and a pop the cola wars are off to a boomimg start once agam This time the new combatant swaggering into the ring is the gaant from Atlanta, Georgia Coca Cola

Coke's second coming to India was hardly a surprise For months the corporate grapevine has been abuzz with rumours that the Atlanta based soft drinks conglomerate was aiming to stage a comeback in India. At one time it was said that Coke was on the verge of teaming up with Godrej and at another time it was rumoured that it was talking to liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya

But nobody had an inkling about Coke's carefully hatched strategy and it has become clear pretty fast that the company has scored one of the corporate coups of the year Instead of battling the bureaucracy for years as its rival Pepsi has done, Coke has slipped in almost through the backdoor Exploiting a clause which everyone else had overlooked, Coke is planning to set up a factory in the NOIDA export processing zone on the outskirts of New Delhi. The factory will make ingredients for the Coke concentrate and under the rules for export processing zones (EPZs), Coke has to export 75 per cent of its production and it can automatically sell 25 per cent in India.

The sheer simplicity of the Coke plan appears to have left its opponents flabbergasted. The consternation was evident in the enemy camps Pepsi has been readying for its triumphant entry into India after battling the bureaucracy and the entrenched local soft drinks manufacturers for over three years. But now it will have to share the limelight with Coke. Pepsi's resident representative Ramesh Vangal left town hurriedly for New York just before the Coke announcement and there are indications that Pepsi may have got a hint of its arch-rival's plans Senior executives of the Tatas, who are involved in the Pepsi

Nobody had an inkling about Coke's carefully hatched strategy and it became clear pretty fast that it had scored one of the corporate coups of the year. Instead of battling the bureaucracy for years as its rival Pepsi has done, Coke has slipped in almost through the backdoor



Jagdish Yadav

Ramesh Vangal: up against Coke

Coke products: second coming





project through Voltas, were busy poring through the rule books on EPZs to see if Coke had read the fine print correctly. Even Parle boss Ramesh Chauhan, who was the moving force behind the anti-Pepsi campaign, and who is normally one of the best informed men in the capital, was caught napping by the carefully planned Coke announcement.

But whatever Coke's rivals may like to believe, it looks as if the company has done its homework well. Coke spotted its opportunity in March this year when the government relaxed the rules relating to EPZs. Under the rules as they now stand, any company can set up shop in these zones and as long as it keeps up its export commitments, it can sell 25 per cent of its production in the Indian market. Says Coke's Stuart Eastwood, director, business development: "It was our corporate policy which drove us out of India. What has changed is the government policy. This is the first time that there is complete conformity of government policy with our own policy."

Coke will be spending much less than



Ramesh Chauhan: double competition

Pepsi in the bargain. The company plans to invest Rs 3.3 crores to set up its factory at NOIDA. It will sell its intermediate to a second Indian company which will make the concentrate and which will in turn sell the concentrate to one or more bottlers which Coke may appoint.

Coca-Cola executives would like to keep everyone's eyes focussed on the

What the Coke proposal will do to the soft drinks market itself is another matter altogether. Already a fizz of spectacular proportions is in the offing with Pepsi making a debut in the market. Now the contest will turn into a three-way fight with Parle ranged against the two multinational giants

export potential of the new venture. They say that they had studied locations all over the world before deciding to site the factory in NOIDA. Over the next 10 years Coke will export "concentrate ingredients" worth Rs 70 crores. At the same time, the company claims that it is only aiming at a small share of the Indian market. Says Eastwood: "Domestic sales will be less than 10 per cent of the total Indian market. Our export obligation places a limit on our sales and we will only have limited access to the local market."

Coke has never hidden the fact that it wanted to come back to India. It had left the country in 1977 when it refused to dilute its equity in 1977. In Coke's - and in Pepsi's eyes - India is a prime market - hot most of the year and a huge thirsty population of 800 million people. And while the Indian soft drinks market has grown by almost four times over the last decade it is still way behind the rest of the world. Even next-door Pakistan is said to consume 13 bottles of aerated drinks per annum compared to a mere three bottles a head annually in India.

What the Coke proposal will do to the soft drinks market itself is another matter altogether. Already a fizz of spectacular proportions is in the offing with Pepsi making its debut in the market. In one corner is Ramesh Chauhan, the boss of Parle who at present controls around half of the Rs 600-crore soft drinks market. Now the contest will turn into a three-way fight with Chauhan ranged against the two multinational giants, who between them control over 90 per cent of the world soft drinks market. Says Chauhan: "People complain about three Indian companies having a monopoly over the Indian market. Now they are going to get two companies which control 90 per cent of the global market."

In the process, however, the ones who are likely to get squeezed out of the market first are the smaller Indian soft drinks companies like Vijay Mallya's which have failed to make a real impact and which even now hold less than 10 per cent of the market. Even Charanjit Singh's Pure Drinks has barely 25 per cent of the market and has fared poorly except in Delhi. Charanjit Singh's old ties with Coke will apparently not be of very much use as the company appears to have ruled out tying up with him again.

But the firm which will be worst hit in many ways by Coke's entry is the other American giant Pepsi. For three years Pepsi has gone by the text book in its battle to get into India. It enlisted the aid of the biggest Indian business house, the Tatas, by involving them in the scheme. It even drew in the Punjab state govern-



Charanjit Singh: mentor turns a threat

ment by involving the Punjab Agro Industries Corporation in the project. For good measure it also managed to stir up public opinion in Punjab in favour of its project. But finally it agreed to bend its terms and accept higher export obligations.

And at the end of the day Coke will be in a better position than Pepsi in several ways. Its project is cheaper to start with. Also, its brand-names are registered in India which will enable it to use its global trademark while Pepsi may be stuck with a jarring hybrid like Pepsi-Volt or Ind-Pepsi. Coke hopes to be in business in about one year after it gets its clearances. And when Coke and Pepsi get going the battle of the bottle will begin once again in right earnest.

Paran Balakrishnan/*New Delhi*

BUSINESS HOUSES

The warring Modis close ranks

The financial institutions have finally decided to flex their muscles to make the two factions fall in line

It has been the fight of the year in the corporate world But now the two battling factions of the Modi family have suddenly found themselves up against bigger, more formidable foes: the financial institutions.

Now they are cracking the whip. And the clout that the institutions wield became clear last week when they forced the dominant faction of the family—the sons of Gujarmal Modi—to back down on their moves to remove K.N. Modi from the chairmanship of Modi Rubber. In the Delhi High Court the group gave a written understanding that they agreed to the institutions' proposal that K.N. Modi should remain chairman of the company. In addition, they also agreed that the removal of the other directors by the institutions would stand.

For the last couple of months the institutions have been watching with increasing exasperation as the two factions fought each other to a standstill. And they are now ready to show their hand if need be to bring the family to heel.

The decisive moves could come on 26 November at the Modi Rubber annual general body meeting. Already the financial institutions have circulated a notice for the dismissal of the independent directors and the Modi Rubber finance director G.B. Rao. It is now open to the institutions to appoint their own directors if necessary.

The Modis are only too aware of the dangers that such a move could expose them to and they are desperately trying to avoid it. At the time SUNDAY went to press the two factions were negotiating frantically to reach a settlement before the 26 November meeting. The two sides are apparently closer than ever before to a settlement but it is still not certain that they will be able to bridge the gap and reach an agreement.

Any settlement in the Modi family is going to mean a division of the companies between the two warring groups. The three sons of K.N. Modi who are demanding a partition are keen on getting one of the key Modi companies, Modipon, which is at present controlled by K.K. Modi, the eldest brother of the opposing faction. Besides this they are said to be trying to work out a deal under which they will also get control of Bombay Tyres and a part of Modi Industries. K.N. Modi's sons already control other group companies including Modi Alkalies and Chemicals, and the newly-formed Modi Champion.

Whether these terms will be accepted by their cousins remains to be seen. Till very recently the other branch of the family has held out against all moves to partition the group. And throughout the fight this branch of the family—K K, Vinay Kumar, Bhupendra Kumar, Umesh and Satish—which has held control of all the key group companies, has insisted that they would not accept any sort of partition.

What may change their mind is the determined stand which the financial institutions are now taking. Throughout the summer the institutions have been taking steps to strengthen their position in the key Modi companies. From all the indications the institutions have been steadily buying Modi Rubber shares while the family fought. As a result Modi Rubber shares have shot up over the last few months to over Rs 70. At the same time, the financial institutions have also been been on a collision course with Modi Xerox' foreign collaborator, Rank Xerox. The institutions are now determined to convert their loans into equity. Rank Xerox is upset about this, amongst other things, as it would inevitably mean that their shareholding would drop from the present 40 per cent to around 35 per cent. In addition Rank Xerox also made a half-hearted attempt to prevent the financial institutions from appointing more institutional directors onto the Modi Xerox board. But even in Modi Xerox there is no doubt about who holds the upper hand: the financial institutions hold a 51 per cent stake in Modi Rubber which was the main company which promoted Modi Xerox. And now with their proposal to convert their loans into equity, the institutions will also have a 10 per cent stake in Modi Xerox.

The power play in the two companies has not been the only two occasions when the institutions have made it clear that they are going to assert themselves if the family did not fall in line. Over the last few months they have been slowly tightening the screws on the Rs 1,200-crore Modi Group. All proposals for fresh projects have been stalled by the institutions. The prestigious Modi



K.K. Modi, Vinay Modi and B.K. Modi: hasty retreat

Any settlement in the Modi family is going to mean a division of the companies between the two warring groups. The three sons of K.N. Modi who are demanding a partition are keen on getting one of the key Modi companies, Modipon

Olivetti project has been the most prominent victim of the institutions' determined stand and its public issue has been stalled for several months now. The institutions have also put the brakes on the group's attempts to raise fresh loans. The last Modi Group proposal to go through was that of Modi Champion in February. As a result the group has found itself in an extremely tricky position with its growth, but now there are rumours too that Olivetti's patience is also wearing thin.

The institutions have had plenty to get annoyed about. The family has steadfastly refused to try and settle the issue. And at the last Modi Rubber board meeting, Bupendra Kumar Modi and Vinay Kumar Modi tried to push through



K.N. Modi : burying the hatchet

a resolution to oust their uncle K.N. Modi from the chairmanship of the Modi Rubber board and replace him with solicitor R.A. Shah. The meeting, as is now well known, degenerated into a slanging match and the institutions were at the receiving end of a good deal of abuse. Now they have struck back decisively and even though the case is in the Delhi High Court, the institutions have made it clear that they are the ones who call the shots.

Amongst those who have been removed are G. Mauk, the representative of Continental, which is Modi Rubber's foreign collaborator, and M.L. Modi a relative of the family. But more importantly, the institutions have also left open the option of appointing a finance director of their own choice who would even have power to conduct a thorough investigation into the company finances. It was this move which has finally brought the two sides on the verge of a settlement.

Paran Balakrishnan/*New Delhi*

SOFT DRINKS

A juice or a drink?

A consumer organisation goes to court claiming that Frooti is not a fruit juice

A swig of Frooti and you slake your thirst. Rarely does one contemplate whether it's a drink or juice which is being sipped. Does it make a difference? Apparently yes. And a raging court battle is going on in Calcutta between Parle Beverages and the Consumer Unit and Trust Society (CUTS) to settle the dispute.

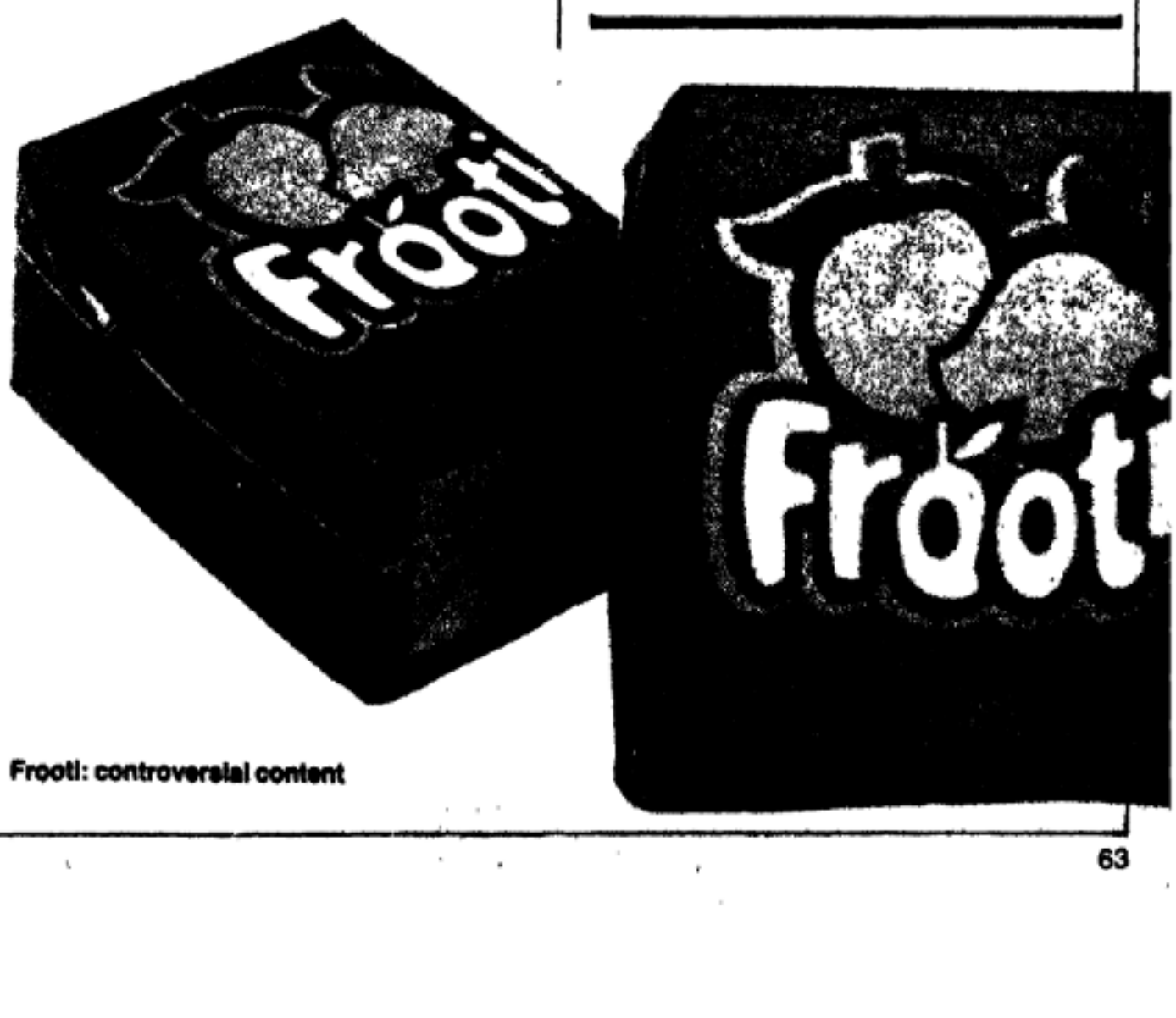
"It's a rip off," says Pradeep Mehta, general secretary of CUTS, referring to the entire Frooti affair. CUTS has raised the issue that any beverage which contains less than 25 per cent fruit juice is a synthetic product according to the Food Product Order 1955 (FPO). Besides, only an aerated beverage can contain pulp and not a ready-to-serve drink like Frooti.

The 'test' conducted by the Superintendence Company of India has shown that Frooti has a pulp concentrate of only 2.53 per cent, against the minimum requisite of 10 per cent as laid down by FPO clause II (i). Not only that, Frooti's packaging too is faulty, says Mehta. "In this connection, I feel it is my obligation to disclose the fact that the grant of licence without subsequent approval of the labels does not permit the party to market the products without such approval," says O.P. Gera, the all-India licensing officer.

"The average consumer is very naive," says Mehta adding that the advertising campaign of Frooti is misleading. Frooti is neither fresh nor juicy, insists Mehta. Anything packaged cannot be referred to as fresh. Moreover, a fresh fruit drink would only be available during particular seasons and not round the year.

However, interested parties in the fruit drink industry have strongly disputed CUTS' argument against Frooti. They claim that Frooti is "not a juice but

Tests have shown that Frooti has a pulp concentrate of only 2.53 per cent, against the minimum requisite of 10 per cent as laid down by the Food Product Order, 1955. Besides, only an aerated beverage can contain pulp and not a ready-to-serve drink like Frooti



Frooti: controversial content

GRASIM

a share with a spectacular annual average appreciation of 240% over last 30 years after a recent 3:4 bonus, now for just Rs. 35!

with Grasim Convertible Debentures

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Face Value Rs 70/- only**
  By investing a small amount you can acquire the blue chip Grasim Share
- **Early Conversion – 31 3 1989**
  Rs 35/ to be converted into 1 Equity Share
  Rest earns interest till redemption
- **Easy Liquidity**
  Debentures will be listed on 8 stock exchanges
- **Fully Secured**
  The debentures are fully secured

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

(Rs in Crores)

	1973 74	1979 80	1985 86	1987 88
• Turnover	101 87	247 35	471 77	675 67
• Profit before depreciation	18 14	21 42	34 19	61 00
• Gross Fixed Assets (excl revaluation)	52 34	115 45	300 43	364 02

GRASIM TODAY

- **World leader in Viscose Staple Fibre Production and Technology.**
- **Leading producer of Rayon Grade Pulp, Caustic Soda, Textiles and Cement**
- **World's leading manufacturer & exporter of specialised chemical plants & machinery and consultants for turnkey assignments.**

GRASIM TOMORROW

- **One of the largest producers of Cement and Caustic Soda from one single location**
- **Sponge Iron (Gas based)**
- **Hydrogen Peroxide**
- **T.V. Glass Shells**

There is an air of quiet confidence at Grasim – confidence born out of a fantastic track record An investment of Rs 1200 in 100 Equity Shares of Grasim made 30 years ago, is now worth Rs 88 700/ on the basis of the ex-bonus quotation of Rs 80 as on 3rd November 88

This represents an annual average appreciation of 240%.

Grasim has on hand major plans for modernisation expansion and diversification This would substantially increase the Company s turnover assets and profitability

With its various manufacturing divisions spread all over the country producing much needed products for the Indian economy Grasim is setting new standards of excellence in the corporate world – excellence embodied in such popular brand leaders as **Gwalior Suiting** and **Vikram Cement.**

Grasim s solid performance and growth make these Convertible Debentures distinctly different

Issue of 92 85 714 12 5% Secured Redeemable Partly Convertible Debentures of Rs 70 each for cash at par aggregating Rs 64 99 99,980

Issue Opens on: 12th December, 1988

A multi-dimensional, multi-locational megacorporation

GRASIM INDUSTRIES LIMITED
Birlagram (Nagda) 456 331 M P

Sobhagya-B/GI/1/88

MANAGERS TO THE ISSUE

SBI CAPITAL MARKETS LTD
202 Maker Tower E
Cuffe Parade
Bombay 400 005

The Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India Limited
Merchant Banking Division
16 Backbay Reclamation
Bombay 400 020

CHAMPAKLAL INVESTMENT & FINANCIAL CONSULTANCY LIMITED
Regent Chambers
208 Jamnalal Bajaj Marg
Nariman Point
Bombay 400 021

DSP Financial Consultants Ltd
914 Raheja Chambers
Bombay 400

H L FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS & MANAGEMENT SERVICES PVT LTD
Raja Bahadur Compound
32 Bombay Samachar Marg
Opposite Bank of Maharashtra
Bombay 400 001

FINANCIAL ADVISERS TO THE ISSUE

Lodha & Co.
14 Government Place (East)
Calcutta 700 001

a drink" which absolves it of all specifications involving juices. The label clearly states "mango drink", they exclaim. "Advertising has its own norms," they feel, pointing out that "fresh" in this case refers to the freshness of the product which is being maintained through aseptic packaging.

But then, FPO specifications are mere clarifications, and not definitions. For instance, adding water to pulp produces juice. However, it is not economic to package water, so the water content in the mango is reduced. Even export of juices takes place in the form of pulp, it is pointed out. The label 'synthetic' cannot be attached to Frooti as its ingredients are natural and it contains no preservative, these sources aver.

Interestingly, there is no equipment capable of revealing the contents of a finished manufactured product. In the test conducted by the Superintendence Company, Frooti was taken in a crucible and boiled. The residue was weighed after the moisture evaporated. One would get similar results even if mango juice was boiled.

These parties vouch for Frooti having more than 10 per cent of juice content but refuse to divulge further trade secrets. They also emphasise that CUTS is underestimating the intelligence of the average consumer. While the controversy rages, the Indian consumer by and large remains quite unperturbed. But come 6 December, and the issue will finally be resolved in the court whether they are drinking a juice or a drink.

Subadhra Rangamani/*Calcutta*

COFFEE

Brewing a price problem

The industry is worried about consumer resistance at home and a glut abroad in a year of bumper output

For those who cherish their coffee, the cup has turned a bit bitter. The decision of the Union commerce ministry last month to revise the minimum release price (MRP) for the brew has hiked retail costs by more than 40 per cent. While planters welcomed the 28 per cent revision in MRP, traders, initially, boycotted auctions held by the Coffee Board, fearing consumer resistance.

At a full board meeting of traders, planters and officials on 28 October, it was decided to implement the decision of the commerce ministry but many fears are yet to be laid to rest. Despite near unanimity in trade circles that the MRP revision was long overdue, there is considerable scepticism over the timing of the hike. It has come at a time when the country is expecting a bumper coffee crop of 2.25 lakh tonnes and the industry is wondering how it will increase domestic consumption of coffee. Worse, there is a fear of a massive glut in the global coffee market.

Says planter and Coffee Board members Lakshmana Gowda, "The revision was overdue. Small planters were struggling for survival since the government had not conducted regular annual revision of MRP. But now, unfortunately, the sudden increase has created a shock. This problem would not have come if the government had worked up the prices gradually every year." The industry will now have to worry about overcoming consumer resistance as well as increasing the domestic consumption from the present 60,000 tonnes to levels matching the bumper produce this year. Exports, given the international glut, are likely to stagnate at a little over one lakh tonnes.

Says board member and exporter Ramesh Raja, "The MRP has nothing to do with the export prices because Indian coffee will fetch a much higher price in the world market." At present the export prices are at least 30 per cent higher than domestic coffee prices. However, this happy situation may not last.

According to an article in the 'World Tea and Coffee Journal' reproduced by *Indian Coffee*: "The consequences of over-production will be felt throughout the year as importers are acutely aware that there is ample coffee in the pipeline. Such knowledge is expected to be reflected in the market as prices stay relatively low, according to traders." There is also pressure on the International Coffee Organisation, of which India is a member, to change its quota policy which is due for a review in September next year. Any change is likely to affect India's exports adversely.



Coffee Board office in Bangalore: hiking prices

But, as board chairman K. Sunder Rajan reiterates, "At present, there is no problem for Indian coffee exports. If there are effects of the hike in the domestic market, it will be known only after a while." But one thing is certain: the sudden decision of the commerce ministry is going to make the board's task harder, for it will have to combat both domestic consumer resistance and an international bumper crop year.

Prakash Belawadi /*Bangalore*

Batra's own depression

Bad news for Ravi Batra, the Anand Marg-loving, Indian born best-selling prophet of doom. According to the prestigious US business magazine, *Forbes*, his new book *(Surviving the Great Depression of 1990)* is "awful, appalling—and dull".

Worse still, *Forbes* claims that Batra did *not* anticipate



Ravi Batra: missed forecast

last year's stock market crash. His sole claim to prescience apparently is one sentence: "The stock market will continue to rise, but its total percentage gain by the end of 1987 may not be as strong as its gain in 1986." Notes *Forbes*, far from predicting the crash, Batra explicitly predicted that the bull market would continue until late 1989.

Intriguingly, Batra seems to have shifted gears. Says *Forbes* snidely: "Batra has virtually eliminated all mention of Laws of Social Cycles, Eras of Warriors, Ages of Acquisitions and all the other features that made his work so much more entertaining ...Particularly to be regretted is the complete absence of Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar ...the leader of a Hindu cult called the Anand Marg which has been accused of arson, child abduction, hijacking, perversion and international terrorism."

Shriram Honda up for sale

Now that DCM is making plans to split, the different groups of the family will have to decide what to do with their losing units. One decision has apparently already been made—Siddharth Shriram, who gets control of Shriram Honda, has decided that he will have to sell the company as he is not in a position to bear the burden of its losses.

Among the potential frontrunners for the company at the moment are the Munjals who are the Indian partners of Hero Honda, and Telco which once planned to go into collaboration with Honda to make the highly successful Honda Accord automobile.

Siddharth Shriram: selling off



From shoes to garments

Bata India is not missing the smallest trick in its efforts to promote its new North Star and Ambassador apparel ranges. As a part of the North Star range, the company will also be selling designer Walkmans and labelled duffel bags and belts. Bata India is also talking to Philips and Weston about supplying the Walkmans which are likely to sell for around Rs 600. Further downmarket, the company is planning to complement its Ambassador range by marketing colognes and aftershaves.



A Bata showroom: into shirts

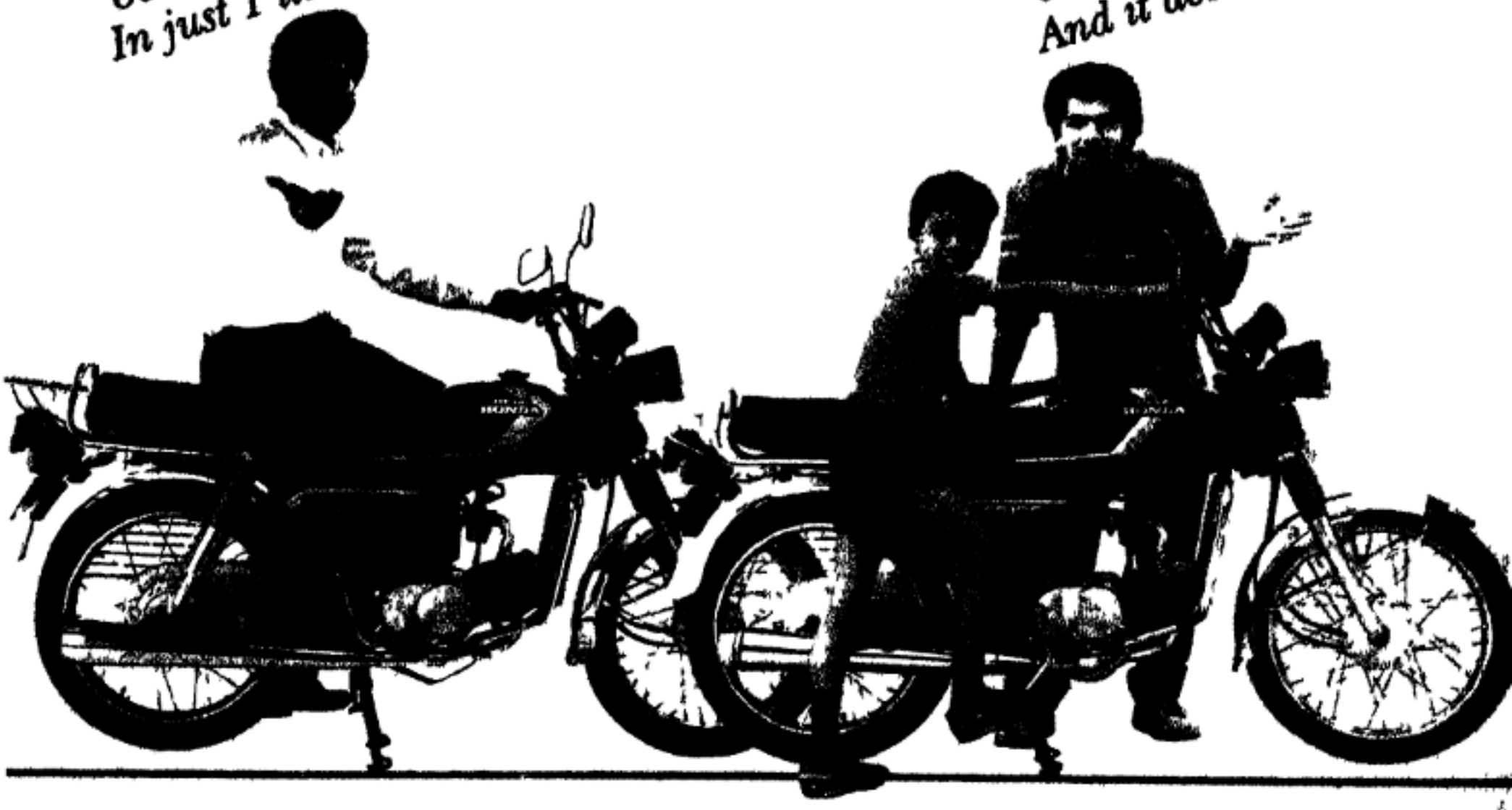
Bata is also going ahead with a lot of innovative plans to expand its presence in the garments field. It is running a trial project in Lucknow under which tailors will stitch school uniforms which will then be sold by Bata showrooms. Bata is also toying with the idea of setting up separate showrooms under the label Thrifty which will sell cheaply priced shirts.And it is going ahead with its plans to bring in the Gloria Vanderbilt, Mike Murjani and Tommy Hilfiger labels.

You can't stop a man on a Hero Honda.

From talking.

"An amazing 80 kilometres. In just 1 litre".

"It's a real easy rider, strong and comfortable. And it doesn't smoke!"



When we launched the Hero Honda CD 100 in 1985, we knew it was a good thing. A fact confirmed by the owners.

Some are moved by the economy (80 km/litre*). Some by the easy maintenance Others by the name of Honda. And all exult in the riding pleasure of India's only 4-stroke 100 cc bike. Honda engineering— Hero's choice.

In all, 200,000 happy owners, each with his own reason for feeling good. To all of you, we can say one thing. You've got a good thing going.

All said and done...

You've got a Good thing Going!

HERO HONDA

** At 40 kmph/130 kg*

WE KNEW always that he was hung up on the Presidential system of government. But becoming enamoured of the trappings of the American Presidential poll is, we feel, carrying things a bit too far.

For the latest on Union energy minister **Vasant Sathe** is that he wants to debate vital political issues with Opposition stalwarts, on television. And his first choice among victims is the Marxist chief minister of West Bengal and archetypal *bhadralok*, **Jyoti Basu**. With him, the irrepressible Sathe wants to discuss the Bakreshwar thermal power pro-



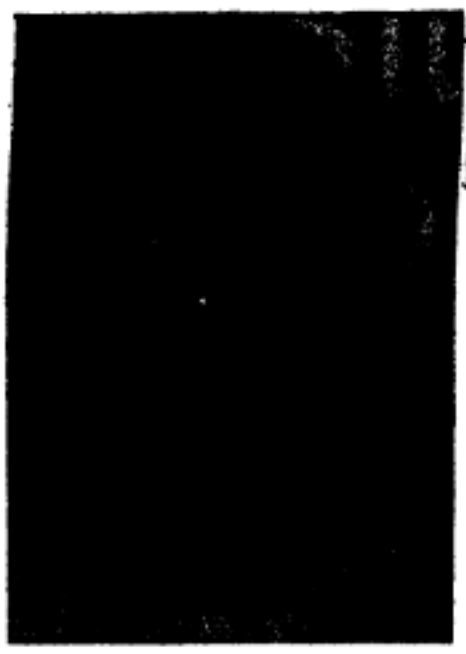
Jyoti Basu: the first victim?

ject—an issue bound to generate much heat, considering the opposing stands the Centre and the state have taken on it.

With uncharacteristic coyness, the minister did not come clean about his desire. Instead, he enlisted the services of Congress(I) legislator Sudip Bhattacharya to reveal his mind to the public. Perhaps, because this particular scheme did not originate in Sathe's otherwise fertile brain, but was inspired by Union minister of state for commerce Priya Ranjan Das Munshi (who had earlier wanted to address a joint press conference with West Bengal finance minister



Vasant Sathe: ace debater?



N.T. Rama Rao: biggest is best

Ashim Dasgupta and information minister Buddhadev Bhattacharyya).

The debate, the energy minister said, could be held at the state government's convenience. If the Leftists have the time, Sathe has the inclination—a little right-of-centre.

◆

BIG IS beautiful. But Andhra Pradesh chief minister **N.T. Rama Rao** more than just contradicts Shumacher's dictum. He believes that biggest is best.

The latest of Rao's grandiose plans to beautify the state capital is a 60-foot, 350-tonne, statue of Buddha that was installed on 'Gibraltar Rock' in Hyderabad's famous Hussain Sagar lake. The monument began the journey from Raigiri, where 66 sculptors and 100 workers worked for three years, to complete it. The 80 km trip is perhaps the most expensive made so far by either man or God.

The statue, which was installed in the middle of the lake last week, has the Buddha serene and unsmiling. But road contractors, sculptors and all those associated with Rama Rao's expensive fancy, are laughing all the way to the bank.

◆

A PUSHY producer trying with all his might to get an extension for his tele-serial. A party in power which believes that nothing succeeds like religious excess. And a story called the *Ramayan*. Ingredients which made possible the success of two 14-year-old Bengali twins from Calcutta. Named, appropriately enough, **Luv** and **Kush**, the youngsters have been chosen (from among the countless hopefuls) by modern-day Valmiki Ramanand Sagar to play the roles of Shri Ramachandra's twin sons in his recently-extended mythological *magnum opus*, *Ramayan*. The duo's only qualification for the role (apart from their near identical looks) appears to be their musical talent.

The filming at Umbergaon proved to be arduous, though. Shooting arrows under the expert tutelage of Rishi Valmiki left the twins with little time for themselves. Back home, too, theirs was a packed itinerary, with all of Calcutta trooping out to greet them. Result: life, for them, has become one endless round of functions, where they have to bear with people who wish to propitiate the 'divine' pair.

Fame, Luv-ly though it is, doesn't make for a very Kush-y existence.

Luv and Kush: divine twins



◆

AS SRIKKANTH and **Arun Lal** went in to open India's innings in the first match in the India-New Zealand Test series, one of them was almost certain to create history. In the end, the honour went to Arun Lal.

The maiden delivery of

Richard Hadlee's third over was a lethal legcutter, which had Lal fending helplessly and then offering a catch to a gleeful Chris Kuggeleijn in the slips. This dismissal made him Hadlee's 374th Test victim and elevated the Kiwi speedster to the rank of the highest-ever wicket taker in Test history, upstaging Ian Botham in the process.

His unfortunate victim, the dimunative Lal, he said would "go down in memory as a very special person." Philosophised Hadlee: "Imran, Kapil and Marshall all have the potential, (to overtake his record). But, remember they will have to overtake *me*." The bowler also hoped that the bionic Botham will come back to Test cricket with a bang and contend with him for a place at the top.

Struggle, for Hadlee, seems to be the spice of life.

◆

THE NEHRU birth centenary celebrations commenced recently, at Teen Murti Bhavan and the star attraction of the function was melody queen **Lata Mangeshkar.** The other celebrity celebrants, including President R. Venkataraman, vice-president S.D. Sharma and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, being there, merely, as it were, on sufferance. Polite attention was paid to their speeches, but the audience sat up only when Lata came on centre-stage. And Mangeshkar, inspired, no doubt, by the solemnity of the occasion, excelled herself. Beginning her recital with a Sanskrit *shloka*, she went on to sing an old Gandhi (the Mahatma) favourite, *Allah tero naam*, followed by the jingoistic *Bahaduron bade chalo, vijay tumhe bula rahi hai* (Soldiers, march on, victory beckons you).

The *piece de resistance* was, however, *Aye mere vatan ke logon*—the song which had brought tears to



Nikhil Bhattacharya

Richard Hadlee: record feat



Raj Soni

Arun Lal: part of history

Panditji's eyes when it was first sung by Lata at the Republic Day celebrations immediately after the Indo-China war of 1962. The number, dedicated to the unknown Indian soldiers who had died for the motherland, had moved Nehru so that he broke down publicly. As did the spellbound audience, as memories were revived of that day, so many years ago.

Said Lata: "I have seen tears in Panditji's eyes when I sang this song. I do not know the price of those tears, but the history of India will have to pay for them."

◆

SHE HAD maintained a dignified silence all along. But being called a cheat by ex-husband **Anup Jalota** was more than **Sonali** could take. And her pent-up ire found expression in an interview with *Filmfare*.

Denying the charge of cheating on her husband, she disclosed that she had always levelled with him about the new man in her life, Anup's *tabalchi* Roopkumar Rathod. Being cuckolded, the portly singer could live with. But his ego, evidently, found it difficult to take the fact that he had been upstaged by a mere accompanying artiste. And one day he even (oh grief, oh horror!) broke his wife's *tanpura* into a hundred little pieces.

Sonali, quick to the defence of lover boy, said: "What's so bad about being a *tabalchi?* Aren't Allah Rakha



N Prasad

Sonali: piqued

and Zakir Hussain *tabla* players?" (Mr Rathod, take a bow). "Can Mr Anup Jalota ever match their status in the international arena?" Then the cut direct: "Successful *bhajan* concerts and manipulated cassette sales don't make a great singer."

Still obviously smarting over Anup's refusal to promote her career, Sonali ascribed his disinclination to his inferiority complex: "His technique is by no means perfect."

Scoring one for women's lib, Sonali will not be accepting any alimony from ex-husband, even though Anup has extended feelers that his concert fees be hiked to help him pay his dues to the lady.

Talk about making the best of a bad situation!

Compiled by Seema Goswami

Lata Mangeshkar: reviving memories



N. Prasad

Prize stud of Hindi cinema Chunky Pandey is one year older. But no further away from pushy mother Snehlata Pandey's sari *pallav*. Even his birthday bash was organised by mama dear, who looked on indulgently while darling son was all over anything female in sight. He hugged Lubna Adam, petted Sabia, threw in an obligatory kiss to fiancee Dimple and whispered sweet nothings into the dusky siren, Rekha's ears.

If this is his way of setting all doubts about his preferences at rest, somebody should tell the guy that he's trying too hard.



Chunky Pandey: setting doubts at rest

Better late than never. The poor man's Mithun Chakraborty, Govinda, has now come clear about wife Sunita and new-born daughter Narmada. And true to *filmi* prototype, he has now swung to the other extreme—regaling bystanders with his *kitni-pyari-bachchi-hai* routine. Fatherhood, then, has accomplished the impossible—made the poor little boy from Virar even more of a poor joke.

Dimple Kapadia goes coy in her middle age. The sizzling smooches of *Saagar* and *Jaanbaz* are a thing of the past, the *Bobby* girl will not allow anyone anywhere near those famous come-hither lips.



Govinda: acknowledgement, at last

The Deols, of course, are an exception—both *beta* Sunny and *papa* Dharmendra. The latter got lucky during the filming of Anil Ganguly's latest venture. The shot required Dimple to kiss the lusty Jat on the mouth and all prudery forgotten, the auburn-haired temptress promptly obliged. Only to defend later: "It was just a quick, passing shot, not a real smooch."
Disappointed, lady?

Dimple: no kissing, please



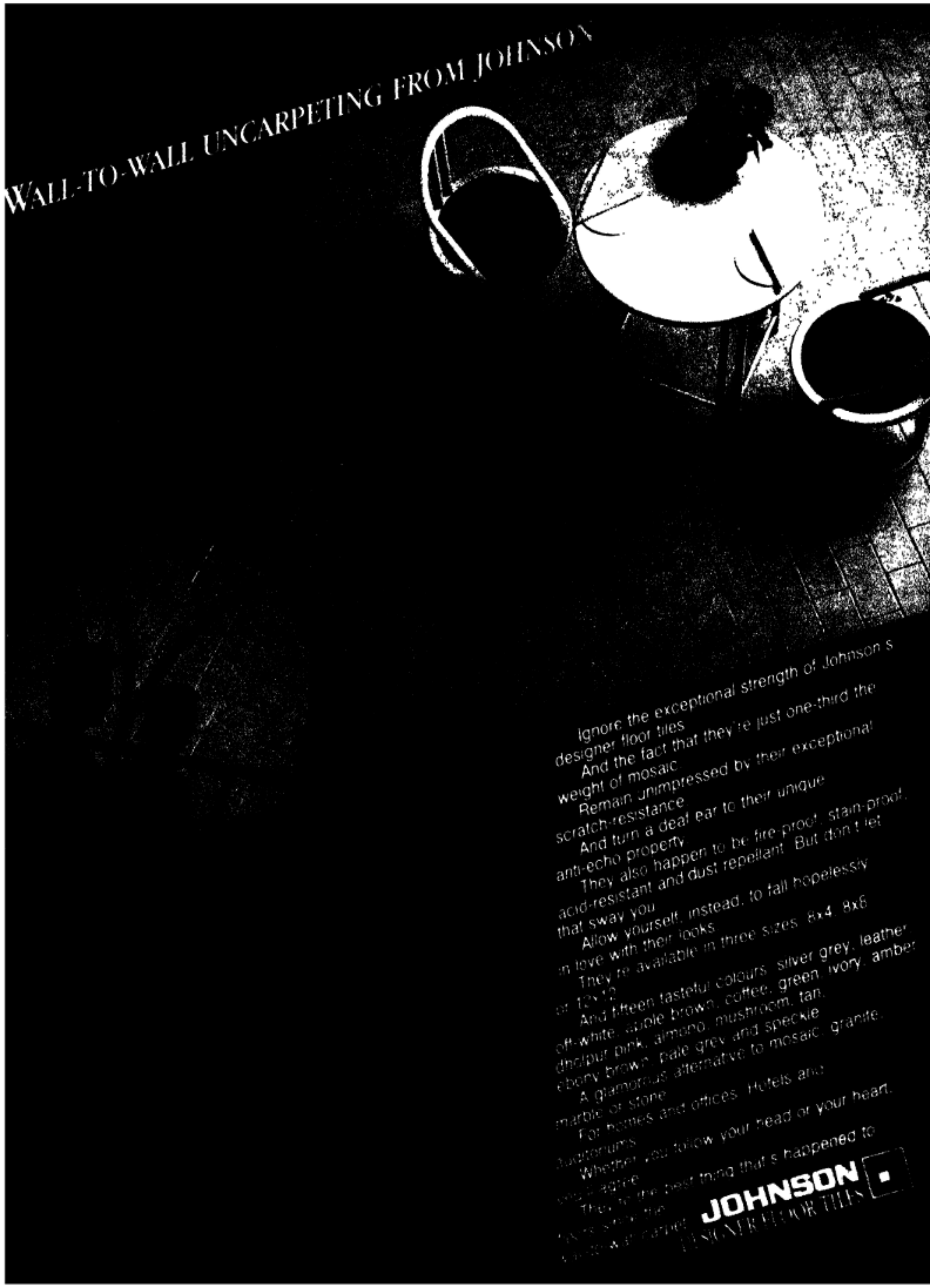
After Sridevi, what? Fatherhood, a second time round, for Mithun Chakraborty. Wife Yogeeta recently gave birth to another baby boy at Breach Candy Hospital. With Mimo, his first-born, Mithun could not establish much of a rapport, because of his preoccupation with both work and play. So the young 'un developed into a regular mama's boy. This time, the saturnine star intends to ensure that the new arrival grows up papa's pet and has, therefore, decided to return to the straight and narrow—all detours named Sridevi, forgotten like a bad dream.

How did Simi Garewal get permission from the Prime Minister to make a film on him? Apparently, Gopi Arora himself approached Rajiv with the request that the much made-up Ms Garewal be allowed to interview him at length for her proposed film. Such a documentary, the dimunative Arora assured the PM, would greatly advance his standing abroad.

But why on earth should Arora bother to boost Ms Garewal's prospects. (After all, isn't he allergic to the name Garewal, in any case?)

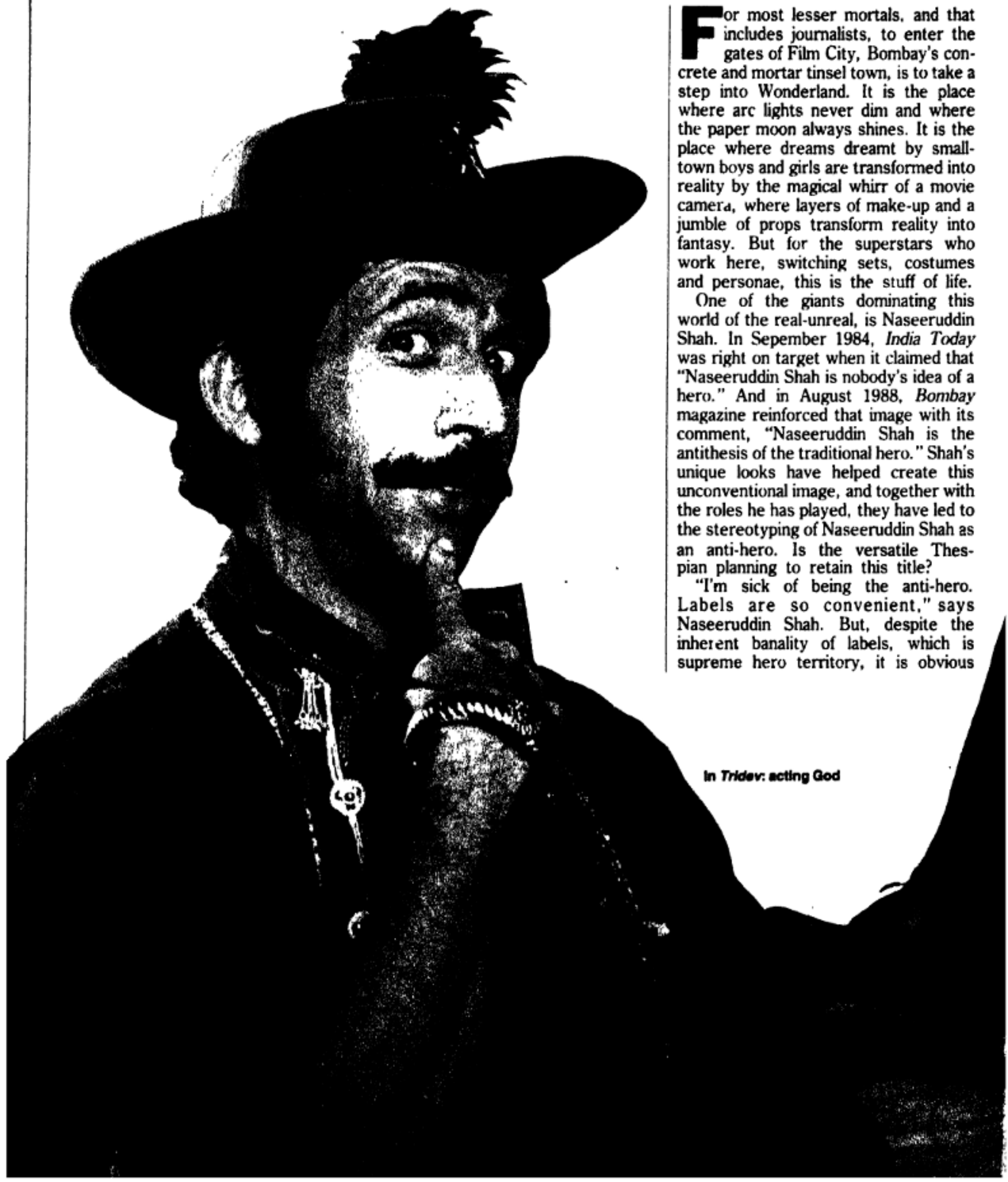
Step forward, Dhirubhai Ambani, the veteran industrialist and current Congress(I) financier, who now has substantial clout in Delhi. And so, when he asked Arora for a favour, the I and B secretary could not refuse.

SUNDAY wishes to make it clear that neither this nor the endless sponsorships offered by Reliance to Simi's ventures should be interpreted as suggestive of any impropriety. After all, Ms Garewal is a feminist and a professional. ■


WALL-TO-WALL UNCARPETING FROM JOHNSON
Ignore the exceptional strength of Johnson s
designer floor tiles
And the fact that they re just one-third the
weight of mosaic
Remain unimpressed by their exceptional
scratch-resistance
And turn a deaf ear to their unique
anti-echo property
They also happen to be fire-proof, stain-proof,
acid-resistant and dust repellant But don t let
that sway you
Allow yourself, instead, to fall hopelessly
in love with their looks
They re available in three sizes 8x4, 8x6
or 12x12
And fifteen tasteful colours silver grey, leather
off-white, duole brown, coffee, green, ivory, amber
dholpur pink, almond, mushroom, tan,
ebony brown, pale grey and speckle
A glamorous alternative to mosaic granite,
marble or stone
For homes and offices Hotels and
auditoriums
Whether you follow your head or your heart,
you'll agree
That's the best thing that's happened to
JOHNSON

Of heroes and men

Naseeruddin Shah—actor or commercial star?



In *Tridev*: acting God

For most lesser mortals, and that includes journalists, to enter the gates of Film City, Bombay's concrete and mortar tinsel town, is to take a step into Wonderland. It is the place where arc lights never dim and where the paper moon always shines. It is the place where dreams dreamt by small-town boys and girls are transformed into reality by the magical whirr of a movie camera, where layers of make-up and a jumble of props transform reality into fantasy. But for the superstars who work here, switching sets, costumes and personae, this is the stuff of life.

One of the giants dominating this world of the real-unreal, is Naseeruddin Shah. In September 1984, *India Today* was right on target when it claimed that "Naseeruddin Shah is nobody's idea of a hero." And in August 1988, *Bombay* magazine reinforced that image with its comment, "Naseeruddin Shah is the antithesis of the traditional hero." Shah's unique looks have helped create this unconventional image, and together with the roles he has played, they have led to the stereotyping of Naseeruddin Shah as an anti-hero. Is the versatile Thespian planning to retain this title?

"I'm sick of being the anti-hero. Labels are so convenient," says Naseeruddin Shah. But, despite the inherent banality of labels, which is supreme hero territory, it is obvious

that Naseeruddin Shah is a far cry from being the archetypal hero Real heroes wear baggies that don't crease and patent leather shoes that always shine, while Naseer sports a Gujarati *dhoti-kurta* and ill-fitting *mojadis* Heroes possess beards that don't seem to grow, while Naseeruddin Shah has to shave everyday. Heroes are surrounded by a coterie of *chamchas*, while Naseeruddin sits alone in the make-up room reading a Penguin edition of short stories.

Although Naseeruddin Shah, the blue-eyed boy of art films, is now spending more time in the big bad world of commercial cinema, he has no desire to transform himself from the anti-hero to the conventional hero "I am not after that at all I don't have any such idea."

The celluloid medium had fascinated Shah right from his school days in Nainital when he mimicked the histrionics of Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy But exposure to popular Indian cinema, brought the realization that it was an escapist form where both the medium and the message served as a massage. Even so, he made a few hesitant forays into vacuous ventures cranked out by the commercial alias *masala* alias mainstream alias entertainment cinema

On the other hand, Shah's performances in *Nishant*, *Manthan* and *Junoon*, Benegal's trilogy on human exploitation,



At work: acting requires discipline

proved that he had the coveted ability to get under the skin of a flesh and blood character. Critics who were bowled over by his intense performances placed him on a pedestal which had not been occupied by anyone else before. Being an NSD and Film Institute graduate, he also approached acting with an air of diligent professionalism. So by the time Naseeruddin Shah was barely three films old, he held exclusive rights to being a "real actor" from India. Despite increasing accolades, he showed no signs of acquiring the typical hero's over-sized image or for that matter, ego Even as late as 1985, with nearly 70 films and three national awards to his credit, as well as a cult following among India's intelligentsia, Naseeruddin Shah was still rejecting stardom. He was avoiding the "air-conditioned, cocooned existence" that is intrinsic to what he calls "heroic" cinema.

Three years later, Naseeruddin Shah is still rigged out as the "dirty villager" he has played umpteen times in movies like *Paar* and *Chakra*. But now the role for the day is different, because it requires him to sing and dance, beat up a few *goondas*, embrace a steamy starlet and so on *ad nauseam* All the spicy stuff that superstars and heroes do, and anti-heroes reject. Here in Film City, Naseeruddin will spend almost eight hours a day on the sets of Rajiv Rai's multistarrer, *Tridev* (three gods). One of the gods is played by Shah—a thirty-eight-year-old man, hardly God, hardly star and certainly not hero.

Naseeruddin has always known that his face may not be his fortune, but the expressions that it can communicate are worth a million bucks. The expression he wears at the start of this day, are confusing. His face is very much the same as the fierce Brahmin's in Girish Karnad's *Godhuli*, with those deep-set

Shah's performances in Shyam Benegal's trilogy on human exploitation, proved that he had the coveted ability to get under the skin of a flesh and blood character



As 'Hero Hiralal': swagger and style

Courtesy
PLA Productions

eyes, so piercing and yet so introspective. But the eyes don't communicate the same idealism and vitality that were visible in the lawyer who appeared in Govind Nihalani's *Aakrosh*.

Four years after starring in that memorable role, Shah has grown disillusioned. Today the idealist's face wears a sense of pathos along with its gamin charm. The disillusionment with art cinema has been brewing over a number of years, but Shah has voiced it only a few months ago. And in the process, has rustled up a mega storm, worthy of documenting on film. Right now, he has signed up for six commercial films, all at one time.

Naseeruddin Shah has always known that his face may not be his fortune, but the expressions that it can communicate are worth a million bucks



Gautam Patole

Relaxing at home: domestic harmony

While Shah still remains at the centre of the controversy, here in the calm and seclusion of his air-conditioned make-up room, his tone is placating. "I haven't switched over completely. There are no serious films being made. You can hardly blame me for that. I have to work. Besides, I have acted in all the three NFDC films that have been made this year—*Pestonjee*, *Rihayee* and *Vasundhara*."

Shah is well aware that there is more *masala* than matter in the commercial movies. But that doesn't seem to affect him one iota. "If the actor is good, his talent will come out, sooner or later. Of course a lot depends on the director. An actor cannot be brilliant without the director's help. If you happen to be stuck in a film with a faulty character, there is nothing you can do about it. You are doomed." In his own career, Shah gives *Sparsh* and *Masoom* the highest ratings for actor-director harmony.

In Ketan Mehta's latest Naseeruddin starrer, *Hero Hiralal*, which was nationally released last month, the actor alone seems to have worked overtime in interpreting the character. Perhaps this is because he is so averse to the idea of sharing the fate meted out to the film's protagonist. "Hiralal is not just a star-struck rickshaw driver, nor does he aspire to be a star. He is a man whose brain has been affected by Hindi movies. For this 'first day, first show wallah', life is a Hindi movie in which he is the hero." Even though on screen, Naseeruddin Shah plays Hero Hiralal with great panache, he doesn't ever extend the latter's rules to his own life. Hiralal is oozing with the desire to display his *herogiri* as seen in his exaggerated swagger or the swashbuckling flourish of his red scarf.

Off-screen, Shah's life seems to possess little scope for exaggeration. It is bound by a phenomenal sense of determination, discipline and perspective. The rules that govern his life are more applicable to a sportsman than a star. These are the rules he learned at Delhi's prestigious National School of Drama when it was headed by Ebrahim Alkazi. "He taught me that acting is not just fun. It is like any other job and requires discipline." Although Naseeruddin Shah admits that he isn't a saint, he still tries to wake up early every morning, hit out at the tennis courts at least thrice a week and drink only on weekends.

Despite his unglamorous image, Shah's own success story reads like a melodramatic Hindi movie script. Once upon a time there was a civil servant's son who from the age of five, was determined to become a famous actor. He was consumed not by text books but the act of watching people. The man he watched most intently was Geoffrey Kendal whose roving Shakespearean troupe performed at Shah's school in Nainital twice a year. (Kendall's influence on the young Naseeruddin is so well-known that it could take up a page in art cinema folklore.) When the time came to decide on a career, Shah made up his mind not to be an honourable doctor, lawyer or civil servant, but the world's greatest actor. His orthodox Muslim father wouldn't hear of it.

With Shabana Azmi and Anupam Kher in *Pestonjee*: controlled performance



In a fit of anger, the impulsive adolescent packed his bags and left home. He boarded the train to Bombay, which to his small-town mind, seemed to be a city of golden opportunity. There luck played truant with him. His pocket money ran out, and he was forced to sell his clothes at Chor Bazaar. His school blazer went for ten bucks. When he finally found work as an extra in films, Naseeruddin roomed with fifty other souls in a *zari* factory at Bombay Central.

Soon even the small-time roles were hard to get and empty pockets saw him sleeping on roads, under bus stops, on pavements, alongside Pamposh restaurant or outside National College.

Then one day, just like in the movies, the messiah came. A big grey car stopped outside National College and a manicured foot stepped out. The foot belonged to Saeeda, Dilip Kumar's sister, and a friend of Shah's father's. The runaway *enfant terrible* was washed and fed and sent back home. But on the train he swore to himself that "one day I'll be back."

The rest is history. English honours at Aligarh Muslim University; a successful stint at Delhi's National School of Drama (NSD); a scholarship at India's premier acting institute at Poona; and finally, *Nishant* and the big break with Shyam Benegal. Naseeruddin Shah was back, just as he had promised himself.

By avoiding the trap of fitting into a specific mould, Shah has managed to grab roles that show off his versatility. He can play a straight-laced Inspector Ghote (*The Perfect Murder*) and a diseased slum *dada (Chakra)* with equal conviction. But his obsession with the notion of exploding stereotypes has led him to be perceived as an actor devoid of a distinct identity. On the one hand, he is trying to slough off the arty label by moving out of art cinema. On the other hand, he has a host of realistic characters haunting his screen career.

Sonam, who struts on the sets of *Tridev*, totally at ease with a qualified actor like Naseeruddin, says, "It's so funny to see him dancing. One has only seen him acting." Well put. And Naseeruddin must realize that his intelligence and self-respect infuse a sense of mockery into all his Mithun-style celluloid capers.

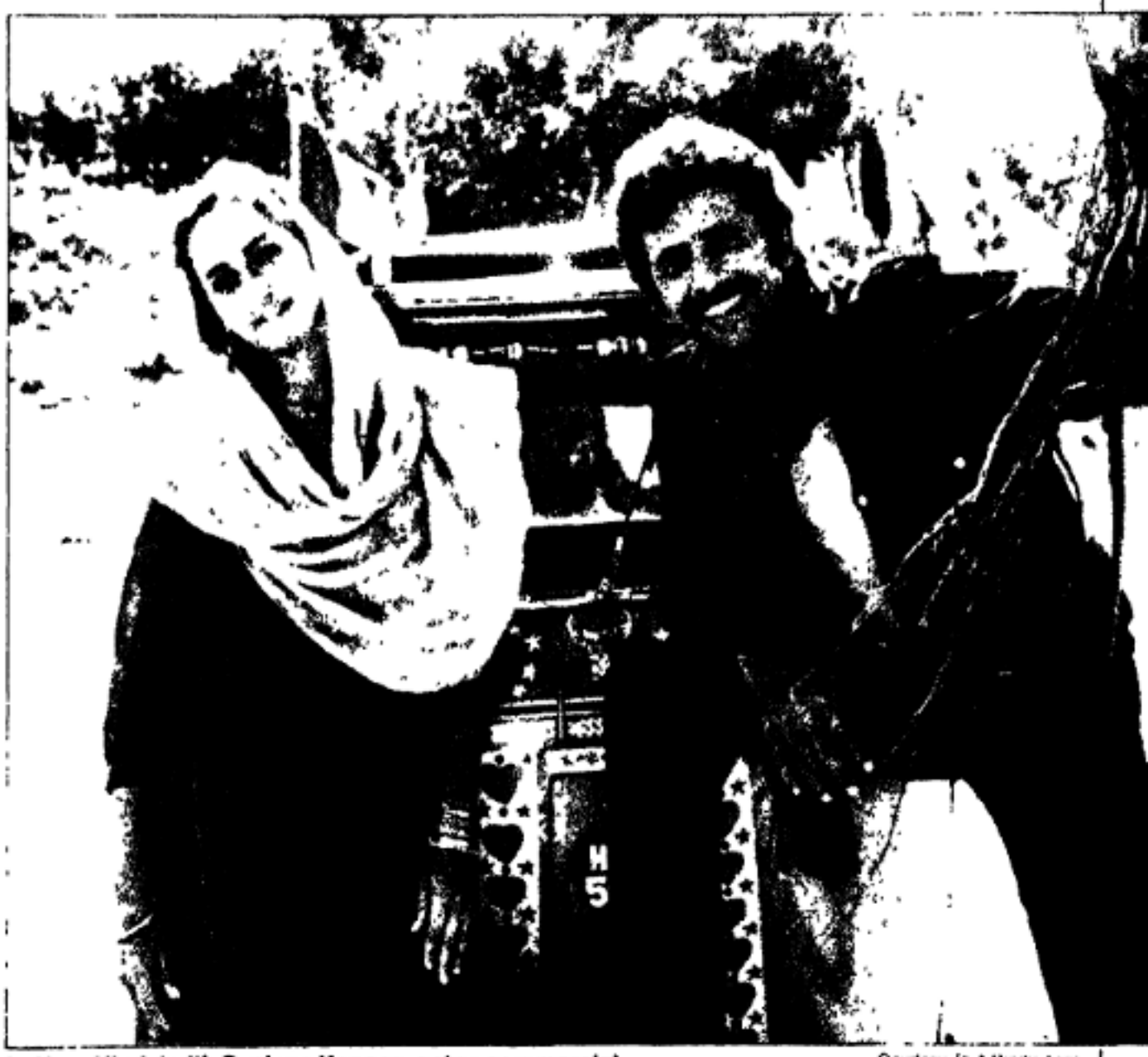
This mockery is probably a product of his own flair for parody. "My comic talents have not yet been fully exploited," he says. The only film where Shah's comic histrionics come to the fore are in Kundan Shah's uproarious social comedy, *Jaane Bhi do Yaaron*. Speaking of Naseer's "scream of an appearance as the stylised and villainous lawyer" in Saeed Mirza's *Mohan Joshi Haazir Ho*, noted critic Maithili Rao reinforces this idea. "His capacity for humour hasn't been tapped. He is excellent at self parody."

Right now Naseeruddin Shah is far too consumed by his career to throw teasers at himself. He has very little time to pause, leave alone stop and think. When he's not before the camera he's on stage producing worthwhile theatre with his co-starrer for life, Ratna Pathak Shah. His dedication to theatre is an important dimension because it is the medium through which he retains close contact with his wife and the real world. Despite his heavy shooting schedules this year, Shah has managed to squeeze in three plays—*Waiting for Godot*, *The Odd Couple* and *The End Game*. Even after nearly eight hours of endless takes under a super strong sun, Shah wipes off the trickles of perspiration and gets ready to zip out of Film City in his Maruti for a rehearsal of Pearl Padamsee's *Dangerous Liaison*.

What is it like switching mediums?

"It's all one and the same thing," replies Shah. "Bad acting is bad acting. Whatever is bad on stage is considered *filmi* and whatever is bad on film is considered stagey." Although to some people, theatre and film might have certain mutually exclusive properties, at this moment, Naseeruddin Shah doesn't think it is important to define them. It betrays his famous aversion to categorization.

For now, Naseeruddin Shah, actor supreme, defies all definitions. Both his life and his career are teeming with



In *Hero Hiralal* with Sanjana Kapoor: going commercial

Courtesy PLA Productions

Shah has managed to grab roles that show off his versatility. But his obsession with exploding stereotypes has led him to be perceived as an actor devoid of identity

innumerable options. And to him, even though some of them might appear contradictory, they are all capable of co-existing. Though many perceive him to be at the cross-roads, Naseeruddin Shah seems to be nowhere near making specific choices. Which is why in a single lifetime, he will be Rajiv Rai's *dev* as well as filmland's down-to-earth guy, or the angry young man as well as a composed and dedicated actor, leading man and anti-hero, mature husband and boyish rebel. By preserving his incompatible components, exploiting his chameleon character, he might stumble onto the third dimension which will boost his commercial image without diminishing his other manifestations.

Anuradha Mahindra/*Bombay*

Snakes and ladders

Bahuguna's expulsion from the Lok Dal leads to speculation about the creation of a splinter Opposition group

For the Opposition, every small step forward has meant a large one back. Each time unity moves appear to be making some headway, they suffer from some setback. But never before have the chances of the Opposition merging to form a new party seemed as bleak as they do now.

On 15 November, the Lok Dal split after President Bahuguna was expelled by the Devi Lal faction at a requisitioned meeting of the party in New Delhi. The Haryana chief minister was elected in his place by a massive majority after the meeting criticised Bahuguna for his "negative role" and for creating "many hurdles in the way of Opposition unity". The split has occurred just a month after the Congress(S) leader K.P. Unnikrishnan created a flutter by pulling out of the Janata Dal– the unified Opposition party the Congress(S) was to be part of, along with the Janata, the Lok Dal and the Jan Morcha. Unnikrishnan declared that his party would stay out on the day the merger was formally announced in Bangalore. Adding to the problem is the Jan Morcha convenor Ram Dhan's persistent refusal to recognise his leader V.P. Singh's decision to merge the Morcha with the Janata Dal. He continues to insist that the Morcha should exist as a non-political organisation.

And that's not all. To compound the sorry confusion, there is the possibility that Bahuguna, Unnikrishnan and Ram Dhan—who are in touch with each other—may form their own party. When confronted with reports to this effect, Bahuguna denied them but added, perhaps significantly, that all proposals concerning future action will be placed before the convention that his faction of the Lok Dal will hold. Unnikrishnan neither confirms nor denies the report ("What about a new party?" "Maybe, I cannot say," was his reply). He adds, however, that if members of the seven-member Opposition National Front create problems for Bahuguna and Ram Dhan (i.e., expel them), then the Congress(S) "will assess the new situation". Ram Dhan was unavailable for comment but he, too, hasn't denied reports of the move to set up a new party.

If Bahuguna, Unnikrishnan and Ram Dhan have been drawn together, then it is not only because they share a left-of-centre ideology. They also share an apathy towards Devi Lal. Bahuguna and the Haryana peasant leader had once united against Ajit Singh, Charan Singh's son, to split the Lok Dal. But their differences began surfacing soon after they became leaders of the Lok Dal(B). After Devi Lal's massive victory in the Haryana elections, the relationship took a turn for the worse, but it is only in the recent past that it attained the nature of a running feud.

The struggle for political ascendancy, of course, was settled in Devi Lal's favour well before the November party convention which expelled Bahuguna. Or specifically, when Bahuguna's right-hand man, Sharad Yadav, deserted him to join ranks with Devi Lal. Yadav, who was described as a "trusted lieutenant", switched sides after accusing Bahuguna of playing the Congress(I)'s tune and deliberately thwarting Opposition unity.

Initially though, it was Bahuguna's reservations about V.P. Singh that were perceived as the obstacle to the unity moves. But in time, these took second place to his disaffection for Devi Lal. On his part, V.P. Singh is much more favourably disposed towards Devi Lal. He has declared that he "would be happy" if Bahuguna were to join the Janata Dal. However, he has made no effort to effect a reconciliation between the two Lok Dal leaders.

Ram Dhan's reservations over the merger of the Jan Morcha with the Janata Dal stems in part from his belief that the former should retain its identity as an independent and non-political organisation. He is also upset with V.P. Singh for not consulting him on organisational decisions. However, of late, the Harijan leader has been engaged in a number of unpleasant confrontations with Devi Lal. For instance, at a Congress(S) meeting, Devi Lal referred to Ram Dhan as a *chamar* during a conversation with an Opposition leader. Ram Dhan is opposed to Devi Lal's caste-based politics—all the more so since Lal represents the upper castes and their interests. Moreover, any Opposition formation which includes Devi Lal, who has become an influential politician in his own

At a Congress(S) meeting, Devi Lal referred to Ram Dhan as a *chamar* during a conversation with an Opposition leader. The Harijan leader is opposed to Devi Lal's caste-based politics—all the more so, since Lal represents the upper castes and their interests

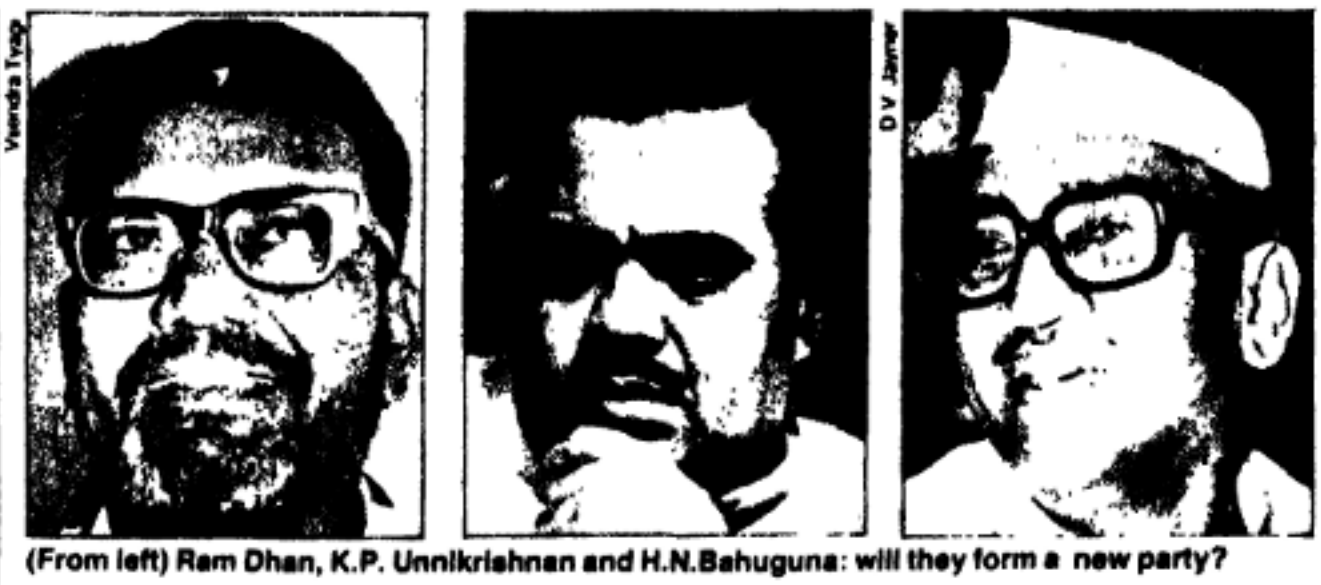
Opposition leaders at a Jan Morcha meeting: confusion in the ranks

Vijendra Tyagi

right, could well ignore the backward and scheduled castes. Already, Ram Dhan is upset that the Janata Dal has not highlighted issues that affect the Harijans. His camp followers say that the leaders of the unified party appear committed to appeasing the upper castes, with an eye on their vote bank.

In contrast to Bahuguna and Ram Dhan, Unnikrishnan was in the thick of unity moves right from the very beginning. If he did not accept the merger announced at Bangalore it was partly because he felt that the Janata Dal was forsaking the left-of-centre line that its leaders had decided to adopt earlier. Unnikrishnan, who still believes that V.P. Singh is the key to an unified Opposition, was upset over the manner in which the merger was effected. He holds Devi Lal responsible to a great extent for this. Unnikrishnan has been very critical of Devi Lal for making premature and *ad hoc* statements announcing Opposition unity. "Chaudhary Devi Lal went about like a bull in a china shop," he told SUNDAY, (30 October—5 November) just after the Bangalore meeting which announced the merger.

Unnikrishnan's differences with Devi Lal came out in the open much earlier. In July, at a meeting convened in the house of Biju Patnaik, Devi Lal announced what he claimed were "V.P. Singh's decisions" on the name, flag and symbol of the proposed unified party. This led Unnikrishnan to protest that the Congress(S) was not party to these decisions and that its consent could not be taken for granted. Singh intervened to say that they were only "proposals" and the meeting ended on this understanding.



(From left) Ram Dhan, K.P. Unnikrishnan and H.N.Bahuguna: will they form a new party?

A few days later, some Opposition leaders met at Haryana Bhavan. Based on the discussions (conducted by Devi Lal), the flag, symbol and name of the unified party (then referred to as the Samajwadi Janata Dal) was announced. Devi Lal maintains that the Congress(S) was party to the discussions, but Unnikrishnan, in a a letter to V.P. Singh, has described the claim as a "despicable lie". Unnikrishnan says that his party had made it clear from the very beginning that the effort should be to create a *new* party—with a radically new constitution, flag and image. "But we were caught up in the wheels of Janata Party politics," he says. Unnikrishnan has asked V.P. Singh, Ajit Singh and Ramakrishna Hegde to clarify who authorised Devi Lal to make the announcements, which, he says, came as a "rude shock" to all in the Congress(S).

In strictly electoral terms, Unnikrishnan, Bahuguna and Ram Dhan do not amount to much. Despite his supporters' claims that he has a following in Bihar, Bahuguna's influence is restricted to a small area of Uttar Pradesh—and even here the extent of his sway is debatable. Ram Dhan has yet to emerge as a major leader of the Harijans. As for the Congress(S), it is a spent force. Only its leader K.P. Unnikrishnan has some measure of influence, but even this is restricted to the region in Kerala where he was elected from. Not one of them can, like Devi Lal, deliver a state. Nevertheless, they are all politicians with images that transcend their pockets of real influence and can be part of the brains trust of any Opposition alliance.

Much will now depend on whether and how much V.P. Singh wants the three leaders in the Janata Dal. Unnikrishnan observes that all of them could join the party provided they were given clear-cut assurances on some specific issues. Recently, Bahuguna spelt out some of the points on which assurances would be welcome: among them, the setting up of an electoral college comprising members of all the parties. Declaring that he was totally opposed to the idea of nominating members to head various party bodies, he stressed that it was possible to hold elections for them right from the outset. Some of Bahuguna's other 'demands' were a clearly defined party constitution and a one man-one post stipulation.

If the Janata Dal does not win over the three leaders and their small following soon, then it is possible that they will form a new party. If they do, then it is likely that they will try to enlist the support of the communists. The success of this strategy will depend on whether V.P. Singh chooses to go along with Devi Lal and forges an alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party. If he does, then the communists may well support the new party. But at the moment, much of this remains conjecture. What is certain is that Opposition unity appears more elusive than ever before.

Seema Mustafa/*New Delhi*



In strictly electoral terms, Unnikrishnan, Ram Dhan and Bahuguna do not amount to much. Not one of them can, like Devi Lal, deliver a state. Nevertheless they are politicians with images that transcend their pockets of real influence and can be part of the brains trust of any Opposition alliance

LIVING INTEREST IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD



NEW TIMES

A Soviet Weekly of World Affairs.

The Soviet Union is making global waves, daily.

The USSR is indeed amidst her own "new times" today with an avalanche of sweeping reforms and changes.

The most appropriate journal to obtain an insight into these developments is NEW TIMES. It's a matchless weekly magazine in English, coming out of the Soviet Union.

One year : Rs. 23.00
Three years : Rs. 45.00

GIFT
A Full Size
Multi-Coloured
Calendar

Enclosed is my DD/MO receipt for **NEW TIMES** for
Rs 45 00 being 3 years subscription
Rs 23 00 being 1 year subscription

(please strike out whichever is not applicable)

My Name . . . . . .

Address . . . . . .

. . . . . .

Send this advertisement and payment to:

Navchetan Books (P) Ltd
5 E Rani Jhansi Road
New Delhi 110 055

Lok Vangmaya Griha (P) Ltd
85 Sayani Road, Leningrad Chowk
Prabhadevi, Bombay 400 025

Manisha Granthalaya (P) Ltd
4/3-B, Bankim Chatterjee Street
Calcutta-700 073

New Century Book House (P) Ltd
41 B Sidco Industrial Estate
Ambattur Madras 600 098

GUEST COLUMN

UDAYAN SHARMA

Bull in a Haryana shop

Why does nobody talk about what Devi Lal is up to?

There are many ways of proving that a man is corrupt. But Chaudhary Devi Lal has found a new one: anybody who disagrees with him must have been paid to do so.

Devi Lal's methods have led him to some interesting conclusions. In 1983, he told a convention of Opposition parties in Chandigarh that Charan Singh and his advisers were on the payroll of the Congress(I). In 1987, he picked on Charan Singh's son, Ajit. Not only had Ajit Singh been paid by the Congress to part Devi Lal from his destiny, but the Chaudhary even knew the exact figure involved: Rs 2 crores. Next, it was the turn of Chandra Shekhar, whose strange unwillingness to regard Devi Lal as the unquestioned leader of the Opposition was attributed to infusions of Congress(I) cash. Now, it's H.N. Bahuguna who is getting the full Devi Lal treatment: 'Congress agent', etc.

Of course, in the world according to Devi Lal, it is remarkably easy to absolve yourself of these corruption charges. All you have to do is become friends with the great man. So, when Devi Lal touched Charan Singh's feet in 1984 and returned to the Lok Dal fold, the old corruption allegations were quietly forgotten. And when he made up with Ajit Singh, who he now describes as a 'beloved nephew', Singh probably returned the mythical Rs 2 crores to the Congress. Even Chandra Shekhar, last month's Congress lackey, is this month's 'brother and colleague'. As for Bahuguna, the former leader of the Lok Dal faction that Devi Lal has now appropriated, it's going to be some time before he kisses and makes up with the Chaudhary, and so the corruption charges will be around for a while.

There are two extraordinary aspects to all this. The first is Devi Lal's brazenness and the almost total absence of any shame. And the second is the unwillingness of independent commentators to point out that the Haryana chief minister is a very strange man, indeed.

The Chaudhary's brazenness knows no bounds. During his campaign against the Punjab accord, his right-hand man was D.R. Chaudhary, the editor of *Peeng*. When *Peeng* attempted to expose corruption in Devi Lal's government, the chief minister, without a trace of embarrassment, began to suggest that its editor was a crook.

Then, there is his misuse of the state police and intelligence machinery. Whenever the Chaudhary visits another state, 250 Haryana plainclothesmen turn up (without informing the state administration) to assess how the great man's visit will fare. His intelligence department also has men in Delhi entrusted with the task of keeping tabs on all other Opposition leaders. All of this is quite open—Devi Lal is even proud of it.

In the world according to Devi Lal, it is remarkably easy to absolve yourself of corruption charges. All you have to do is become friends with the great man

Some weeks ago, he told the Lok Dal's central parliamentary board that the party's central office in Delhi was working against him. He was asked to substantiate his claim. "Intelligence reports," he replied without batting an eyelid and proceeded to read out the concerned report. His colleagues were shocked. "Do you spy on the party's own office?" one asked. "Yes," said the Chaudhary smugly. "My men are everywhere."

There's also his attitude to money. The Lok Dal's proud boast, in the days when Charan Singh led it, was that it never took money from



Ranjit Kumar

Devi Lal: a law unto himself

businessmen. No longer. Now, Devi Lal collects funds from everywhere. He is so awash in liquidity that at any given time, he carries a minimum of Rs 3 lakhs in cash on him. He never explains where this money comes from.

None of the above is secret. Nearly everybody who is involved in Opposition politics knows about the Chaudhary's ways. Why then, do you never read about it?

Why, indeed?

The adverse relationship between the press and the government in a democracy means that while the ruling party gets it in the neck, less attention is paid to the Opposition's misdeeds. There is something to be said for this principle.

But in the case of Devi Lal, perhaps, it has been taken too far. The press has a duty to enlighten its readers about a man who thinks nothing of manipulating a byelection (in Faridabad), whose idea of democratic discourse is the law of the jungle, whose granddaughter-in-law has access to guns that mysteriously misfire thrice in quick succession, and whose rape of the political system brooks no parallel.

The press has a duty to enlighten its readers about a man who thinks nothing of manipulating a byelection (in Faridabad), whose idea of democratic discourse is the law of the jungle, whose granddaughter-in-law has access to guns that mysteriously misfire thrice in quick succession

Would *you* like to be ruled by this man?



HERE'S ONE SMALL REASON WHY YOU SHOULD TAKE UI'S PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE POLICY

Your child Your family
Their future lies in your hands
And your happiness lies in theirs

That's why you try to do everything you possibly can, for their continued well-being

United India's Personal Accident Insurance Policy is one way of making sure that a sudden threat to your life doesn't cripple your whole family's future.

It provides for compensation in the event of permanent or temporary total disablement, permanent partial disablement, or death by bodily injury resulting from accidents It could be extended to cover limited reimbursement of medical expenses for treatment of bodily injuries resulting from accidents.

A family package and 'on duty'/ 'off duty' covers at discounted premiums are also available

So whether you are a construction or electrical engineer, veterinary doctor or bank cashier, machine operator or shopkeeper United India's Personal Accident Insurance Policy is a sensible act of caution that shows your family how much you care.

Act now. Contact any of our 1000 offices.

UNITED INDIA INSURANCE CO. LTD.
(A subsidiary of the General Insurance Corporation of India)
24 Whites Road, Madras 600 014

IITA /016

Maestro moves on

Zubin Mehta bids farewell to the New York Philharmonic

It will be the end of a long innings and a cherished association. Zubin Mehta, music director of the New York Philharmonic since the 1978-79 season, has decided not to continue in his post after his present contract expires in 1990-91. When he completes his tenure, Mehta will have held the post for 13 years, longer than any other conductor in the orchestra's 147-year history. The early announcement is meant to give the managers enough time to look for a replacement.

"After a period of deep reflection," Mehta said, "I have come to the conclusion that at the end of the 1990-91 season, my life must turn toward other directions. Having held the position of music director with various North American organisations since 1961, I must at this juncture pursue other artistic endeavours which have to do with less administrative activity than that with which a music director is usually involved.

"I have indeed enjoyed my tenure with the New York Philharmonic tremendously, making music with them at home and all over the world, and I certainly look forward to the coming seasons. I have gained enormously from this experience and have had the pleasure of sharing music with some of the finest orchestral musicians in the world. I have never been deterred from continuing the great tradition of the New York Philharmonic which I inherited, and certainly hope that my contributions to this organisation have been in keeping with what makes this orchestra one of the finest ensembles in the world."

Mehta is now in his eleventh season as music director of the New York Philharmonic, with which he spends an average of 22 weeks a year. In October 1983, Mehta's contract was extended through the 1990-91 season. Mehta and the orchestra returned from a triumphant tour of the Soviet Union in June 1988. After three performances in Leningrad, as well as three in Moscow's Tchaikovsky Hall, the ten-day tour culminated in a historic joint concert in Gorky Park with the State Symphony Orchestra of the Soviet ministry of culture.

Between 18 August and 10 September, 1988, Mehta led the orchestra on a critically acclaimed 16-concert tour of 13 cities in ten European countries. Mehta has also led the Philharmonic on tours of Latin America in 1982 and 1987, Europe and Israel in 1985, Asia in 1984, the US in 1981 and 1983 and Mexico in 1981.

Recently he conducted a new production of *Otello* at the Vienna State Opera and the highly praised new Los Angeles Music Centre Opera production of *Tristan and Isolde*, designed by David Hockney with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

"I have indeed enjoyed my tenure with the New York Philharmonic tremendously, making music with them at home and all over the world, and I certainly look forward to the coming seasons. I have gained enormously from this experience and have had the pleasure of sharing music with some of the finest orchestral musicians in the world"



Zubin Mehta: conducts with a passion

Born in Bombay, Mehta grew up in a musical household. His father Mehli Mehta, currently music director of the American Youth Orchestra in Los Angeles, co-founded the Bombay Symphony Orchestra. At 18, Zubin Mehta abandoned medical studies to pursue a career in music at the Academy of Music in Vienna. Seven years later, at the age of 25, he conducted the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonics. He returns annually to both orchestras.

Zubin Mehta's 1961-67 stint as the music director of the Montreal Symphony gave him the crucial visibility which led to his 1962 appointment as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. This made him the youngest music director of a major American orchestra, a post he held for 16 years.

Concurrent with his philharmonic duties, Mehta is music director for life of the Israel Philharmonic. He also regularly conducts the Vienna Staatsoper and the Royal Opera at Covent Garden. He also serves in an advisory capacity for the Italian summer festival, *Maggio Musicale Florentino*.

Stephen Stamas, the president of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York, Inc, commented, "Zubin Mehta has provided outstanding artistic leadership to the orchestra, and our musical life has been enriched by his contributions. We regret that he has decided not to continue after the end of his present contract. However, we look forward to the next three years of his leadership of the orchestra."

Added the managing director of the Orchestra, Albert K. Webster, "These years working with Zubin have been deeply satisfying to me to all of this Philharmonic colleagues. He brings inexhaustible energy, tremendous enthusiasm, absolute loyalty and the highest standards of personal integrity to every facet of the orchestra's life."

He went on: "His magnificent artistry has given joy and peace to millions. His stewardship of the Philharmonic over the decade has left an extraordinary legacy to his successor and to the public—the finest orchestra in the world. I count as one of my life's greatest privileges the opportunity to have been part of the Mehta years of the New York Philharmonic. Zubin never faltered in his devotion to his orchestra, he was available at all hours from every corner of the world, and he met each problem head on, with an uncanny ability to triumph over trouble and to transform adversity into opportunity."

Nirmal Mitra/*New York*

Unfriendly relations

Racism is rapidly becoming institutionalised in Thatcherite Britain

"The fight against racism is a fight against the state which sanctions and authorises it - even by default—in the institutions and structures of society and in the behaviour of its public officials."
—A. Sivanandan in *Race and Class*

Britain today is not awash with race riots, street matches, bobbies wielding heavy truncheons. Paki-bashing may not be the norm, the Brixton and Southall riots may be things of the past, and the National Front may no longer be killing Asians in broad daylight: but the essence survives. Racism in Thatcherite Britain prospers, though in the shadows.

Tory success has meant that even the politics of black power have got divided. Asians and Afro Caribeans no longer raise a clenched fist together. Even among Asians, there is a split between the Southall Sikhs, the East End Bangladeshis and the affluent Ugandan Gujaratis. And to keep the diverse ethnic minorities satisfied, squabbling and disunited, the government throws in crumbs of race relations. The race issue is kept burning through convoluted courses like the Racism Awareness Training which starts with the premise that racism is an integral part of white society.

Today every local council has a race relations or a community relations office. But while those in labour-controlled councils like Paling, Hounslow and Brent, carry on some sort of work, the performance of those in conservative or liberal boroughs (like Tower Hamlets in East London, famous for its ill-treatment of Bangladeshis) is little less than farcical. Ironically, in Thatcher's fast moving Britain, the Race Relations Act seems to be curiously static at the 1976 level.

"The act has no teeth, no gums even," said A Sivanandan, director of the Institute of Race Relations. "It cannot bite." The infamous act, which in its present form is a revision of the 1968 act, has created a body called Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) for smoothing out race relations. The CRE is today the apex race relations body in Britain. Curiously, it is appointed by the government. But its deputy chairman, Bhikhu Parikh, brushes aside criticism that the CRE being a government body is restricted in its function.

"The CRE is the only body which has the legal power to enforce the act," said Bhikhu Parikh. "Only the CRE can recommend important changes if it finds the government is pussyfooting on some issue. It can conduct a formal investigation and demand action if it finds racial discrimination." The CRE report *Living in Terror* published last year brought out the horrors of racism in areas like Tower Hamlets and Newham. Its annual report this year spelt out discrimination in the areas of housing employment and health.

The CRE sanctioned £2 million to community relations organisations last year. Even the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan received £15,000 from the CRE. "The CRE exposes discrimination in the media," said Parikh "and acts as a watchdog or an armed conscience for race relations."

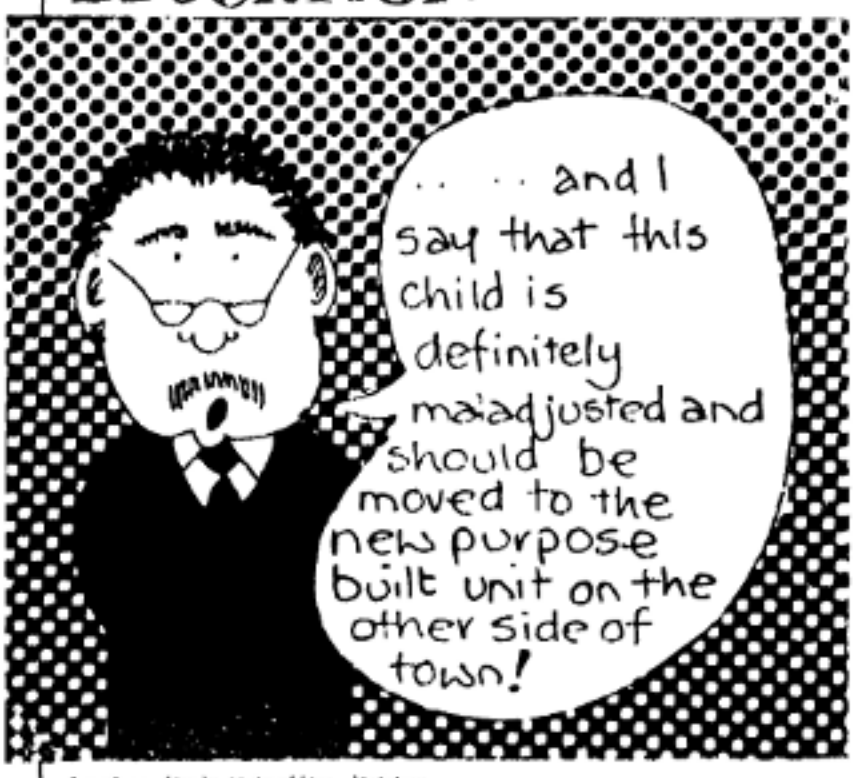
But didn't he agree that the CRE, despite publishing excellent investigative reports, failed to change government legislations, such as the Immigration Act? "We did manage to get a few concessions on the Immigration Bill," said Parikh. "We managed to make the government agree that the bill would be effective from August, so all those who had applied before August could still get in under the old act."

"A lot more needs to be done," said Parikh. "In education, immigration, housing—everywhere there's much more that we have to do. Also there are lots of areas where we have failed. Yet, I would say our main job is to keep the British public aware and expose discrimination in strategic areas."

Parikh's optimism is not shared by critics of the CRE who denounce the whole motive and functioning of the body. It is criticised as propagating and continuing racism by keeping the race issue alive and allowing the government to pass discriminatory laws.

"Race relation bodies are a farce," said a worker with Tower Hamlets social services. "We need laws for everybody on an equal level. There is no point passing discriminatory laws and then pumping in a lot of money to float race-relations bodies. If there were anti-racist laws to begin with, we would not need these bodies."

EDUCATION



Courtesy The Institute of Race Relations.

The government throws in crumbs of race relations to keep the diverse ethnic minorities satisfied, squabbling and disunited. The race issue is kept burning through convoluted courses like the Racism Awareness Training which starts with the premise that racism is an integral part of white society

A. Sivanandan: pioneering studies in racism





At the Institute of Race Relations, one of the premier academic institutions for the study of race, there was much cynicism about the effectiveness of the Race Relations Act and the CRE.

Director Sivanandan whose pioneering studies on racism have provided some of the most serious academic work in this area has traced the continuous link between colonialism and racism. In the institute's journal *Race and Class*, Sivanandan had attacked schemes like Racism Awareness Training (RAT) as being a degradation of the black struggle.

Said Sivanandan, "The Race Relations Act was passed to balance against the Immigration Act which was blatantly racist. The Act provides no power of review and does not have any contract compliance clause." As for the CRE, he felt it was only dealing with trivialities, enlarging them to look like life and death. All it did was get a few compensations for some people and was effective only for middle class people.

In contrast the Race Relations Institute studied the roots of racism and presented it to a large audience. A cartoon book brought out by the institute, *How Racism Came to Britain*, was nearly banned from schools by the conservatives but managed to escape. It illustrates vividly how colonialism and racism are closely linked and how one began where the other ended.

The institute, which started in the 1950s, was then controlled by ex-colonial bodies and big business houses which tried to promote race relations for their needs. In 1958, when race riots broke out in Notting Hill, the first studies on Britain were done by the institute which still maintained an academic and elitist stand.

In the Sixties more reports on Britain were produced and the board of directors, realising that the staff were getting radical, sacked the director. The inevitable split occurred in 1972 and from plush premises in Mayfair, the staff moved into a warehouse and lived on dole. The institute survived, with the help from churches and the sheer determination of its workers. It now has a modest office in central London with a library that is a researcher's dream.

Bhikhu Parikh: optimistic about the CRE



Terry Austin-Smith

Even today, a group of Asians celebrating Navratri in Leicester can have bricks thrown at them by fascist groups and the incident can still go virtually unreported in the newspapers. The extreme right wing National Front, once notorious for its anti-black street marches and attacks on non-whites, is still around—evidently satisfied with Thatcherism. Also around is its guru Enoch Powell.

It is a twin crunch for many non-whites in Britain. During Labour rule, they had to live under the constant fear of Tory-inspired race attacks. Now that the Tories are running things, racism, they say, has become a way of life. It needs more than race relations bodies to wipe it out.

Shrabani Basu/London

An aid to equality

Michael Day, chairman, CRE, defends the body

"Britain is still adjusting to a new reality as a multi-racial country," said Michael Day, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), during his recent visit to Calcutta. He feels that the formation of the CRE in itself, and the expenditure of £ 12-13 million of public money to run the commission, indicates that Britain is taking the racial problem seriously.

There is no country that is not suspicious or does not express its hostility of another community because of differences of colour, caste and ethnic differences. And Britain has experienced radical and substantial readjustment over the last 25 years. The British have had to accept the fact that people recruited as cheap labour after the war from the West Indies and the subcontinent were not temporary migrants but were "here to stay". But the onset of recession and the reduction of employment opportunities have led to the perception of Asians as a distinct threat.

"The CRE is no token body," said Michael Day in reply to criticism that the commission, being a government organization, was severely restricted in its functions. He cited examples in which they had protested against the policies of the government. Taking up the cudgels on behalf of a West Indian prisoner who was denied a job in the prison kitchen, the CRE went to court, fought his case and won.

The CRE is frequently accused of being a refuge for the middle class. But Michael Day chose to defend his organisation by mentioning the case of the Bangladeshis of Tower Hamlets. This low-income community had to suffer because of the discriminatory policies of the housing authorities. The CRE's efforts to "draw attention to their plight" finally ensured justice for them.



Questioned about the relevance of Racial Awareness Training schemes (RAT), Day defended them vigorously. They encouraged people to look at different ethnic minority groups in a new light, he said. One learns not to make assumptions on the basis of differences in accent and dress. Greater representation of Asians and Afro-Caribbeans in organisations like Marks & Spencers is being worked at, but it will take some time before they can compete at equal levels with the British.

And the CRE is here "to see that justice is done". It is often criticised for being low key. But as Michael Day points out, the emphasis is on results, not on self-promotion.

Subadhra Rangamani / Calcutta

Roofs that are light, durable and economical, don't crack, or leak, or harm your health.

Galvanized sheet roofs.

Because of the innumerable advantages they offer over other roofing materials, galvanized sheets are the ideal choice for various roofing applications Sheds, godowns, bus shelters, rain shelters homes anything that needs a roof

Made by coating steel sheets with zinc, galvanized sheets are corrosion resistant Which means they are extremely durable and almost immune to the negative effects of wind, rain and snow

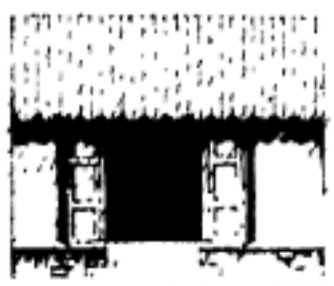
CRACK-PROOF

Galvanized sheets are incredibly strong The core of solid steel ensures that they do not crack Or chip So don't be surprised if you come across someone whose roof has lasted for a whole century



LEAK-PROOF

Unlike roofs made of other materials, galvanized sheet roofs do not leak No matter how heavy the rains So you are spared the discomfort of a roof that behaves like a shower in the monsoon



LIGHT-WEIGHT & ECONOMICAL

For their strength, galvanized sheet roofs are amazingly light Making installation very easy And saving you money on costs of transportation and storage You also save on the cost of supporting structures since they need to bear a lesser load



HEALTH-HAZARD FREE

If all these advantages have impressed you, there's one that will positively convert you to a galvanized sheet roofing admirer your health is not harmed Some roofing materials shed fibres that could seriously impair your health ask your doctor



But with a galvanized sheet roof over your head, you can stop worrying and start relaxing

I would like some more information about galvanized sheets.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

OCCUPATION _____

ALL INDIA COATED STEEL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION
POST BOX NO 4206 NEW DELHI – 110 048

Life-long roofs for healthier living.

Mudra:D AICSMA 3401

From Russia with love

Mikhail Gorbachev's three-day visit further strengthens Indo-Soviet friendship

Pomp, pageantry and protocol co-existed with bonhomie and the business of bilateral discussions. The three-day visit of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa Gorbacheva, from 18 November was more than a ritual expression of friendship between the two countries.

Nevertheless, the public relations came first. At the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Gorbachev disregarded the large contingent of Indian and Soviet securitymen, strolled across to a group of pressmen, and greeted them with a warm smile: "I am very happy to be once again in India. I am moved by the welcome I've had."

The fact that it was Gorbachev's second visit to the country in less than two years and his first to any state since he became the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, lent significance to the President's trip. The meeting between President Gorbachev and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was marked by a businesslike and constructive approach.

The most tangible outcome of the Soviet leader's visit was the announcementof a massive 3.2 billion rouble (Rs 5,300 crores) credit the largest ever extended by the Soviet Union to India. The credit will be mainly utilised for power projects in the thermal, hydro and nuclear sectors, and 2.2 billion roubles of the proposed credit will be used for the setting up of a 1000-MW power station, comprising two nuclear power reactors, in southern India.

The talks between Gandhi and Gorbachev and the Soviet delegation led by foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze and their Indian counterparts led by external affairs minister P.V. Narasimha Rao centred around bilateral issues.

Later, the emphasis shifted to international issues such as Afghanistan and Sino-Soviet relations. On 19 November, after accepting the prestigious Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for 1987, Gorbachev sounded a grim warning on Afghanistan and was cautiously optimistic about Sino-Soviet relations. The Geneva accord, he said, had been widely welcomed but Pakistan and the United States were finding it "hard to accept" the new approach to international dimensions.

One of the significant aspects of Gorbachev's visit was his emphasis on "closer ties" between India and China on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other. The Indo-Soviet summit statement, issued after the Soviet President's visit, however, did not mention any talks on China and the foreign office, when quizzed on the matter, skirted the issue. But diplomatic circles are buzzing with the speculation that President Gorbachev and Prime Minister Gandhi "differed" on their respective assessment of Chinese policies. The Soviet President is reported to have explained to Rajiv Gandhi that China is no longer following a confrontationist path and that the country has undertaken substantial modernisation programmes. The Prime Minister, however, is said to have voiced his doubts.

Political observers in Delhi believe that there has been a "qualitative shift in Indo-Soviet ties". They stress that it is inevitable that when Soviet relations with countries towards whom it was previously not very warm improves, there is bound to be a relative decline in the importance of India. Some officials in South Block observe that it is a matter of concern, that the swift rapprochement between China and Soviet Union should be taking place at a time when India is still grappling with its problems with China. The Soviets and the Indians go out of their way to stress that such fears are "groundless".

If one takes the optimistic view, the relationship between Soviet Union and India is founded on the principle of mutual benefit. The prime concern is the economic benefit which both sides can derive from each other. And Gorbachev's second visit to Delhi amply stressed this aspect of the Indo-Soviet relationship.

Patralekha Chatterjee/*New Delhi*



Mikhail Gorbachev (right) with Rajiv Gandhi: reaffirming old ties

Political observers in Delhi believe that there has been a "qualitative shift in Indo-Soviet ties". Some officials in South Block observe that it is a matter of concern that the swift rapprochement between China and Soviet Union should occur at a time when India is still grappling with its problems with China



About 4000 temples,
40 bathing ghats,
1600 gopika stories,
and Raslila of course!

Mathura beckons you. And you can stay by paying anything from Rs. 10 to 75 per head.

Everything about Lord Krishna is in and around Mathura. And in Mathura you have good accommodation too.

Stay in a Rs. 10/- per head dormitory or a Rs. 75/- aircooled room and chant the Lord's name as you see his legends come alive in the 4000 and odd temples. Go to Braj Bhoomi and perhaps you'll come across a cowherd who is a descendant of the Yadavas.

In and around Mathura there are many places you can see. Like Barsana, Gokul, Radhakund, Vrindavan, Nandgaon and many more.

Whichever place you go to, rest assured you'll find accommodation in the tourist bungalows and Yatri Niwas.

To give you an idea we have—

Tourist Bungalow Barsana (195 km. from Delhi)	— 20 beds
Tourist Bungalow Gokul Phone : 43 (153 km. from Delhi)	— 20 beds
Tourist Bungalow Civil Lines Mathura (145 km. from Delhi)	— 14 beds
Tourist Bungalow Radhakund (169 kms. from Delhi)	— 20 beds

So set out and see where the divine who authored the Song Celestial lived. Perhaps you'll hear his flute ..

Weekly conducted tours are also available from Delhi.

For further details contact :

U.P. State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd.
Chandralok
36 Janpath, New Delhi-110 001
Phone : 3322251
or
U.P. Government Tourist Offices
all over the country.

F N/XIII-36

SUNDAY WEEK

BEGINNING 27 NOVEMBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March–20 April) This is a lucky week for you Your financial prospects are bright However, be wary of your colleagues Your success is likely to arouse their jealousy and hostility Be tactful and patient Artistes and intellectuals will be rewarded On the home front there will be peace and happiness
Good dates: 30, 2 and 3
Lucky numbers: 5, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: West



TAURUS (21 April–20 May) This will be a hectic week You will be busy reaping gains from past efforts On the other hand, since you may encounter some financial problems, be wary of launching new enterprises Do not be extravagant Avoid arguments with your superiors An unexpected visit from a close relative is forecast this week On the domestic front, avoid controversies
Good dates: 29 1 and 2
Lucky numbers: 2, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: North



GEMINI (21 May–20 June) This is a favourable week for love and marriage Do not gamble or take unnecessary risks this week Political involvements may create some problems A major incident may leave an impact on your mind An untoward happening could prevent you from undertaking a journey you have had in mind Take care of your health
Good dates: 28, 30 and 1
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: South-east



CANCER (21 June–20 July) This will not be a favourable week for romance The domestic front will not be peaceful However, do not lose heart because you will have enough will power to see you through this crisis. Your financial prospects are not too bright. A member of the opposite sex will attract you. Be careful about your health
Good dates: 27, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: North-east



LEO (21 July–20 August) Financially, this will not be a good week for you A word of advice avoid gambling and speculation Do not be disheartened if your schemes and ventures are not successful Businessmen should not launch new projects Matrimonial plans are best forestalled The marriage of someone close to you may cause some anxiety
Good dates: 28, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



VIRGO (21 August–20 September) This will be a lucky week for sportsmen A long journey may be in store for you Businessmen are advised to refrain from executing new ventures this week A word of caution your health as well as that of a family member may cause some problems Also, do not antagonise your employers or those in authority Avoid extravagance
Good dates: 30, 1 and 3
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 8
Favourable direction: South



LIBRA (21 September–20 October) This will be a favourable week for businessmen However, a new friendship may prove harmful to your interests Those in service can look forward to a promotion Sportsmen may win new honours this week Friends and relatives will cooperate and contribute to your success Young people will enjoy socialising this week
Good dates: 27, 28 and 29
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: North



SCORPIO (21 October–20 November) Pay great attention to business and other professional matters this week But if you do not gain financially, do not be disheartened Go ahead with new business ventures this week Keep a watch on the health of your children Relatives and friends will be around to share your fortunes
Good dates: 29, 30 and 1
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: North-west



SAGITTARIUS (21 November–20 December) This week creative artistes will gain recognition You will gain through property matters and insurance policies Your intuition will guide you, especially in matters of the heart New friends are likely to provide you with inspiration. A journey may be in store for you. Letters may bring good tidings
Good dates: 28, 30 and 2
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: South west



CAPRICORN (21 December–20 January) This will be a good week for you Your financial prospects are bright if you can check extravagance You will be able to contact influential people this week Elders will help you The domestic front will be calm For those planning to get married, there might be disharmony in the negotiations, but do not lose heart Take care of your health.
Good dates: 27, 29 and 1
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: East



AQUARIUS (21 January–20 February) This week conserve your energy and be very tactful if you want to win over people who matter to you Rely on your intuition and matters will sort themselves out. Though the domestic front will be peaceful, you may have some problems with your spouse. A word of caution do not make hasty decisions.
Good dates: 1, 2 and 3
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North

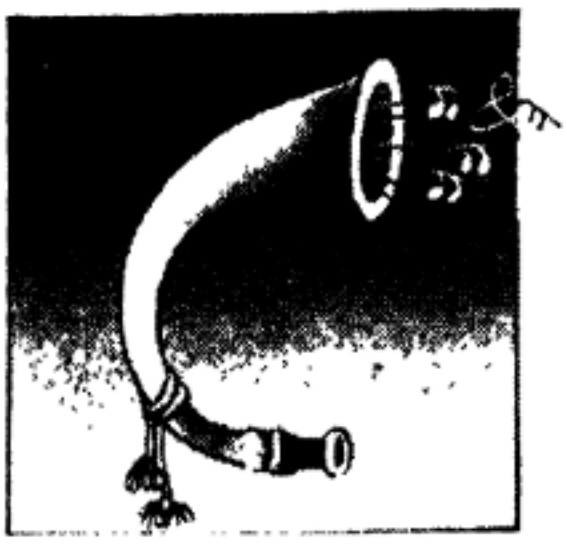


PISCES (21 February–20 March) This is a week of mixed fortunes The domestic front will be a source of joy, but speculations will not yield favourable results Also, a love affair may come to a sudden end Avoid getting into disputes with friends and relatives Watch your health For professionals, the time is favourable
Good dates: 27, 30 and 3
Lucky numbers: 2, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: West

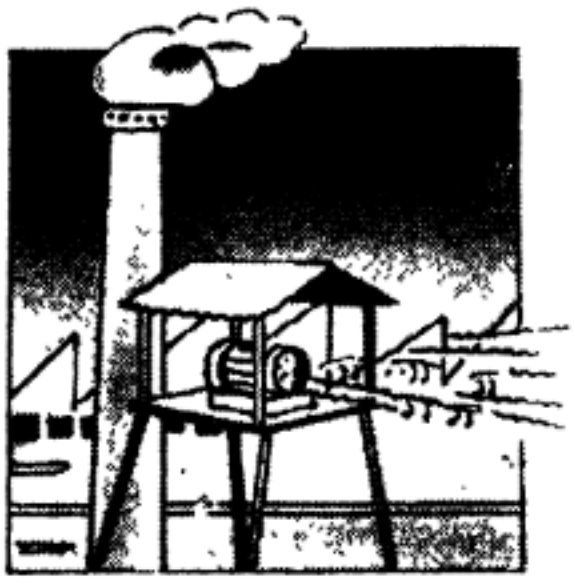
Star Partners: Gemini–Leo

The Gemini man will resent the Leo woman's domineering attitude and fiery display of emotions. His need to interact with different kinds of people will be misunderstood by her Matters may come to such a state that he will want to leave her and go his own way

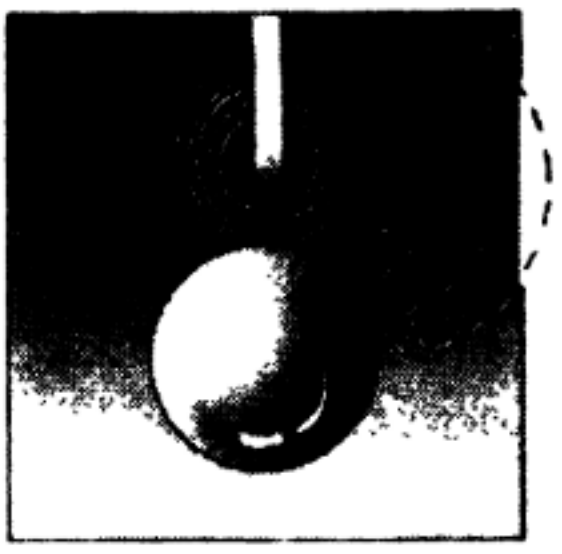
PROGRESS PUTS EVERYTHING BEHIND WHICH IS OLD.



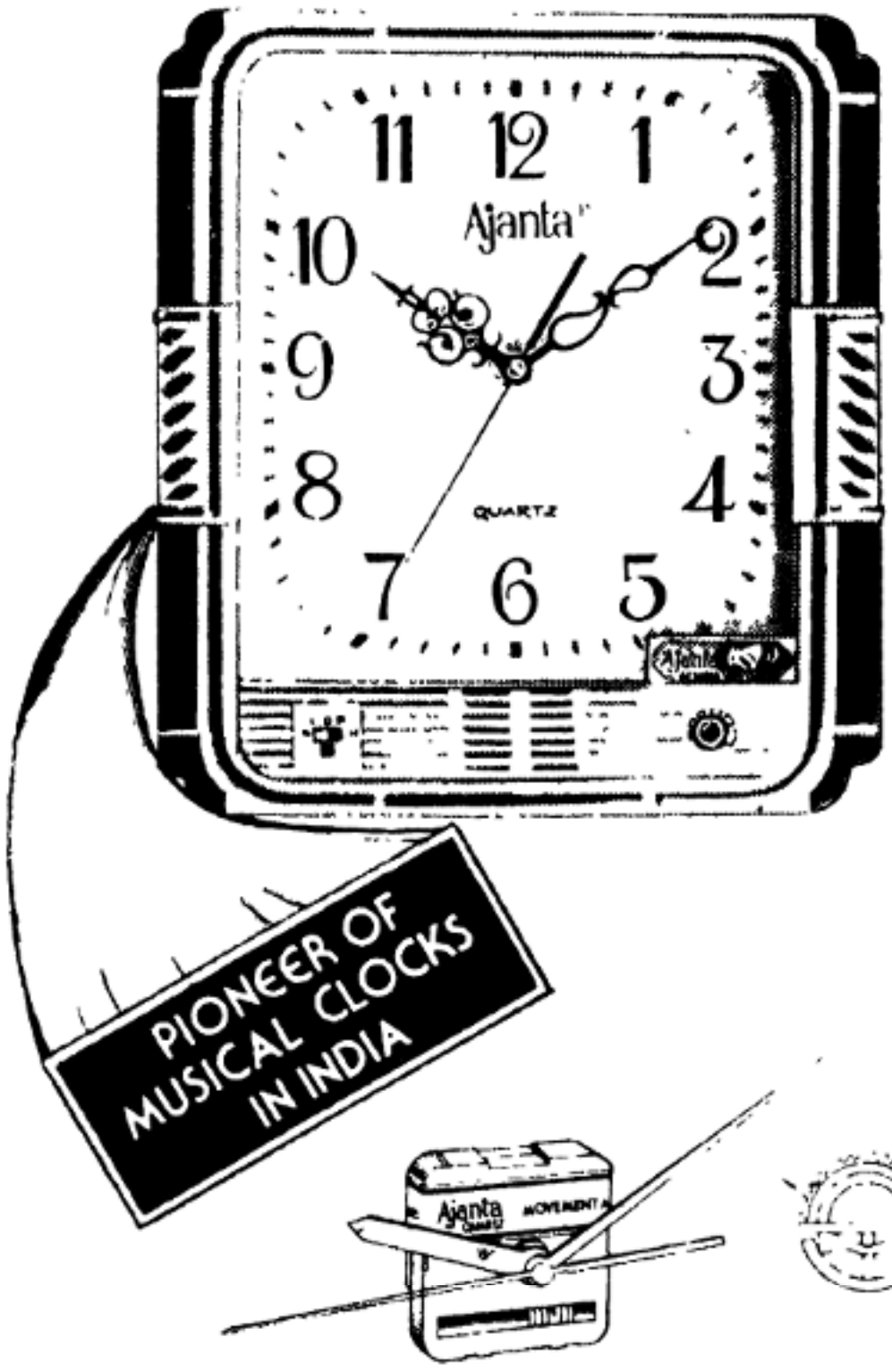
In ancient times therewere wonderful things to show the time



Then an industrial revolution brought the siren



This is what you know well has already run-out of time ..



..Today we bring the most modern thing that plays music with time.

Ajanta®

QUARTZ MUSICAL CLOCKS & TIMEPIECES

Up to now therewere noisy things being applied for time showing. From now on it is sweeter, whispering music you are going to hear from our musical clocks
We have developed
a wide range of classic music pieces.

- Chime Strike(Twelve melody)
- Short melody
- Long melody
- West minster(Quarter Chime)
- Miracle eye(Sound auto Control)
- Jingle bell and many more

MARKETED BY:
AJANTA ORGANIZATION
104, TODI CHAMBERS, 1ST FLOOR,
2ND LAL BAZAR,
CALCUTTA - 700 001.

Mohan Joshi *hazir nahin*

Poor Mohan Joshi. Only the other day, heavyweights like chief minister Sharad Pawar and AICC(I) general secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad were all praise for his work as president of the Maharashtra Youth Congress. Then, suddenly, he was unceremoniously sacked and replaced by Avinash Pande, an MLA from Nagpur.

Congress circles believe that the axe fell on Joshi only because he was perceived as Gurudas Kamath's (the former All India Youth Congress president) man. The new AIYC chief, Mukul Wasnik, apparently, wanted his own protege installed in Maharashtra. Recently, Joshi organised a special train to allow state Congressmen to attend the Indira Gandhi memorial rally in New Delhi on 31 October. It is not known whether the Prime Minister was pleased but clearly Wasnik was not impressed enough.

Back to 'fatso'

If S. Thirunavukarasu was the kind of man who kept his word, he'd have met his maker by now. The former AIADMK minister, soon after parting political company with Jayalalitha, had sworn, "I would rather hang myself on a rope than go back to her."

At the time, Thirunavukarasu had advanced a number of reasons for going off Jayalalitha. Some of them were political: he charged her with being "autocratic", "running the party as if it was her personal fiefdom", "misappropriating party funds to the tune of several lakh rupees", and "unfit to be a leader". Some were aesthetic. She is an "ugly woman", he declared: "so fat that one cannot see her neck".



Jayalalitha: anything for political expediency

Now Thirunavukarasu is back to being (pardon the expression) hung up on Jayalalitha again. On 16 November, he arrived at the AIADMK headquarters—now under Jayalalitha's control—along with his minions to return to the fold. Jayalalitha did keep him waiting for over an hour but when she arrived, graciously accepted a silk shawl from Thirunavukarasu as a gesture for taking him back.

Those close to Jayalalitha are surprised that she has treated Thirunavukarasu so generously. Said one hanger-on: "Jayalalitha will forgive anything for the sake of political expediency. But she hates disparaging remarks on the way she looks." The lady is extremely conscious of her appearance and though she admits to being a shade overweight, believes she is plump in a comely way. The question being asked is whether Thirunavukarasu's reprieve is only a stratagem to later embarrass him for saying the unpardonable.

Bommai loves Venkat

Why is Karnataka chief minister S.K. Bommai soft on state Governor P. Venkatasubbaiah? The Governor, it may be recalled, returned nominations to the Legislative Council to the government without signing them. Then, he sent a notice to the chief minister's office asking for more details on the telephone tapping scandal. His actions have sent Hegde loyalists in the Janata Party into a rage and they are bewildered by Bommai's unwillingness to take on the Governor.

Few are prepared to accept that Bommai's attitude stems from his being non-confrontationist and meek. The theory explaining his softness runs thus. When the elections come around next year, the Janata Party may split. In case this happens, Hegde will gang up with V.P. Singh against the Deve Gowda group. And allying with the Deve Gowda group is the only way that Bommai can hope to come out of Hegde's shadow and be *numero uno* in the state's politics. For the present, of course, Bommai is keeping his options open. Meanwhile, it is useful to keep the Governor, who is no friend of Hegde's anyway, in good humour. ■



S.K. Bommai: avoiding a confrontation



The Captain and the lady

An unusual development in the Prime Minister's inner circle: Mrs Sheila Dixit, whose antagonism towards Aunty G (Sonia Gandhi) was noted on this page last week, has now found a new ally: the bumbling, semi-



(Above) Sheila Dixit and Satish Sharma: new allies

articulate Captain Satish 'Marble Tile' Sharma.

Old Satish had been under a bit of a cloud lately what with his tiles, his crony Lalit Suri and his friendship with the Hindujas all provoking much scorn and derision. So, he has decided that his interests are best served by linking up with a leading light of the PMO.

This is a significant development because in the old days, the PMO and the PM's house moved in separate orbits: Dhawan never got on with Alexander; Gopi Arora never kowtowed to the Captain, etc.

It is believed that this axis could not just topple Aunty G, but also threaten the Gang of Four.

Rajiv's dig at Rushdie

The Prime Minister's reference to the *Satanic Verses* controversy in his SUNDAY interview is probably his first clear statement about why the book was banned. He has also said that he won't be replying to Salman Rushdie's long and self-important missive.

However, he seems to miss no opportunity to slip in a snide reference to Rushdie's attempt to lecture him on censorship and freedom. At the Maulana Azad centenary celebration, he said pointedly: "We don't need to learn our secularism from dictionaries, textbooks or from books that are published abroad."

Nobody had any doubt about who the reference was to.

Rajiv Gandhi: undiplomatic



The return of the PM's sphinx

What news of H.Y. Sharada Prasad? Those who believe that Mrs Gandhi's former information adviser has been relegated to obscurity should think again.

While the sphinx-like Prasad is regarded by many to have demolished Mrs Gandhi's relationship with the press, Rajiv trusted him enough to entrust his press relations to him after Bofors broke and Mani Shankar Aiyar fell from grace.

Now, while the PM's press liaison is in the capable hands of G. Parthasarathy, Prasad is still hovering around the fringes of the Prime Minister's office. Apparently, many of Rajiv's speeches still go to him for final approval.

Officially, however, Prasad is only concerned with the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.

Getting at Sharma

Who is the Opposition's real enemy? According to the rustic chief minister of Haryana, it is Udayan Sharma, the editor of *Ravivar*. At the last National Front meeting in Agra, Devi Lal spent 20 minutes attacking the unfortunate Sharma who the Opposition believes may be the Congress(I) candidate in Agra.

Devi Lal urged the bemused voters of Agra to elect Ajay Singh, instead. This is great but there's just one problem: until last year, the Chaudhary claimed that Singh was also a paid agent of the Congress(I).

After Lal's fulminations, a visibly embarrassed V.P. Singh had to apologise to the Agra press corps for Devi Lal's outburst against a journalist. It reminded one of Chandra Shekhar's famous observation: "Why does V.P. Singh need enemies when he already has Devi Lal on his side?"

Out, damned Clouseau

The battle for V.P. Singh's soul continues. The current combatants are Ramnath Goenka and Santosh Bharatiya, the editor of *Chauthi Duniya*, the V.P. Singh fan club's official newsletter. In an editorial in a recent issue, Bharatiya writes:



V.P. Singh: battle for his soul

"One newspaper owner, considered to be an Opposition supporter, has decided that V.P. Singh is never to be left alone. He believes that if Singh thinks independently, his future is jinxed. To prevent this, the owner and his associates– who are very close to a particular political party– will go to any lengths...A lawyer, associated with this newspaper group, walks in as a friend but proceeds to spy for a particular political party."

Obviously, Bharatiya is no fan of Goenka and Ram Jethmalani's. But given that his editorials frequently reflect the Raja's own biases, does this mean that V.P. Singh has tired of the mercurial press baron and his sidekick, Inspector Clouseau?

The new ONIDA.
Nothing can touch it...except the glance of envy.

When admiration takes on the colour of envy and hands tighten around objects that can be hurled, may be once again there's a new ONIDA on the horizon.

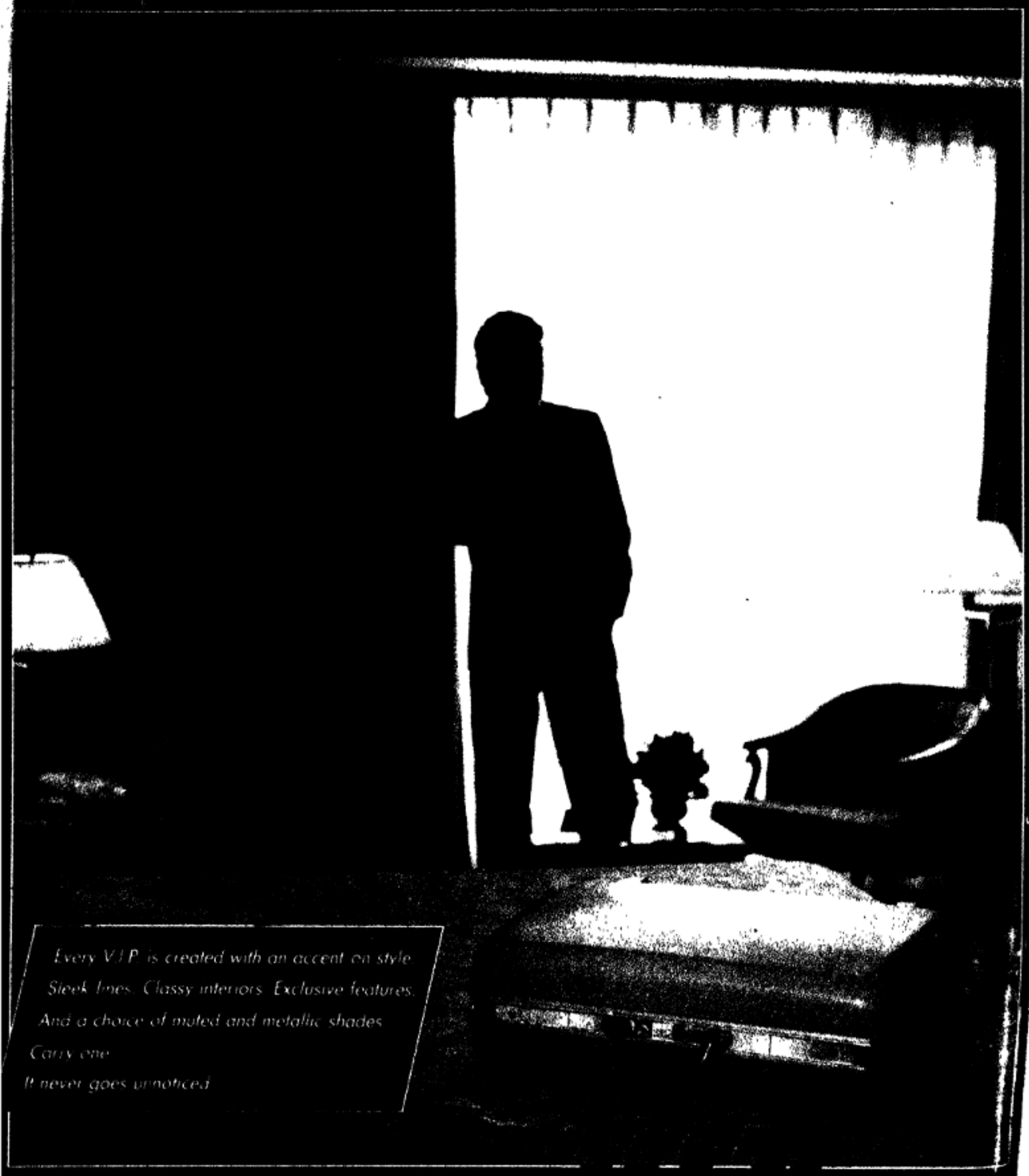
Yes, the new ONIDA is here with the bewitching 'Cube' look! Magic of technology captured within a fully moulded, exquisite cabinet, and an exotic black tube . Devilish good looks, with features slightly beyond the reach of the times Yes, it has everything poised at your fingertips waiting for action

But before you unleash it all, don't forget, Envy waits at the wings So, heed this old word of wisdom Love thy neighbour, but guard thy ONIDA.

ONIDA. Neighbour's envy. Owner's pride.



WHO'S THAT CARRYING A V.I.P. ?



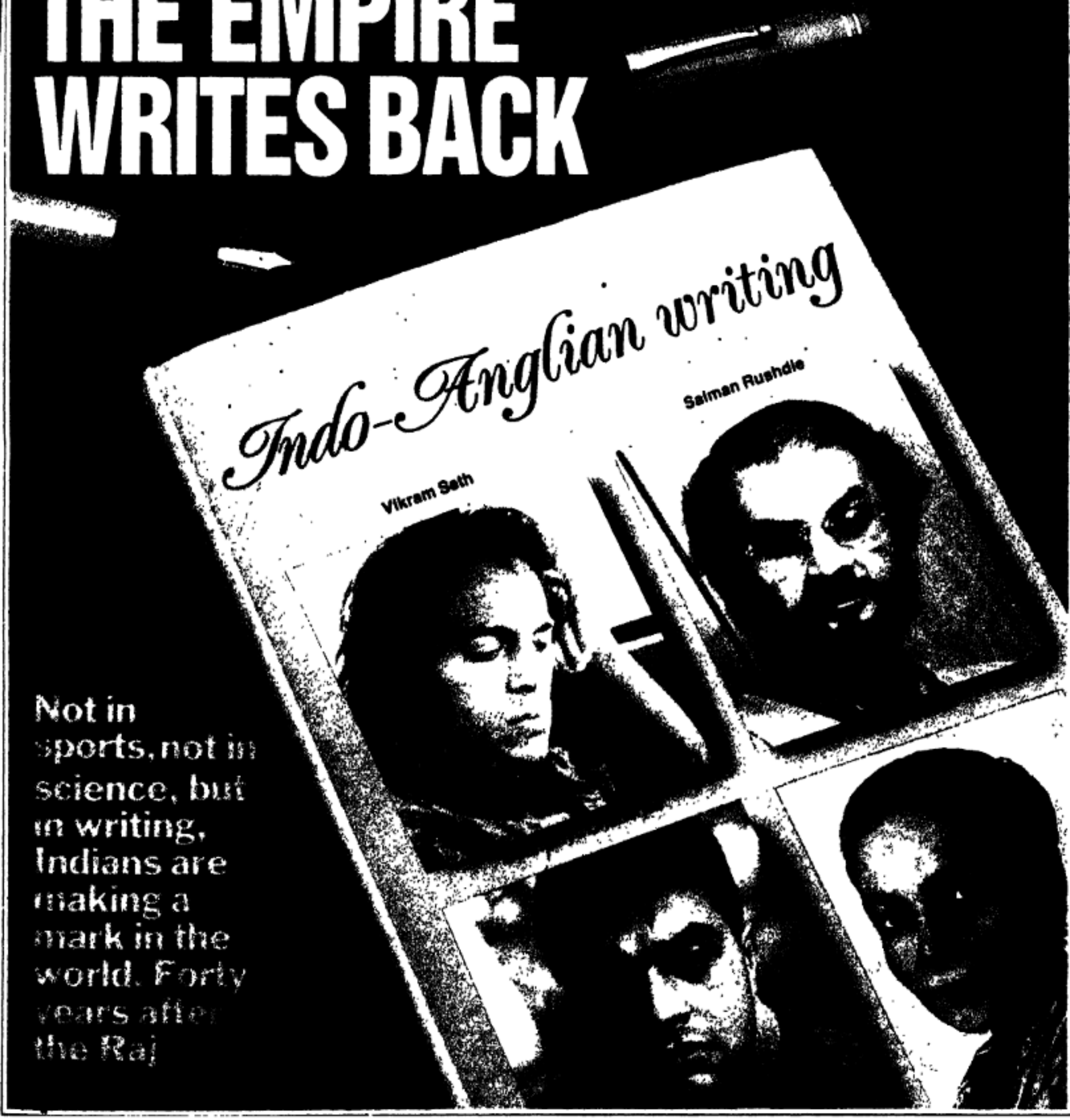
Every V.I.P. is created with an accent on style.
Sleek lines. Classy interiors. Exclusive features.
And a choice of muted and metallic shades.
Carry one.
It never goes unnoticed.

LUGGAGE TO BE SEEN WITH

HOW LIQUOR BARONS FUNDED MGR'S PARTY

SUNDAY

THE EMPIRE WRITES BACK



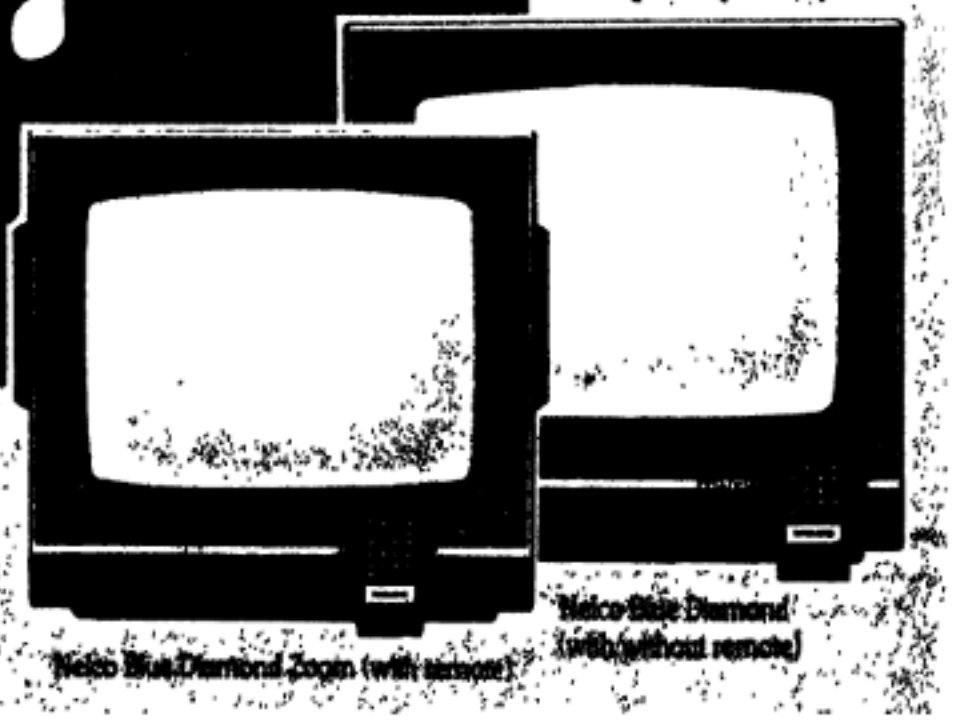
Not in sports, not in science, but in writing, Indians are making a mark in the world. Forty years after the Raj

NELCO BLUE DIAMOND

It's been seen.
It's been compared.
It's been bought.

NOW, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR!

The fabulous, fantastic Nelco Blue Diamond. To give you inimitable excellence of colour. So go to your nearest Nelco dealer, and... Trust your eyes only.



Nelco Blue Diamond Zoom (with sensor)

Nelco Blue Diamond (with/without remote)

A TOSHIBA PRODUCT

NELCO

BLUE DIAMOND

CONTENTS

VOLUME 16 · ISSUE 1 · RS 6.00 **SUNDAY** AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

4—10 DECEMBER 1988

Evergreen Public Library

COVER STORY **28**

THE EMPIRE WRITES BACK

Not in science or in sports, but in writing, Indians are making their mark in the world. SUNDAY takes a look at the new breed of Indo-Anglian writers and their work.

SPECIAL REPORT **12**

SPIRITED CHARGES

Did M.G. Ramachandran make his millions from the prosperous liquor industry of the state? An investigation

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS **21**

VISITING FEARS

Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to India should have been a happy occasion. But it has raised fears that the Soviet Union may leave India at the mercy of the Chinese

FOCUS **24**

SHUFFLING THE PACK

Despite frequent changes, the AICC(I) general secretaries remain little more than yes-men.

CRAFT **40**

THROUGH A GLASS LIGHTLY



Chandeliers—showpieces of wealthy drawing rooms—are now available on Indian pavements. And cheap.





Page 28



Page 21

COMMENT

Letters 4
Byline M J Akbar 8
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 10
Sight and Sound 11
Comment Kewal Verma 16
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 18
Business Diary 59

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Random Notes 81
Delhi Diary 82

Cover photograph: Vivek Das
Cover artwork: D.S. Thapa

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bijit Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001

Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura 20 paise. North Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup, Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur and Sonitpur districts of Assam 30 paise

INDEPTH **35**

BOFORS: NEW REVELATIONS

The Bofors scandal refuses to fade away. With the publication of a fresh set of documents relating to the payment of commissions in the howitzer deal, the government is once again on the defensive. What do the new revelations mean?

NEWS **47**

The ruling Janata government in Karnataka faces a crisis, in Maharashtra, Vasantdada Patil woos farmers in a bid to come out of political oblivion, the Bihar Governor and chief minister are on a collision course; and a killer disease afflicting fishes claims 40 lives in Assam

BUSINESS **54**

Close on the heels of the agreement to triturate DCM, a fierce row has erupted again. Orkay Silk Mills continues to be in the red, and in an unprecedented move, a former managing director of Ennore Foundries now heads the workers' union.

PROFILE **66**

BARGAIN BASEMENT BACHCHAN

Undeterred by Amitabh Bachchan's misfortunes, Raj Babbar is toying with the idea of joining politics. A profile of the filmstar

BOOK EXTRACT **68**

CALCUTTA VIGNETTES

On his first visit to the city 11 years ago, Gunter Grass was shocked by the appalling poverty and filth. A decade later Grass returns to rediscover Calcutta. Excerpts from his book, *Zunge Zeigen*

Khaas Baat 63
Spotlight 64
Odds and Trends 77
Sundayweek 79



Cornering the PM

The cover story revealed many unknown facets of the Prime Minister (*Plain speaking*, 13 – 19 November). The interviewers deserve praise for their bold and forthright questions. It is indeed a matter of pride for all Indians that a PM can be pulled up by the print media. The interview revealed the Prime Minister's helplessness, ignorance, and confusion on important issues. Rajiv Gandhi seems to have failed to achieve what he wanted to and, more important, does not have an answer for his failure.

B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur (Bihar)

■ The interview was interesting. However, the Hindujas are unlikely to disclose to whom they sold Pitco. And the United Kingdom is not in a position to reveal anything about Pitco as it is obliged to India which purchased the Westland helicopters. But how come Rajiv Gandhi did not visit the Westland factory before ordering the purchase for, earlier, he was opposed to these machines?

B. S. Uppal, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)

■ The questions were well devised and stressed mainly on the issue of corruption. Rajiv Gandhi should have used this opportunity to clear the doubts of the people regarding the Bofors deal. But he failed to make use of this opportunity. Most of his answers were evasive and marked by the *Hame dekhna hai* and *Hame karna hai* syndrome. Given the significance of the questions, the PM's answers were disappointing and unimpressive. When he overtly admits that there is no harm in accepting donations from companies by political parties, he is indirectly supporting a menacing form of corruption. Rajiv Gandhi had obviously not done his homework well before the interview, or else he would have come up with the stock answers he is famous for.

Nanda Dulal Roy Chowdhury, Kharagpur (West Bengal)

■ The part which puzzled me the most in the interview was the one about Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. The Prime Minister did not seem to know where communal riots had erupted because of an article in a newspaper. If Mr Gandhi cannot distinguish between Kerala and Karnataka, then he doesn't deserve to be Prime Minister. To your question whether he would have banned the book had there been no threat of violence, he replies: "I doubt it." But in all his speeches regarding this and the ban on the film, *The last temptation of Christ*, he has said that the government will never release any book or film that hurts the sentiments of the people. It's a shame that our PM cannot even remember what he has said.

Samir Marx Mahajan, New Delhi

■ You are right in your surmise that Rajiv Gandhi retreated into his shell once his honeymoon with the press was over. This had resulted in a communication gap between the PM and the public. Rajiv Gandhi bared his soul after a long time to the press. The interview was informative and interesting. On a number of occasions the leaders of our country have spoken to the masses through the columns of your magazine. SUNDAY is one of the few magazines which has presented balanced articles on politics. For once, the Prime Minister has shown a maturity befitting his office.

Debashis Bose, Calcutta (West Bengal)



Ashok Majumdar

Rajiv Gandhi: not well-informed

PMs and authors

The parallels drawn between Salman Rushdie and Rajiv Gandhi (*Beyond Saleem Sinai*, 30 October – 5 November) were interesting. However, since the latter cannot boast of any literary talent, the comparisons were unfair. However, Rushdie can be favourably compared with Nirad C. Chaudhari. Both authors have recognised the evils of religious fundamentalism and stood against them and have had to pay the penalty because of opposition from the zealots in their own religion. No wonder then that both have left the country to settle in a land of their own choice.

Lastly, while Rushdie is on a conflict course with Rajiv Gandhi, it is common knowledge that Chaudhari and Nehru, too, didn't see eye to eye.

Praveer Tripathi, Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh)

Plan Balkan

Contrary to popular belief, the plan to Balkanise India was prevented not by Jawaharlal Nehru, but by Sardar Patel (*The Nehrus*, 6 – 12 November). If the Iron Man of India was allowed to have his way, then the Kashmir issue would never have gone to the UN and the state would have been fully merged with India. Who is M.J. Akbar trying to fool? As Dr Ram Manohar Lohia once said, Nehru did nothing for the country after Independence. If he really did anything, it was only incalculable damage to the nation. Subramaniam Swamy is totally justified when he says that India would have been better off without Nehru.

G.B. Verma, Howrah (West Bengal)

■ Too much has been made of Akbar's so-called revelations about Nehru's role in

'The Prime Minister is lying'

Rajiv Gandhi deserves mention in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the Prime Minister who has told the largest number of lies in the four years of his disgraceful tenure in office. Desperation at the mounting evidence of his misconduct in office has driven him now to falsify judicial records. He has alleged that "corruption charges" against me have been "confirmed by the courts, confirmed by commissions". I challenge the Prime Minister to cite a single instance to substantiate this baseless and dishonest assertion. If he has any self-respect and decency he will either meet this challenge or apologise. I know he will do neither for the charge is false and a man who can utter such a falsehood cannot have the decency to apologise.

I wish, however, to set the record straight. No court, nor any enquiry commission,has confirmed any charge of corruption against me. Far from indicting me, the Supreme Court made this categorical observation in its judgment in the arrack bottling case: "The allegation against the Chief Minister has been found to be unfounded and false." The judgment was delivered on 9 April, 1986. Yet, only three days later,in his speech at Bangalore on 12 April, Rajiv Gandhi chose to misrepresent the Supreme Court's categorical finding and demand my resignation. I was in a hospital then but wrote to him on 15 April pointing out the falsehood. It reveals that his persistence in mendacity is equalled only by his cowardice. He replied on 18 April to say that "I did not ask for your resignation. I said it was for the people of Karnataka to decide in the light of the clear finding of the Supreme Court." This was both a



Rajesh Kumar

Ramakrishna Hegde: challenging the PM

persistence in falsehood and a cowardly retreat. The people of Karnataka gave him a fitting answer by foiling his attempt to destabilise the state government by launching a so-called *satyagraha* on 21 April under the inspiring leadership of an Oscar Fernandes. The Prime Minister told the he as part of this campaign. The next time he repeated it, was in the Lok Sabha on 11 December, 1987, while speaking on the no-confidence motion which was prompted by the Bofors and HDW scandals. He has repeated the lie once again. Obviously, fresh evidence on Bofors has driven him to paranoia and to the repetition of the same old lie. The 1984 election campaign was built on lies galore. This time the pattern will be repeated.

Ramakrishna Hegde, Bangalore (Karnataka)



Nehru: undue credit?

averting the Balkanisation of India. With the passing of the Independence of India Act by the British Parliament, British paramountcy over the native states lapsed and they became virtually independent. I distinctly remember listening to a broadcast by the Maharaja of Travancore declaring the independent status of Travancore state on the eve of Indian Independence.

The fact that 600-odd native states were left virtually independent when the British withdrew, speaks for the indomitable will of Sardar Patel. There has never been a 'canard', as hinted in some journals, that Nehru was responsible for the partition of India.

K.P. Luke Vydhian, Bangalore (Karnataka)

■ Subramaniam Swamy reveals his pedestrian culture when he says that "Nehru did not think of India... He valued Anglo-American cheers in general and Edwina Mountbatten in particular".

Swamy was too young when Nehru strode the political arena like a colossus. Sine his views are based on bookish knowledge of Pandit-ji, he has no right to say that "Nehru did not think of India".

K. Vasudevan, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager (U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta-700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

Stunted deal

The article was hard hitting (*Where doubles dare*, 13 19 November). It clearly highlighted the plight of our stuntmen and women in the tinsel world. What is really sad is that these 'heroes' who are risking their lives every single moment are hardly ever remembered or applauded for their chilling feats. What makes matters even worse is that fact the these stunt performers are paid meagre sums for their efforts. It is time something was done to check their exploitation.

Shashank Shekhar, Meerut (Uttar Pradesh)

■ The stuntmen and women are given a raw deal by the Bombay film industry . Most

What your mother couldn't tell you about making your marriage work.



Remember the day before your wedding? Your mother and you talked into the small hours of the morning. She told you the meaning of marriage, those little compromises you would have to make, how to fit into his life and how to please him. However, like most women, your mother shied away from one sensitive topic — the right contraceptive method to use

The contraceptive confusion

There is a bewildering choice of contraceptives today. And making the right choice is not easy. Some methods involve the tension of counting days (you could go wrong so easily), while others carry the risk of side or after effects. Or worse, the embarrassment of a clinical examination. Some depend upon the temperature for effectiveness. Surely there is a contraceptive method that's absolutely safe without the mess, the accompanying side effects or one that involves a lot of preparation? What you need is a safe, simple, sure method that is right for both of you

The safe, sure condom

The condom is one of the safest, simplest and surest of contraceptives. It does not involve a visit to the doctor or a clinical examination. Nor does it mean surgery, pain or discomfort to your body. Now thinner and finer than ever before, the condom protects without interfering with the pleasure.

Kohinoor confidence

Ask for Kohinoor by name at your nearest chemist. One of India's largest selling condoms, Kohinoor gives you the confidence of knowing you are absolutely safe. It is lubricated and made from the finest latex to give you a near natural feeling. Each condom is electronically tested for total safety. That's the Kohinoor confidence. Is it any wonder that millions of couples all over India are choosing Kohinoor as the safest, most practical method of contraception?

Kohinoor is from the people who understand your need for privacy, protection and pleasure; for a contraceptive that is absolutely safe. And your wish to make your marriage the best thing that ever happened to both of you.

KOHINOOR

Plan your family with Kohinoor confidence.

A Product

MAA COMMUNICATIONS LRCF 388

of our Hindi films have a number of action-packed sequences in which these 'doubles' have to risk their lives time and again. The world's largest film industry would do well to ensure that these people get a better deal.

Anjana Sinha, Calcutta (West Bengal)



Gautam Parole

Performing for a pittance

■ I was really aggrieved to learn that these dare-devil men and women who risk their lives at every moment are themselves treated so shabbily by the Bombay film industry. While our heroes and heroines earn lakhs for a film, these unfortunate people have to be content with a pittance. The camera men, the makeup men and the spot boys, too, face an uncertain future. It is time these people put up a united front to ensure better working conditions for themselves.

Amit Mukherjee, Calcutta (West Bengal)

Military fiction

Thanks to the SUNDAY report on the *1989 Scenario*, a publisher has decided to take the book. It is unlikely the government has any interest in the book: it received an MSS copy in early June and ignored the matter. Moreover, the government has been aware of my contacts with over 30 foreign missions spread over ten years; it has seen no reason to object.

Why write such a worst-case scenario? For some time now, the Government of India has been pursuing a high-profile, maximum confrontation policy with China and Pakistan. Normally this would be welcome to a hard-liner like myself, and superficially, at least, this would seem like a good time for a final showdown with both our traditional adversaries. We have never been stronger, better trained and better equipped.

The problem is that despite all this, our security situation has never been worse. The Soviet Union has clearly indicated that it will not intervene in the case of war with China, and aside from supplies, may not even intervene in a conflict with Pakistan. For the first time we must take seriously the possibility of Sino-Pak action in concert, particularly if we threaten the Pakistani position in Occupied Kashmir.

The book was written in March 1988 when pressure was building up on President Zia to recapture Siachen. It starts with a partial Pakistani success in Siachen and an Indian retaliation in the northern areas. India is successful and is leaning on Skardu when China, concerned about its own position in western Tibet, and the likelihood that Pakistan will be defeated in the escalating war, attacks Ladakh and Arunachal. Pakistan seizes on this chance to attack northern Punjab and west Kashmir.

The declaration of 'Khalistan' leads to mass panic in north-west India even though the terrorists are small in number. The Indian army is caught between the Pakistanis on one side and millions of people fleeing the border areas on the other.

The Chinese are thrown back in Arunachal. In Ladakh, however, under combined Sino-Pak pressure and the need to redeploy troops for defence of the Beas river line, the army goes into a fortress at Leh which is holding out at the ceasefire. The fall of Jammu, Pathankot, Amritsar and Gurdaspur makes the defence of Kashmir Valley difficult, but the army creates a fortress at Srinagar, relying on air supplies. The fortress is breached due to subversion and Srinagar falls.

The IAF easily masters the Chinese air force and delivers powerful blows against Pakistan. The Indian tank offensive into Sind, though gravely weakened by withdrawals northward, makes a spectacular advance. The dwindling ability of the IAF and the lack of reserves forces the army to fall back when the Pakistani counter-offensive is launched. India is pushed back to the border, but Pakistan lacks the resources to cross the southern border.

The military realises that Pakistan has shot its bolt and that China, though preparing a second offensive, can be neutralised. It calls for total national mobilisation and starts preparing for a long war which will crush Pakistan and defeat China.

The political leadership is, however, in a total state of collapse. Both the Soviets and the Americans are privately delighted at seeing India reeling under the severe blows it has received, and pressure the shaken and demoralised leadership into accepting a disastrous ceasefire.

1989 Scenario exists only in first draft form. Though I personally think it is a reasonable possibility, many have taken strong objection to the magnitude of India's defeats and feel I have given the Pakistan services a competence that is presently beyond them. Now that a publisher is ensured, some changes will be made.

Ravi Rikhye, New Delhi

Kitchen cabinet

The cover story was informative *(The gang of four*, 9—15 October). In order to revamp and revitalise his party, Rajiv Gandhi has tried to infuse these newer elements. It has been the country's misfortune that right from Mrs Gandhi's days, people like Pranab Mukherjee who never faced the electorate were asked to finalise the election strategies in various states. Likewise, the present gang of four, with little political knowledge, has been reigning supreme in the country. Isn't it unfortunate that experienced leaders like Kamlapati Tripathi are sidetracked and instead, inexperienced quinquagenrians are consulted?

P.K. Srivastava, New Delhi

Masses be damned

The report (*Same tales from a Congress state*, 6—12 November) was informative. Bihar is in the midst of strife and turmoil. The tug of war between Congress leaders for power is creating havoc in the state. Owing to Bhagwat Jha Azad's apathy, the condition of the masses is deplorable. But the CM does not seem to be bothered with the lot of the common people.



K M Kishen

Bhagwat Jha Azad: apathetic

Amarendra Kishore, Sasaram (Bihar)

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

Clues to Chinese checkers

You could freeze to death in Beijing's sunshine. The sky is pastel clear, and the mercury wanders only through a ten degree radius through zero, from a high of about eight to a few degrees below zero at night—but it is not the temperature which is a problem. In fact with the sun as company it should be beautifully chilly. But a nasty wind leaves the layers of wool wrapped around on everybody in virtual tatters and cuts at the bone. It seems and feels incongruous that one should feel so bitterly cold under so much sunshine, it seems as if the sunshine has something artificial to it, that it is not quite real. One might say something similar about the sunshine that is being used to warm relations between China and India after the deep freeze of a quarter of a century—for who can ignore the icy gusts of the intractable border problem which refuse to leave either side alone. It is of course the right and proper thing to do—to build peace out of what is common rather than search for war out of what is different; friendship out of what is compatible rather than hostility out of the tensions. All very good. But are India and China quite ready for an outbreak of peace? The answer, I would suggest at the cost of being accused of unnecessary optimism, is yes—but not because of the endless sermons on brotherhood that are threatening to deluge Beijing, and which one has heard all too often on this weeklong acquaintance tour of the most distant capital for an Indian since 1962. One is quite thoroughly sick of hearing how great the two peoples are, and how wonderful our two civilisations were and so on and so forth. If it was all so cosy, then what was the big and costly fuss all about? The reasons why peace is possible lie elsewhere. Let me suggest a few.

Time has brought its own level of maturity into the thinking of both nations. The age of rhetoric is over. People want a better life, and if socialism cannot provide that, well, the free market will. In fact, India and China may be coming closer in their thinking

First: both sides have exhausted their ambitions of leadership of the non-superpower world, which both once had. Jawaharlal Nehru, spurred by a grand and idealistic worldview, saw India as the guardian of a moral force which could bind the post-colonial world into a new and equitable relationship. The *panchsheel*, a concept which, he emphasised, went back at least to

Nehru and Chou Enlai in New Delhi: changed political climate



Ashoka, was the philosophy of a new international order. As the father figure and the ranking hero of the post-colonial world, his stature climbed even higher as his language became the currency of international diplomacy. India's role in world affairs rose proportionately, and we are not going to see the likes of those days again. Whether it was Korea or Indo-China or Bandung or the Suez or of course the formal inauguration of the non-aligned movement, India and Nehru were key players in the game. It was not a sight which the Chinese leaders found particularly bearable, especially since they were obliged over and over again to use Nehru's unique influence to state their case-- for a while the Indian embassy in Beijing functioned as China's post box to the West It was not just a matter of Han pride, although there was surely an element of that too. The Chinese leaders had their own ambitions for their country, and their own idealism to promote. Mao Zedong and Chou Enlai deeply resented the eminence of Nehru, a sentiment which they began to express with far more freedom after they had succeeded in humiliating him. Mao and Chou wanted to see China as the Third Force in the world, a power in its own right, a magnet for the new nations of Africa and Asia, an exporter of revolution and harbinger of a new world. Mao and Chou also realised how shrewdly he had built his influence and power purely on ideas and his individual prestige: Nehru's power grew out of his ideas, not out of a barrel of a gun. The gun defeated the visionary in 1962. But by 1988 that victory has been reduced to a paragraph in history.

India's humiliation did not solve China's problems at home. A desperate Mao was forced into institutionalised upheaval, romantically named the Cultural Revolution. This carefully engineered chaos only set China back a decade. The country which has emerged out of that phase gives pragmatism precedence over ideology. Both India and China have learnt, one through defeat and the other through a pyrrhic victory, that you cannot lead the world unless you have first firmly secured your base, your home. That is a good starting point for peace.

Second: the age of military supremacy is over. This, of course, is something China has had to learn. The days when it could be contemptuous of the Indian defence forces are over. China's Generals now realise that they cannot take another inch of territory from the Indian army. And they have spent long years of observation and analysis before becoming convinced of this. If anything it is the Indian military position which is stronger on the border—but fortunately no one in Delhi is so foolish as to believe that it is strong enough to push the Chinese back. The new slogan in Beijing becomes particularly relevant in this context: learn truth through facts. This is why China has quietly accepted Delhi's declaration of Arunachal Pradesh as a full state of the Indian Union. It protested of course since it claims the territory, but that has been more for the record than for acrimony. The fact is the Chinese know that they cannot take Arunachal Pradesh by force, so that is now the truth they must learn to live with. Both India and China are confident that they can defend the territorial *status quo*. That too is an excellent basis for peace.



Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi with Chou Enlai in Beijing: the cold war is over?

Let me suggest a few reasons why peace is possible. First, both sides have exhausted their ambitions of leadership of the non-superpower world, which both once had. Nehru saw India as the guardian of a moral force which could bind the post-colonial world into an equitable relationship. Second, the age of military supremacy is over

Third: both are aware that the cost of confrontation is simply too high, particularly when the era of the short war is almost certainly over (every nation has the capacity to resist for a long while). China's economy is a self-admitted mess. All the Maoist orthodoxy and high-falutin demagoguery has seeped out of the balloon and suddenly Beijing is beginning to realise the virtues of a mixed economy (how Nehru was once abused for advocating such a thing!). And as far as we are concerned, our economic problems hardly need elaboration. Moreover, both Beijing and Delhi have enough to do keeping what provinces they have under one flag. Who wants more?

Time has brought its own level of maturity into the thinking of both nations. The age of rhetoric is over. People want a better life, not another torrent of words. It is this which is making the slogans which were once mythical into terms of ridicule. No one wants to be a Maoist in China any more. They want better food, and more clothes, and if socialism cannot provide that, well, the free market and private enterprise will. Officials call the Maoists the "extreme left" almost as if we were back in India. In fact, India and China may be coming closer in their thinking than both realise. The world is changing and so are we. We could restart the era of cooperation. But in order to do so, we first must free ourselves from the prejudices of the past. ■

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Diwali thoughts on Iqbal



It was a happy coincidence that this Diwali happened to coincide with Allama Iqbal's 111th birth anniversary. For my generation, born and brought up on Urdu, it has been indeed as the Iranian poet, Bahar, wrote of the century of Iqbal.

Iqbal has made this century his own:
A hundred thousand he surpassed alone
This champion with a hundred horsemen's might
An army of brave poets put to flight,
And, equal to the challenge and call,
Having great talents, he excelled them all.

(Translated from the Persian by A.J. Arberry)

Exactly 84 years ago in a memorable poem entitled *Taseer-i-Dard* - picture of pain - Iqbal warned his countrymen of the perils that lay ahead:

Vatan kee fikr kar naadaan museebat aaney vaale hai
Teyree barbaadyon kay mashvarey hain assmaanon mein

Think of your country you foolish man for the troubled times to come
There is conspiracy in the heavens to plan your ruin

Zara devkh is ko jo kuch ho rahaa hai, honay vaalaa hai
Dharaa kya hai bhalaa ahad-e-kuhan kee daastaanon mein

See what is going on and what has yet to come
What is there in harping on glories of your past.

Na samjho gay to mit jaogay ai Hindustan vaalo
Tumharee daastaan tak bhee na hogee daastanon mein

If you pay no heed, you will be wiped out, O people of Hindustan
Even your story will not be told in the stories of the world.

I spent my Diwali morning re-reading Iqbal and pondering over his gloomy prophecies. I recalled how interest in the Allama was rekindled by my friend, the late Manzur Qadir. It was at his instigation that while on a sea voyage from London to Karachi that I had first tried my hand at translating Iqbal. I kept it up spasmodically. I carry his *Kulliyaat* (Collected Works) on plane journeys to translate a verse or two. I never accepted Iqbal's two-nation theory, his obsession with religion and yet looked upon him as the prophet of modern India. Then I re-read my translations and realised how prosaic they were. Amongst the poems that defeated me was the one so melodiously rendered in *qawalli* form by Lata Mangeshkar: *Kabhee ai haqeeqat-i-muntazar* . I came to the conclusion that it was untranslatable. Then Manzur Qadir's elder son, Bashrat Qadir, came to spend a week with us to show his pretty wife, Bambi, the sights of Delhi and Agra. One evening I told him about his father initiating me into translating Iqbal and my dismal attempts at tackling the opening lines of.

Kabhee ai haqeeqat-i-muntazar, nazar aa libaas-e-majaaz mein
Keh hazaaron sajday tarap rahey, meyree jabeein-niyaaz mein

He promptly came out with his rendition:

Come, O thou long-awaited truth,
Reveal thyself in naked form
A thousand adorations burn
Tumultously within my soul.

It doesn't rhyme, I protested. "No," he admitted, "but I have taken more liberties with the rest to make them rhyme:

Jo main sar-bah-sajda hua kabhee
To zameen say aaney lagee sadaa
Tera dil to hai sanam aashnaa
Tujhey kya milevga namaaz mein?

Prostrate in worship as I lay,
Arising from the earth I heard
A voice resplendent that did say
"What do ye with God's holy word,
Whom God's own guidance thou hast spurned
To idols fair thy heart hath turned?"

I made Bashrat put down other translations he remembered. He spent several hours writing them down for me. In subsequent columns I will, off and on, reproduce Bashrat Qadir's translations of selected Urdu couplets. They are the best I have seen so far.



I spent my Diwali morning re-reading Iqbal and pondering over his gloomy prophecies. I recalled how interest in the Allama was rekindled by my friend, the late Manzur Qadir. It was at his instigation that while on a sea voyage from London to Karachi that I had first tried my hand at translating Iqbal

FREE DISSECTION

Dr S.K. Saxena of Jaipur assures me that the following incident is true.

"Sawai Man Singh Medical College and Hospital, Jaipur, celebrated its golden jubilee of establishment with much fanfare. A life science exhibition was on during the entire celebration period of one month. Entry ticket to this section was Re 1. One of my friends asked if there was anything free of cost. I suggested him to go to room Number 31 and find out for himself. He went there and found a big board reading: "Post-mortem is done here free of cost. Please do not pay any bribe to anyone for the post-mortem." ◙



R.K. Laxman *The Times of India*

"

Our relations (with the USSR) have improved tremendously. They were always very good, but now they have become much better.

RAJIV GANDHI, *after the recent visit of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev*

What for?

RAJIV GANDHI *on being asked whether he would re-open the Bofors investigations*

Mr V.P. Singh tells lies every day.

GHULAM NABI AZAD, *AICC(I) general secretary*

Aap phirse likhna shuru kijye.

JYOTI BASU, *West Bengal chief minister, to Subash Ghisingh, who used to be a writer*

Jyotibabu is an honoured guest and should be treated well.

SUBASH GHISINGH, *GNLF leader*

Everyone now believes that not only do you have nothing to prove, you will not take *sanyas* either.

250 CONGRESS(I) MPs *in an open letter to V.P. Singh*

Those who are corrupt have no place in the Left Front government.

JYOTI BASU, *chief minister of West Bengal*

Some are becoming fat, while others are thin—and herein lies the crux of the Left Front's problem.

A.B.A. GHANI KHAN CHOWDHURY, *West Bengal PCC(I) chief*

It (Benazir Bhutto's demand to be appointed Prime Minister) is unfair, as it is aimed at introducing a contrived majority.

NAWAZ SHARIF, *IDA leader*

I am a great fan of not only Mrs Gandhi, but also Mr (Rajiv) Gandhi.

MARGARET THATCHER, *British Prime Minister*

It was an organised crime, based on local factors that utilised the media misinformation of Punjab.

REPORT OF THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS ORGANISATION *on the Bidar riots*

Next they will say, go and shit on a pot, we want to can the shot. You can't do that.

DIMPLE KAPADIA, *filmstar, responding to a statement that actresses have to perform whatever they are asked to do, regardless of privacy*

As far as South Africa is concerned, let me repeat that I live for today, not tomorrow. There has been no offer.

MOHINDER AMARNATH, *on reports stating that he has been offered money to tour South Africa*

"



Spirited charges

Was MGR corrupt? Recent disclosures by a Madras businessman suggest his involvement in the liquor trade

If the late Tamil Nadu chief minister M.G. Ramachandran's political rivals are to be believed then his government was amongst the most corrupt regimes in post-independence India. But in Tamil Nadu, few people believed them, especially when it came to corruption charges. MGR could do no wrong. Besides, the common man argued, why would he need more money considering that he had made his millions in the film industry and had no children to leave his riches to.

Public faith notwithstanding, the allegations against MGR persisted. The most persistent charges were related to the state's liquor trade. Although MGR, himself a teetotaller, initially championed prohibition, after 1980 he legalised the opening of thousands of country liquor (arrack) dens all over the state. In an equally quixotic move a few years later, he ordered their shutdown. He also allowed the establishment of a number of breweries in the state. But the allegation that he made money from the liquor trade remained unsubstantiated.

MGR's corruption might not remain a matter of conjecture. Especially now that R. Kapanipathi Rao, a former partner of one of Tamil Nadu's biggest liquor barons Ramaswamy Udayar, has decided to spill the beans. He alleges that MGR did not merely help liquor barons to make millions but also helped himself to part of the stupendous profits.

Rao's bombshell came in a long letter written to the Union finance ministry. Rao, a former promoter-cum-chairman of the Mohan Breweries and Distilleries Limited, (located 10 kms from Madras), decided to come clean about MGR's corruption because of a dispute with his former partner, Udayar. Rao's main

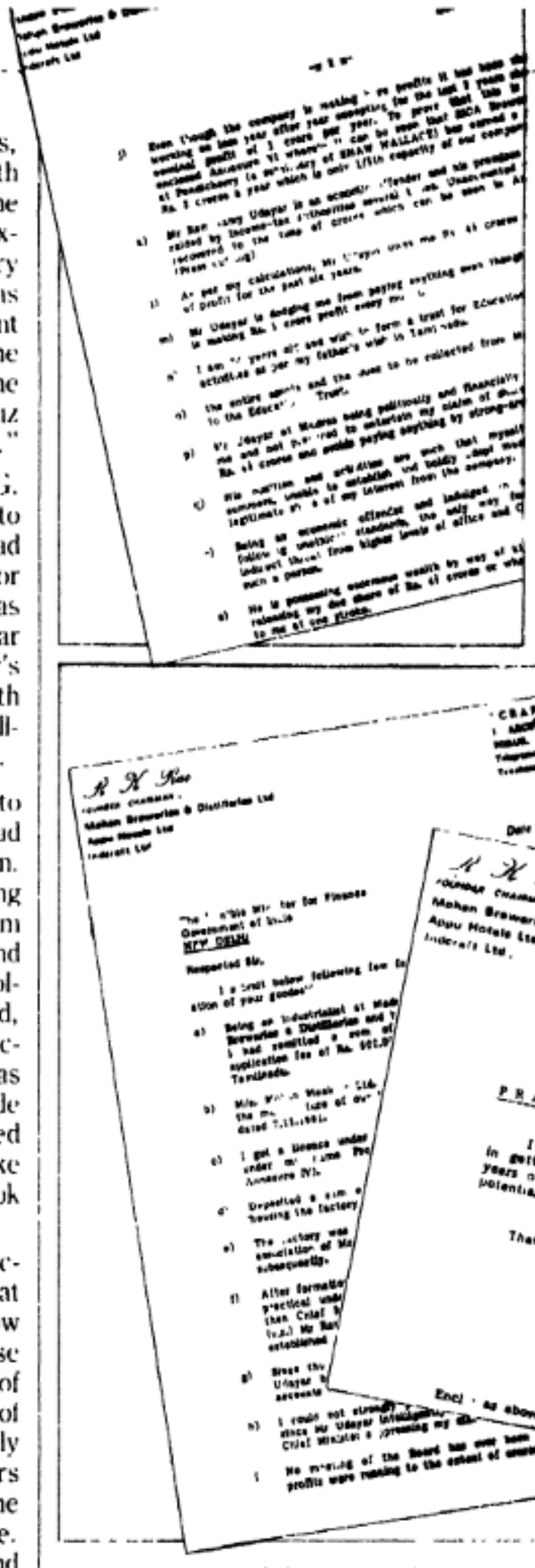
grouse against Udayar is that he has, allegedly, done him out of profits worth Rs 4.5 crores, rightly due to him. In the letter (dated 6 April, 1988), Rao explained: "After formation of the factory as a public limited company, there was practical understanding that 50 per cent of the earnings were to be given to the then chief minister, 10 per cent to me and the rest to all other associates, viz Mr Ramaswamy Udayar, Mr Ethirajan."

The "then chief minister" was M.G. Ramachandran. The letter seemed to confirm the suspicion that Udayar had been operating Mohan Breweries for MGR. Rao went on to claim that he was deprived of his share because Udayar was "close" to MGR. All the brewery's accounts were falsified, says he, with Udayar shrewdly exploiting MGR's illness to keep Rao's demands at bay.

Rao, apparently, has good reason to be cut up with Udayar. The brewery had been conceived as a joint concern. Udayar had been instrumental in getting the necessary licences and permits from MGR and Rao had provided land and money. The concern, set up in collaboration with Mohan Meakin Limited, was inaugurated in 1981. Beer production began in August 1984. Theirs was the first unit making IMFL (Indian made foreign liquor) and it should have stayed ahead of its rivals. But later entrants like Mahalingam and McDowells overtook Mohan Breweries.

Rao believes that they were producing more than their rivals, but that Udayar was deliberately showing low production in order to evade excise duties and deny him a legitimate share of the profits. He also found that most of the firm's profits were being illegally siphoned out, either into MGR's coffers or for financing the construction of the giant Ramachandran Medical College. The college was Udayar's brainchild and he made out that it was being built with contributions from MGR's supporters. Rao is now demanding that the Centre launch a "thorough investigation" into the funding of the college and the functioning of the brewery.

According to Rao's calculations, the brewery made an annual profit of at least Rs 30 crores—or Rs 150 crores during the last five years of its functioning. In contrast to his estimates, the company showed losses till 1982-83 and in the next year showed a modest profit of about Rs 18 lakhs. Since then, successive annual reports show turnover growing at more than 100 per cent per year but profits growing at a far slower rate. The company is yet to declare a dividend.



Photocopies of Rao's letter to the finance ministry: shocking allegations

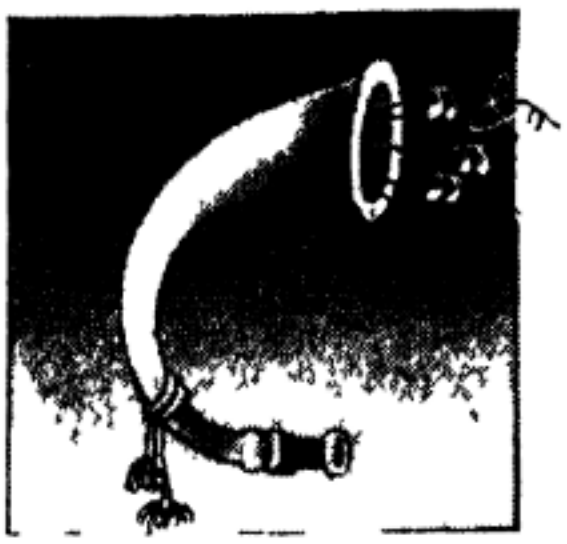
Rao's letter to the Union finance ministry seemed to confirm the suspicion that Udayar had been operating Mohan Breweries for MGR. Rao claimed that he was deprived of his share of the profits because Udayar was "close" to MGR. All the breweries' accounts were falsified, he says

A long time associate of Udayar and director of Mohan Breweries, M Ethirajan, however, maintains that "being a highly competitive field, no brewery in India has been able to produce profits in its initial years." Ethirajan argues that the price of his company's liquor is between 20 and 25 per cent less than that of rival brands. Besides, the company earns just about 50 paise to one rupee on every case of liquor. Rao, on the other hand, estimates that profit per case is Rs 50.

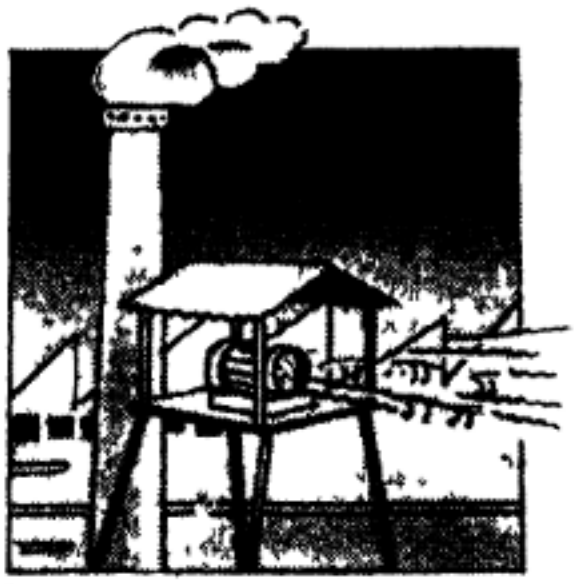
Ethirajan dismisses Rao's allegations as the rantings of a "fraud" who is trying to blackmail the company. "I am not going to yield to any threats from him," declares Ethirajan. "Let Rao petition anybody, I am not worried. I am not guilty." Ethirajan argues that it is not possible for a registered company to have 'secret agreements' with a chief minister or anyone else. Besides, says he, "Rao should have raised these questions when MGR was alive...now with MGR no more, he is talking about all kinds of claims of his." Udayar refused to comment on Rao's allegations, arguing that it would not be proper for him to react as he was not a director of the company.

Rao is, however, determined to fight it out. "I am 74 years old but I can put up a real fight still," he says, "I am sure of

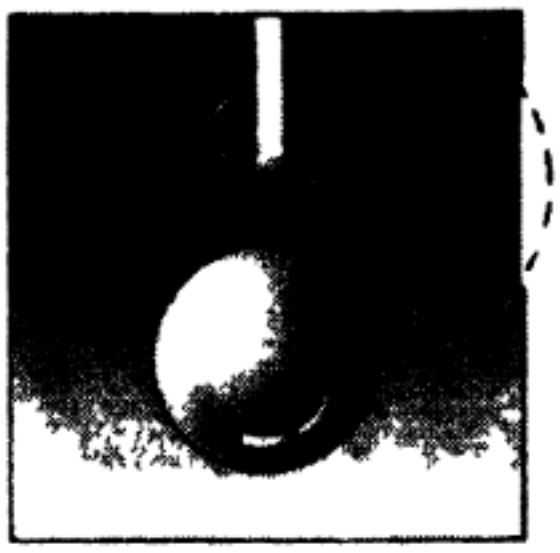
PROGRESS PUTS EVERYTHING BEHIND WHICH IS OLD.



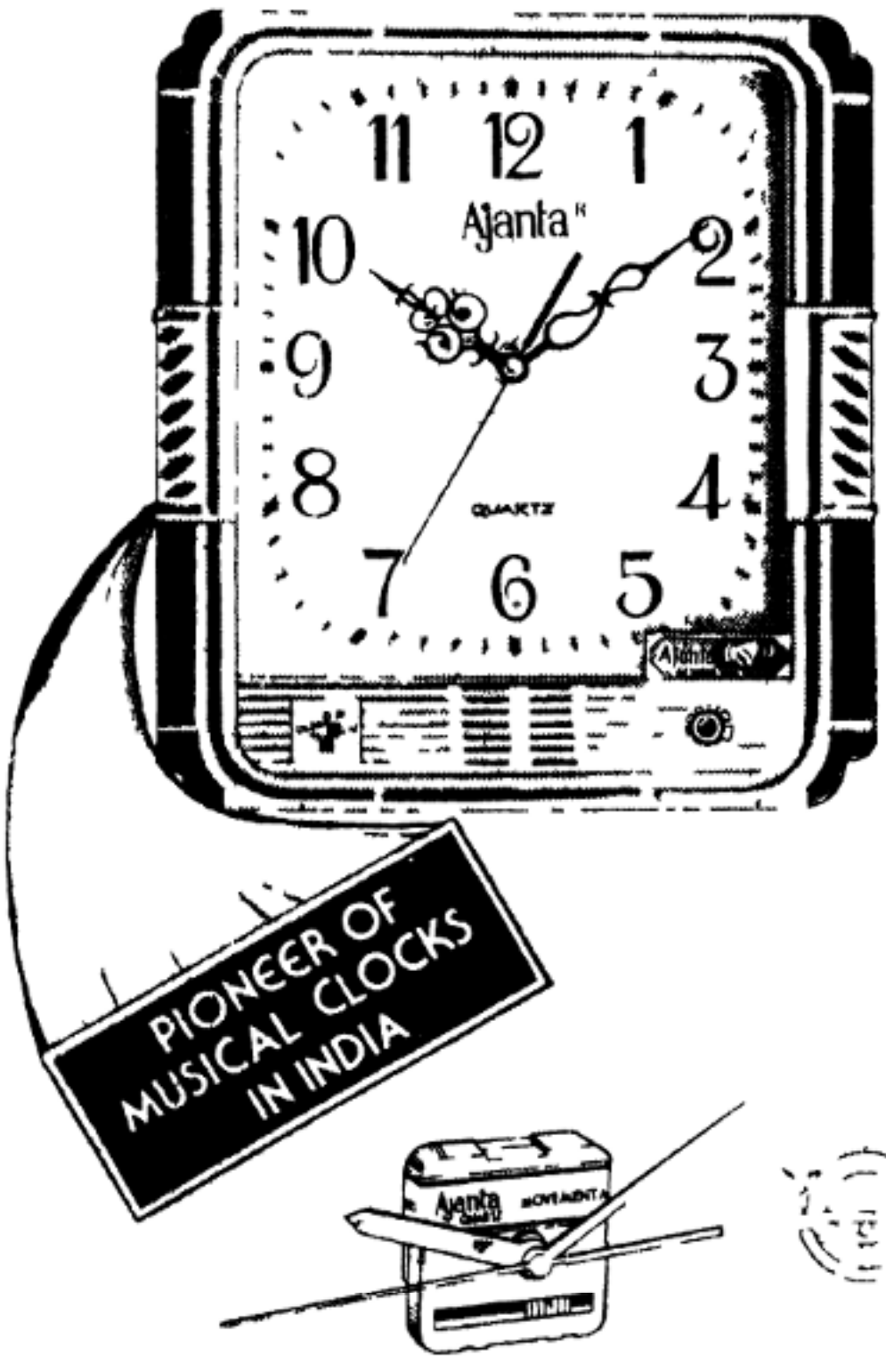
In ancient times therewere wonderful things to show the time



Then an industrial revolution brought the siren



This is what you know well has already run out of time.



..Today we bring the most modern thing that plays music with time.

Ajanta®

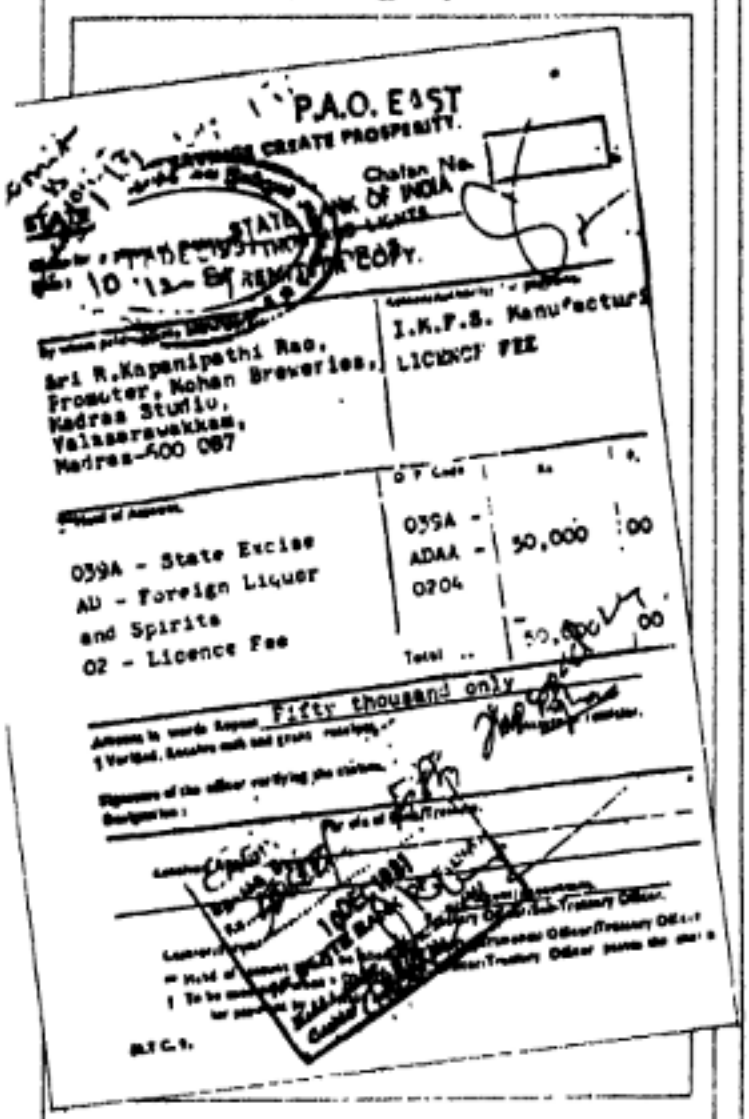
QUARTZ MUSICAL CLOCKS & TIMEPIECES

Up to now therewere noisy things being applied for time showing From now on it is sweeter whispering music you are going to hear from our musical clocks
We have developed
a wide :ange of classic music pieces

- Chime Strike(Twelve melody)
- Short melody
- Long melody
- West minster(Quarter Chime)
- Miracle eye(Sound auto Control)
- Jingle bell and many more

MARKETED BY
AJANTA ORGANIZATION
104 TODI CHAMBERS, 1ST FLOOR,
2ND LAL BAZAR,
CALCUTTA - 700 001

winning my last ten paise, with interest, from Udayar." Rao says that with MGR's death his profit share should have increased and that he should legitimately get about Rs 18 crores. Apprehending danger from Udayar and his henchmen, the gutsy Rao has even


P.A.O. EAST

I.K.F.S. Manufactur

Sri R.Kapanipathi Rao,
Promoter, Mohan Breweries,
Madras Studio,
Valasaravakkam,
Madras-600 087

LICENCE FEE

039A - State Excise	039A -		
AU - Foreign Liquer	ADAA -	50,000	00
and Spirits	0204		
02 - Licence Fee	Total ..	50,000	00

Fifty thousand only

Document reproduced by Rao to substantiate his case

ordered a bullet-proof Mercedes for himself and his wife.

But it looks as if Udayar is going to need a lot of protection—more so than Rao. For, the dispute with Rao is not Udayar's only problem. Recently, the state government issued an order that is going to cost Udayar a lot of money.This relates to the acquisition of 125.7 acres of government land in a Madras suburb by the Ramachandran Trust (of which Udayar is the managing trustee). The land price had apparently been grossly undervalued during MGR's tenure and now the government has revised its value upwards—by about Rs 4 crores—and has directed the trust to pay up.

Ethirajan feels that people like himself and Udayar are being penalised for their alleged 'closeness' to MGR. He claims that at one time they were branded pro-Karunanidhi and had to suffer for it. Udayar was even raided in 1985. And now, laments Ethirajan, "Any file relating to us is automatically rejected by the government because they say we have been close to MGR."

If nothing comes of the Rao-Udayar controversy it will be because of the inordinate importance the state's liquor



Ramaswamy Udayar: funded MGR?

Rao found that most of the firm's profits were being illegally siphoned out, either into MGR's coffers or for financing the construction of the giant Ramachandran Medical College. Rao is now demanding that the Centre launch a thorough investigation into the funding of the college and the functioning of Udayar's brewery

industry is accorded by local politicians and parties. Recently, even the Tamil Nadu Governor, Dr P.C. Alexander, announced that the government was going to use funds generated by the liquor trade to finance a major chunk of the state's developmental projects. Dr Alexander's claim that the state government could extract Rs 25 crores from the liquor trade, without affecting the retail price of liquor, implies that big money was involved in past liquor transactions. Whether part of this money went to the highest political offices, including that of the chief minister, is a question that will be answered only if Rao is proved right.

R. Bhagwan Singh / *Madras*

KEWAL VERMA

Backwards to the fore?

The Opposition coalition does not seem to represent the weaker sections of society

It is yet another brainwave of Devi Lal with Raja Vishwanath Pratap Singh as the protagonist. For the second time in independent India's history, a backward castes-led coalition is planning to capture power at the Centre. They had succeeded once in 1979—when Charan Singh was installed as the Prime Minister. Devi Lal's gameplan is similar to the one hatched in 1979 and envisages an alliance of four castes: the Ahirs, Jats, Gujjars and the Rajputs (AJGR). Though Devi Lal and his accomplices are flexing their muscles, the question is: will history repeat itself?

Historically speaking, the AJGR combine, which broadly represents the interests of the landed peasantry, is a declining force in Indian politics. Surveys have revealed the disturbing trend that of the additional 267 million people who will inhabit the country after 15 years, more than 175 million will flock to the urban areas. What is more, studies have indicated that even within the rural population there is a steady shift from agricultural to non-agricultural activities.

Nevertheless, the AJGR coalition is a force to reckon with and its effort is a serious threat to the Congress(I). The Jats, both in Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, are traditionally anti-Congress(I). The Ahirs in their strongholds of eastern UP and Bihar, are only too willing to join the Opposition ranks and the Rajputs of UP and Bihar are already excited over the prospect of a Thakur— V.P. Singh—leading the country. True, the Gujjars are still undecided but with a little bit of persuasion, they too could be roped in easily.

Critics may scoff at the idea of the Rajputs joining hands with the backward castes to fight the Congress, but the fact remains that economic compulsions have forced the Rajputs throughout the country to take to agriculture. The result: the economic and social barrier between the Rajputs and the backward classes is slowly breaking down.

There are a number of other immediate inducements too for both the Rajputs and the backward castes. While the Rajputs are justifiably enthused over the prospects of V.P. Singh heading the government, the backward castes argue that effective power will be in their hands. Devi Lal has already staked his claim for the presidentship of the parliamentary board of the Janata Dal which would enable him to control the distribution of party tickets during the elections. It may be recalled that it was Charan Singh who oversaw the distribution of tickets during the 1977 parliamentary polls. Moreover, at the state level, effective power will be in the hands of either the Jats or the Ahirs: Devi Lal and his sons in Haryana, Mulayam Singh Yadav in UP, and Lalu Prasad Yadav in Bihar.



The AJGR combine is trying to cash in on the present mood of the middle class which is distinctly anti-Congress(I). The question of morality in politics is an important issue among the middle class and V.P. Singh is exploiting this sentiment to the hilt

Moreover, the Jats, Ahirs and the Rajputs control the moneybags of their respective regions. During elections, this single factor could prove fatal for the Congress(I).

The AJGR is also trying to cash in on the present mood of the middle class which is distinctly anti-Congress(I). The question of morality in politics, especially after the Bofors scandal, is the single most important issue at the moment among the middle class and V.P. Singh is exploiting this sentiment to the hilt. Mahendra Singh Tikait's week-long *dharna* at the Boat Club in Delhi demonstrated that the middle class was with the backward castes.

Articulation of caste consciousness in the Hindi belt reached its peak in the 1980 elections. But at that time the Rajputs did not cooperate with the backwards. The Rajputs of UP and

Bihar by and large supported Chandra Shekhar's Janata Party while the backward castes lined up behind Charan Singh. But, despite the fact that Charan Singh could not win over the middle class, his party put up a good show in the states of Haryana, UP and Bihar.

Indira Gandhi successfully checked the growth of a backward caste alliance by forming a counter-coalition of diverse social forces but it remains to be seen whether Rajiv Gandhi can do the same. While it is true that any Opposition



Devi Lal and V.P. Singh: the Jat-Thakur combine

alliance will lead to the formation of another counter-coalition, it is up to Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress(I) to exploit the situation. Already, the Congress(I) is trying to win over Kanshi Ram and his Bahujan Samaj Party, but such alliances of convenience alone will not do. The party will have to supplement it with practical economic and social measures.

But so far Rajiv Gandhi has not been able to come up with any imaginative social or economic programmes which could enthuse a section of the people to forge a counter-alliance and defeat the emerging coalition of the backward castes and the Thakurs. The AICC(I) did make a number of pious promises but the people somehow have the impression that Rajiv Gandhi is not serious about implementing them. Moreover, Rajiv Gandhi's initial hesitation to take a bold stand on issues like *sati* and the entry of Harijans into the Nathwada temple has alienated a large section of the people from the Congress(I).

After being on the run for the last one year, the Congress(I) suddenly finds itself in an advantageous position. Moreover, the ideological differences of the varied Opposition parties which were swept under the carpet have begun to surface



So far Rajiv Gandhi has not been able to come up with any imaginative social or economic programmes which could enthuse the people to forge a counter-alliance and defeat the emerging coalition of the backward castes and the Thakurs. The AICC(I) did make pious promises but they have remained unfulfilled

The AICC(I) adopted five important resolutions at its session in Madras but the only one that has the potential of influencing the outcome of the next parliamentary elections is the recommendation on electoral reforms: to ban secessionist and communal parties. But the resolution will have little meaning if the Congress(I) enters into an electoral alliance with the Muslim League in Tamil Nadu. It is actions such as this that has made the people sceptical about Congress policies and programmes.

However, the political climate of the country is undergoing a change. For the last 20 months, the Congress(I) has been on the run under a sustained offensive by the Opposition. But suddenly, and unexpectedly, the Congress(I) finds itself in an advantageous position as the Opposition is caught in its own web of contradictions. The enthusiastic turnout at the Congress rally on Indira Gandhi's death anniversary surprised not only the detractors but the party bosses as well. In fact, most Congress leaders were fearing that the rally would be thinly attended which could demoralise the party's rank and file.

Another important aspect of the rally was the impressive participation of youths and it would be sheer self-deception to dismiss them as "hired" supporters. The success of the rally also showed the fact that Indira Gandhi's name still works wonders. The new-found confidence of the Congress leadership has been further reinforced by the warm reception Rajiv Gandhi received during his recent tour of Tamil Nadu.

On the other hand, the ideological differences of the varied Opposition parties which were swept under the carpet in a desperate bid to unite, have begun to surface. Ram Dhan of the Jan Morcha sounded the first note of dissent when he said that the Harijans, the Adivasis and the rural poor have no place in the AJGR-dominated Opposition. More serious perhaps is the threat of the BJP and Syed Shahabuddin both have asked the new Opposition coalition to choose between the two. The Opposition leaders are justifiably alarmed as they cannot afford to antagonise either the BJP or do without Shahabuddin who wields enormous influence among the Muslims.

In pre-independent India, it was Sir Chhotu Ram who stirred caste sentiments to keep the Jats away from the national movement. After independence, Ram Manohar Lohia too resorted to casteist politics but for an entirely different reason: to forge an alliance of the Harijans and other backward castes. He failed. After the abolition of the *zamindari* system, the backward castes became landlords. Today, the Jats or the Ahirs are no longer the oppressed sections of society: they have turned oppressors themselves. Thus, it would be naive to assume that the AJGR coalition represents the interests of the weaker sections of the society. Only under a skilful and determined leadership can the Congress(I) defeat the designs of the Opposition.



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

The lurking Naxalite threat

Of all the left extremists, or Naxalites as they are popularly called, the People's War Group (PWG) is the largest and the most violent, according to the central government. While it has its headquarters in Andhra Pradesh, it also operates in parts of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

The warning sent by Hyderabad to New Delhi is that the PWG is keen on developing ties with like-minded groups such as the Maoist Communist Centre and Party Unity of Bihar and West Bengal—besides consolidating its own factions in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Pachiappan. During M.G. Ramachandran's rule, there was ruthless suppression of Naxalites in Tamil Nadu.

Reports gathered from the field reveal that the PWG has an organisation reaching the grassroots. At the top is a three-member committee comprising chairman Kondapalli Seetharamaiah, Nukku Subba Reddy and Sambasiva Rao. Below them are provincial committees, one for the plains and the other for forest areas; and at the base are regional committees and district committees.

Since the two main communist parties now rely on the parliamentary system for power, they have no striking force. The left extremists, calling themselves Marxist-Leninist, do not believe in peaceful methods and rely mainly on violence. Their striking force is in the forests. The PWG has a different formation for forest areas.

Here, only divisional committees exist. There are four divisions: Adilabad and East Godavari, both in Andhra Pradesh, one in Maharashtra, and one in Balsar, Madhya Pradesh. Eighteen squads operate under the forest committees, each squad comprising nine to 14 members. In the semi-forest areas, nearly 16 small squads function, each one having two to three men.

In the plains, there are 120 central organisations, each assisted by two or three aides, who are ideological mentors as well as mobilisers of potential terrorists. They carry arms.

The forest squads are called the "arms" of the PWG; they use sophisticated weapons like AK-47 rifles, .30 carbines, .12 bore shotguns, SBBL, DBBL, SBML, guns,.303, 8mm rifles, pistols, revolvers and grenades. These weapons have been obtained from "outside sources" or snatched from licensed holders and the police.

The PWG manufactures its own 8mm rifles, .12 bore shotguns and grenades. It has set up illicit factories in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, apart from Andhra Pradesh. The *modus operandi* of the PWG is to kill those who resist its activities so as to strike terror.

Voluntary contributions are limited; funds are mostly collected through extortion. *Beedi* leaf contractors used to be the main source but it has shrunk considerably following the nationalisation of *beedi* leaf collection. Now excise contractors and paper mills are the main targets.



Nirmal Mitra

The CPI(ML) office in Hyderabad

The People's War Group stands out as the most militant and brutal, and its militancy is on the increase. Based in Andhra Pradesh, it also operates in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa...It has set up illegal arms factories in many states and its *modus operandi* is to kill those who resist its activities so as to strike terror

In Andhra Pradesh, the PWG has spread its operations all over the districts; it is particularly active in the districts of Warangal, Khammam, Karimnagar, Adilabad, Nizamabad and East Godavari, and in the rural areas of Visakhapatnam.

Outside the state, the PWG is at present concentrating in the districts of Koraput (Orissa), Gadchiroli (Maharashtra) and Bastar (Madhya Pradesh). Here terrorists find shelter, often in urban areas, which goes to show that they have strong sympathy from sections of the intelligentsia. In these districts they hold arms training classes and even have units to make explosives.

It appears that the central command is not always in full control of the situation; local cadres often act on their own in violation of the strict ideological code. For example, the abduction of some officers in Andhra Pradesh last December was not what the PWG command had wanted. Increased access to better weapons and enormous funds had emboldened the local militants to act on their own.

Besides the PWG, the two most active groups in Andhra Pradesh are the Chandra Pulla Reddy group and the Pyla Vasudeva Rao group. The first operates in the districts of Warangal, Karimnagar, Kurnool and Khammam and in the urban area of Visakhapatnam. The Pyla Vasudeva Rao group is strong in the Rampachodavaram area of East and West Godavari districts, Srikakulam district and Yellandu and Suryapet of Nalgonda district.

There is also a pro-Lin Piao faction, but it is not significant. It is against violence, and espouses the causes of the poor. It does not approve of killings.

The PWG thus stands out as the most militant and brutal, and its militancy is on the increase. And the most disconcerting aspect, the Andhra Pradesh police feel, is "an effort towards increased urbanisation of hitherto predominant rural movements". ◻



The desolate ramparts of Jhansi remember the valiance of its young queen and a tragic grandeur in a moment of history.



बुन्देलों हरबोलों के मुंह हमने सुनी कहानी थी,
खूब लड़ी मर्दानी, वह तो झांसीवाली रानी थी।

'I shall not surrender my Jhansi'. And she did not. In her ceaseless battle with the British, the young queen Lakshmibai fought to the finish, but refused to submit. In her tragic end was her glory.

Uttar Pradesh evokes the memories of some of the most glorious moments in India's first war of independence.

Bithoor, a mute testimony to the valour of Peshwa Nana Saheb and Tatya Tope, remembering their triumphs and tragedies. Lucknow, where the Residency was sieged for forty-five days by the soldiers of the war of independence. Kanpur, a scene of battle and blood, fire and fury, where the British might fell to dust.

Many a time Uttar Pradesh has emerged from the mist of history and shone with a scintillating brilliance. Its cities and monuments are a witness. Agra, the city of Mughal splendour. Fatehpur Sikri, Emperor Akbar's deserted capital. Mahoba, the fabled land of the legendary warriors, Alha and Udal.

Accessibility : Lucknow, Agra, Varanasi and Kanpur have direct air connections with the major cities of India. All the places in Uttar Pradesh are linked with a network of rail and road. Inter-state buses and luxury coaches ply between important cities of Uttar Pradesh and other states.

Accommodation : All the destinations offer wide-ranging accommodation facilities—from luxury hotels to youth hostels, dharamshalas and pilgrim sheds. In addition, UP Tourism provides 129 well-appointed stay-points at various tourist centres.

Uttar Pradesh.
The spirit lives on.

An enduring memory of a glorious hour in history, the ramparts of the Jhansi Fort.

U.P. Tourism

'Chitrahar', 3 Naval Kishore Road,
Lucknow 226 001.

ITDC/UPT/1523

Is your baby a pale image of her sunny self?



The right distance for using a flash is four to eight feet

Indu shows you how to take better photographs.

Taking a good photograph indoors is really easy if you remember these simple points.

To start with, if you're using a flash, make sure you keep the right distance from the subject. If you go too close, the light emerging from the flash will be too much in proportion to the distance. The result is a photograph that's pale. The features of the subject may look flatter too.

Standing too far doesn't help either. You get a photograph that's dull, as the light is insufficient. The ideal range is between four feet and eight feet. Stay within this... and you can be sure of a photograph you're proud of.

Keeping these tips in sight helps. So does a good quality colour film. Like Indu. The colours are rich and lasting.



Hindustan Photo Films Mfg. Co. Ltd.
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Indunagar, Udhagamandalam 643 005
Marketing Headquarters: Subramanian Buildings
No 1 Club House Road, Madras 600 002

Sista's-HPF.994.86.D

Visiting fears

Gorbachev's visit to India raises fears about the Soviet Bear abandoning India to the Chinese Dragon

It should have been an occasion to celebrate and reaffirm an established relationship. But Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to India last week generated misgivings and unanswered questions. This was his second visit to India, and the first since his appointment as the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. The visit might have been designed to further consolidate Indo-Soviet relations but instead, it resulted in the Soviet leader allaying widespread fears about a "cooling" in bilateral relations between the two countries.

The run-up to Gorbachev's Indian visit was marked by speculation about the state of Indo-Soviet relations—speculation that hinted at a growing Soviet detachment from Indian security concerns. Of specific concern was the Soviet Union's increasing friendliness towards China and the implications of this on India's security environment. So strong and persistent were these Indian misgivings that Gorbachev, himself, was compelled to rebut them. In an extraordinary gesture, the Soviet leader personally tried to dismiss the fears. "I shall not dignify with answer such totally groundless and obviously speculative assertions", he said about the reports, in the course of a speech at a Rashtrapati Bhavan banquet, on the day he arrived.

Gorbachev, however, hinted that an improvement in India's relations with China was important to the Soviet Union. He stressed that forging good relations with China was imperative in the overall global context. Without referring directly to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's proposed trip to Beijing next month, he said he was "happy" to see "signs of improvement" in Sino-Indian relations and mentioned that a "Sino-Soviet summit was probably not too far away".

The Soviet leader made these observations at Vigyan Bhavan where he was presented the Indira Gandhi prize for peace, disarmament and development (the ostensible reason for his Delhi visit). The thrust of Gorbachev's speech was that good relations between the USSR, China and India would be required to solve the problems of the Asia-Pacific region.

After Gorbachev's departure, the Opposition quizzed Rajiv as to whether any discussion on Sino-Indian relations had taken place. "Why did China not find a mention in the joint communique released at the end of President Gorbachev's visit?" asked the irrepressible Subramaniam Swamy. In response to Gandhi's reply that "it was not possible in any statement of reasonable size to cover all these subjects", Swamy quipped that, "it showed that China was not important enough to be mentioned." An angry Rajiv shot back: "As far as relations between the Soviet Union and India are concerned, China is unimportant." But the remarks did touch a raw nerve, and the Prime Minister went to great lengths to assert that India's relations with the Soviet Union and China were not "tied up" with each other.



President Mikhail Gorbachev: allaying misgivings

Nonetheless, diplomatic circles in New Delhi buzzed with speculation about how Sino-Soviet rapproachement would affect Sino-Indian relations. Xinhua, the state-controlled news agency of China in an analysis of President Gorbachev's second visit to India noted: "Indo-Soviet economic relations might undergo a process of readjustment in view of *perestroika* in the Soviet Union." The report countered the apprehensions of a section of the Indian media that there would be a shift in Moscow's priorities, asking: "If Soviet Union's relations with India are not detrimental to a third country, why should a third country's relations with the Soviet Union be detrimental to Indo-Soviet relations."

Foreign affairs specialists in New Delhi reacted to President Gorbachev's pronouncements in the capital with guarded optimism. Said Bhabani Sengupta, noted commentator on international affairs: "The Prime Minister's statement in Parliament is extraordinary. If what Rajiv Gandhi meant was that

Bold, sporty and fashionable The statement of rich and refined Vimal Suitings. The statement of Ravi Shastri.



V I M A L ' S ☐ W I N T E R ☐ S T A T E M E N T S



The looks of a winner

VIMAL

WOOLLEN & POLYRICH SUITINGS

Mudra/ARIL/4383A

China was *now* not important in Indo-Soviet relations then he was making a profoundly important policy statement, because it meant that he in his mind has removed the China obstacle. But if he meant that China has never been a factor in Indo-Soviet relations, then it is a profoundly unhistorical statement." But Sengupta was quick to add: "It is stupid to say that there is a difference between Soviet Union and India on China. After all, both President Gorbachev and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi agree that relations with China must improve."

Sengupta pointed out that patterns of international relations are rapidly changing. The cold war, between the USSR and the USA on the one hand and the USSR and China on the other, shows signs of getting over. All this points to a "less conflicting, less tense international milieu". The primary reason for the changing scenario is the growing realisation on the part of both the superpowers that they have 'overstretched" themselves. This has resulted in the Superpowers' reneging on their commitments.

President Gorbachev is, without doubt, primarily responsible for the changing pattern of international affairs. And the fact that currently China is central to Soviet policy on the Asia-Pacific region, poses a challenge to South Block. Says Sengupta, "Only those who see China as an eternal enemy are apprehensive of Sino-Soviet rapprochement. Our relations with China have been frozen for long with low intensity tension on the border. We cannot follow the same policy."

Election year exigencies haved forced the Indian government to make it clear that its actions should not be interpreted as a surrender of Indian interests (in this case, territory). Instead of talking about 'mutual accommodation', India has suggested that alternative phraseology be used, like 'mutual national interest' and 'mutual national sentiments'.

Meera Sinha Bhattacharjea, a well-known expert on China points out that President Gorbachev's recent pronouncements on China must be analysed in the context of "a major shift in Soviet foreign policy strategy which was spelt out in Vladivostok in 1986." The three elements of Soviet foreign policy which India has to take into account are: a shift in focus to the Asia-Pacific region in which China plays a major role; a general downplaying of a confrontationist attitude; need to restructure Soviet economy and to derive as much advantage as possible from increasing economic contact not only with the developed West but also with developing countries. In all of these, China plays a very important role." Bhattacharjea points out that till the time of President Gorbachev's Vladivostok speech, there was a parallel between Indian and Soviet strategy on their territorial problems. But at Vladivostok, the Soviet leader changed track to, in effect accept, China's position on the eastern sector (of the Sino-Soviet) border. With this China and the Soviet Union have rapidly proceeded to settle their border problem. Agreement to the effect has been recently reached and Sino-Soviet relations normalised. Now, Sino-Indian territorial problems have become purely bilateral.

It can be argued that this would mean a strengthening of the Chinese negotiating position in terms of the boundary dispute. And, in that case, President Gorbachev's visit and warm statements would be cold comfort for India.

Patralekha Chatterjee/*New Delhi*

Sondeep Shankar



Gorbachev hinted to Rajiv Gandhi that an improvement in Sino—Indian relations was important to the Soviet Union, which led to speculations about a 'cooling' in Indo—Soviet bilateral relations

Democracy delayed

Uncertainty over Benazir's appointment as Prime Minister casts doubts on the future of Pakistani democracy

Pakistan's National Assembly (Parliament) building is a white, imposing structure erected in a hollow at the end of Islamabad's main road. For most of its history the building has remained silent without legislators or the noise of democracy to warm it. Till last week, the building remained forbidding, and buffetted by icy winds blowing from the mountains adjoining the city. And as chilling as the building itself were the prospects of parliamentary democracy in the country.

For, the elections to the National Assembly were long over; the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Benazir Bhutto had emerged as the single largest party with 93 out of the 217 elected seats in the National Assembly. And yet the establishment, dominated by the dead dictator, General Zia-ul Haq's followers, were refusing to yield. It was almost as if the National Assembly was the property of the heirs of General Zia and fortified against encroachers like Benazir.

Even the designated guardian of the National Assembly and the supposedly impartial steersman of the electoral process, Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, seemed desperate to stave off Benazir's installation as the queen of the National Assembly. In the process, the President substituted constitutional procedure with arbitrariness. At first, he promised to convene the National Assembly within 13 days after elections as stipulated in the Constitution; then changed his mind and said that the Assembly would only be called on 7 December. He persisted in evading the issue of when the next Prime Minister would be appointed and what the criteria for such appointment would be. And just when he was on the verge of losing all credibility, he declared that constitutional procedures would be followed: the National Assembly would be convened on 30 November and the new Prime Minister named the next day.

The Pakistani voters, who had responded with overwhelming enthusiasm for the return of parliamentary democracy, were dismayed and Benazir, who had emerged as the most popular national figure, was outraged. In any other democracy, the thought of the leader of the majority party not being given a chance to form the government would have been unthinkable. In Pakistan, the parliamentary rules seemed confused. President Ishaq Khan showed no signs of being impressed with Benazir's loud claims that she could prove her majority—with the help of independents and other supporters—on the floor of the House. An exasperated Benazir Bhutto went on to say that her party did not have to agree to even a coalition government and was in a position to form a government on its own.

The delays and increased uncertainty over the appointment of Benazir as the Prime Minister strengthened the suspicion that President Ishaq Khan and his advisers were in league with the PPP's rival, the Islamic Jamhooree Ittehad (the Islamic Democratic Alliance). The IJI, composed of nine parties most of whom admit to being the inheritors of the Zia legacy, continued to boast that they would form the government—an amazing claim considering that they had won only 55 seats. The IJI's strength further dwindled when four of its MNAs, originally belonging to the Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami (JUI—Darkhwasti group) walked out and joined the parent body of the JUI led by Maulana Fazlur Rahman.

But the IJI leadership remained unfazed. Especially confident was the caretaker chief minister of Punjab, Nawaz Sharif, who was being projected as the country's future Prime Minister by the IJI. Sharif's confidence was bolstered by the results of the Provincial (state) Assembly elections held on 19 November. His party had trounced the PPP in the country's largest and most important province, Punjab, and was in a position to form the government there. The PPP's only decisive victory was in the country's second largest province, Sind.

The results in the other two provinces—Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP)—were not decisive for any party. The IJI, however, emerged as the single largest party in the NWFP with 28 out of the total of 80 seats, while the PPP trailed with only 20 seats. In Baluchistan too, the IJI got 8 seats against PPP's 3 seats. The poll results in these two provinces were more a victory for smaller parties like Khan Abdul Wali Khan's Awami National Party (ANP), Fazlur Rahman's Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islami (JUI) and Baluchistan National Alliance. The IJI might have bested the PPP in these two provinces but its higher tally of seats proved nothing. It confirmed, if anything, that the IJI's principal support base is Punjab.

The IJI's improved showing in the provincial poll sparked fresh hope in the

Benazir Bhutto: will the military regime hand over power to a popular government?

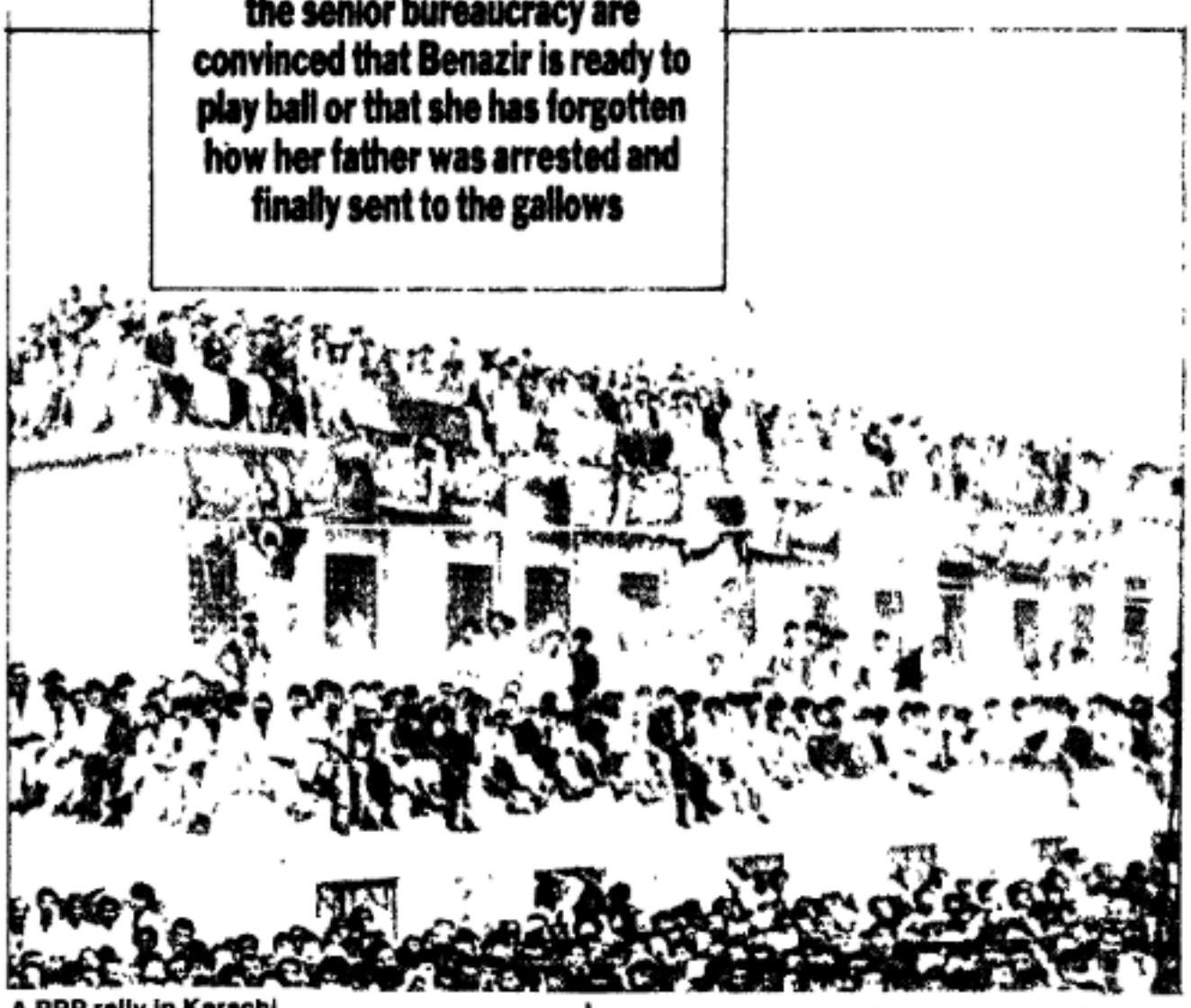


heart of the pro-Zia establishment and provided a new excuse for advocating Nawaz Sharif's claim to the prime ministership. This seems to have put the country's military leadership in a bit of a quandary. Pakistan's senior most military leader, Chief of Army Staff General Aslam Beg,tried to appease the pro-Zia establishment by suggesting that the next government should be formed on the basis of 'national consensus'. This talk of a 'broad-based popular government' implied a partnership of rivals, a linking of the IJI and the PPP.

The suggestion was so preposterous that both Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto rejected it outright. Benazir declared that the Pakistani people had already delivered their verdict and the choice of the people should be honoured. There clearly could be no compromises or half way houses: if the establishment wanted democracy they would have to accept Benazir as Prime Minister.

The military leadership -as opposed to the collection of senior bureaucrats, discredited politicians, business tycoons and newspaper owners General Zia had brought together to form a ruling cli-

Not all sections of the military and the senior bureaucracy are convinced that Benazir is ready to play ball or that she has forgotten how her father was arrested and finally sent to the gallows



A PPP rally in Karachi



que—had reconciled itself to Benazir assuming power. And Benazir too has reconciled herself to the idea of the military setting the ground rules. Before the elections, she made it a point to stress: "The role of the armed forces has been critical to restoring democracy. I do not foresee conflicts between us and the military. Both the armed forces and the PPP realise that the unity of the country is supreme."

If the military has any reservation on Benazir assuming power, it stems from the fear that Benazir once allowed undiluted power could rapidly consolidate her position. The 16 November poll verdict does not give the PPP unfettered powers; a coalition government necessarily calls for compromises on the part of the dominant party. In these circumstances the establishment, which includes the military, would find it easier to influence policy making. Should Benazir make political alliances, influential friends and erode the political bases of her rivals, then the PPP could become uncontrollable.

That could mean an unpredictable Benazir, even a vengeful Benazir. Not all sections of the military and the senior bureaucracy are convinced that Benazir is ready to play ball or that she has forgotten how her father was arrested and finally sent to the gallows. Giving Benazir her political due could amount to opening a pandora's box for the Pakistani establishment. Zia's ghost might have been laid to rest but Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's spectre could yet come back to haunt.

Indranil Banerjie/*Islamabad*

On his own terms

Dhiren Bhagat, a SUNDAY columnist, dies tragically in a car crash



Till the end, Bhagat remained his own man. One month, Congress MPs would toast him for attacking the *Express*; the next month they would call him 'unpatriotic' for endangering the Lanka accord. He accepted the praise and the abuse with equanimity

He maintained three homes—a cottage in Mussourie, his parents' flat in Bombay's Pali Hill and an apartment in New Delhi's Vasant Vihar—but it was difficult to find him in any of them. At 31, Dhiren Bhagat was one of India's most peripatetic journalists. At the time of his tragic death in a road accident in New Delhi on 24 November, he had just returned from covering the election in Pakistan and was about to fly to Bombay.

The last time most people in Delhi saw him was in early November at a party to celebrate the publication of M.J. Akbar's *Nehru*. He spent the early part of the evening avoiding a member of the Prime Minister's office whom he had mercilessly lampooned in *Private Eye* in 1985, and the rest getting into an argument with another PMO joint secretary. As the discussion grew more and more heated, Bhagat uncharacteristically demanded that the bureaucrat step outside to settle it 'like a man'—an unwise move considering that Dhiren was most at home in libraries while his adversary had proved his mettle in the Sialkot sector. Fortunately, the physical confrontation was averted but not before the joint secretary managed to throw in a few digs about you "Western-educated people who don't understand India".

"Oh," said Bhagat, relieved at last to be on sure ground. "And does that include your Prime Minister, who I gather, is also Western educated?"

The story of Dhiren Bhagat's decade in journalism is one of such unlikely confrontations and similar smart retorts. He lived by his own rules; he played no favourites; he stood up for what he believed in; he took on whoever he felt needed to be fought; and he always managed to have the last word.

He discovered that he could write provocatively when he was 14. As editor of the *Mayoor*, the newspaper at Ajmer's Mayo College, he turned the school upside down with angry editorials and witty put-downs. But it was not till his second year at Oxford (he read politics, philosophy and economics at Merton) that he realised that he could make a living out of journalism. His first column (accompanied by an extremely glamorous photograph) appeared in *Bombay* magazine in 1979 and the response it evoked convinced him that he had a future in Indian journalism. When he came down in 1981, he attempted, along with lawyer Salman Khurshid, to launch the *New Delhi Review of Books*.

Unfortunately that fell through, but by then he had been discovered by Vinod Mehta, who took the unusual step of giving him a fortnightly column in *The Sunday Observer* in 1982. It soon became the *Observer's* most popular feature, generating dozens of letters each week. Bhagat loved the controversy and kept it going by attacking the mighty. He was the first to dare to suggest that Salman Rushdie was unreadable, wrote a mock-obituary of Khushwant Singh and evoked sacks of hate mail by arguing that Arun Shourie didn't know how to write English.

He kept his other writing going too. There was a column in *India Today* on the arts, regular writing for *Imprint*, and when Pritish Nandy revamped *The Illustrated Weekly* in 1983, several cover stories. All of it was distinguished by irreverence. At the *Observer*, he entered an argument between Kersy Katrak and Iqbal Masud by noting: "Like Katrak, I have as much respect for Masud's prose as I do for his views: both are piffle." In *Imprint*, he took on all of India's leading columnists. Of N.J. Nanporia he wrote, "reading one of his columns is like being stuck in the middle of the Sahara with no water". On another occasion, he went off to interview a shady American academic who had produced a collection of Emergency-era poetry. When Bhagat pointed out that the collection included one of his poems for which no permission had been requested, the academic turned shifty. And when he added that the sense of the poem had been lost because the word 'god' had been turned into 'dog', the American threw him out of his hotel room

He came to national prominence because of his interviews for the *Weekly*. For Nandy's first revamped issue, he took on Menaka Gandhi and made her look fairly stupid. Later, he plotted to get NTR to talk to him. In those days, Rama Rao was perceived as a great democrat but Bhagat had heard that he was a bit of an autocrat. So, the moment he entered the room, he prostrated himself at NTR's feet. Later, he was to recall: "I waited on the floor, thinking that he would make some attempt to stop me or ask me to get up. But, apparently, all of his ministers had to do this, so he didn't think it at all odd." When he finally picked himself off the ground, NTR was beaming. He proceeded to give Bhagat the interview of a lifetime, comparing himself to Ayatollah Khomeini and declaring that he would nationalise the arts if he came to power. When a horrified press secretary tried to interrupt, he was livid. "You shut up," he snapped. "Mr Bhagat is my friend." It made for terrific reading.

It was during the *Weekly* phase of his career that he began to tire of Bombay and its intellectual set. He made up with most of those he had attacked. Kersy Katrak became a great friend and Iqbal Masud something of a *guru*. He turned his attention instead to Punjab. In 1983, he had gone off to the Golden Temple, met

Bhindranwale and Longowal and returned convinced that the problem would not go away unless the Centre took some positive political action. A piece in *Imprint* was widely criticised for taking this line, but by 1984, after the fiasco of Bluestar, his position began to seem more reasonable.

Dissatisfied with the official line that General



Sundarji's men had accidentally destroyed the Akal Takht but had miraculously ensured that not a single bullet nicked the Harmandir, he flew to Amritsar. In a despatch for *The Sunday Observer*, he noted that he had seen at least 100 bullet holes in the Harmandir and debunked the government's propaganda. His interest in Punjab led him to accept a commission from Penguin India for a book on the subject: sadly, it remained unfinished when he died.

It was inevitable that the foreign press would discover him. *The Spectator* asked him to do a cover story on Bhindranwale and was so pleased by it that he was appointed the magazine's regular man in India. Being something of a young fogey himself, he fitted in easily with *The Spectator* ethos and was soon doing cover stories from London as well.

It was in his capacity as the *Spec's* man in India that he interviewed Rajiv Gandhi in 1985. It was one of Bhagat's better interviews and remains the only time the Prime Minister has talked honestly about his brother and the Emergency to the press. He also got Rajiv to confirm that he had—in fact—failed at Cambridge ("I flunked," the PM beamed).

The Rajiv raj saw him shift his operations to Delhi. Initially, he was cynical about the regime (unkind critics said that this had more to do with Mayo/Oxford snobbery over Doon/Cambridge social climbing), but by 1987 had moderated his stand. He was particularly exercised by the *Indian Express* which he felt had turned into a pamphlet from a newspaper and wrote several columns saying so. However, the government was deeply suspicious of his credentials and nobody of any consequence would see him.

Still Bhagat persevered. When Prem Shankar Jha told him that he had seen a copy of the famous Zail Singh letter with handwritten corrections on it that had probably been made by S. Mulgaokar, he got Jha to admit that Gopi Arora had shown him the letter. Unfortunately, Arora would not take Bhagat's phone calls. Undeterred, he scoured Delhi for somebody who would see him. Finally, after days of camping outside CBI director Mohan Katre's office, he secured a photocopy of the letter and set off a national storm.

For most of 1987-88, Bhagat was Delhi's hardest-working journalist. He always made it clear to everybody he interviewed that *nothing* was off-the-record, yet everybody kept saying indiscreet things to him. He asked Bhaskar Ghosh why Doordarshan seemed unable to get Ramanand Sagar to speed up the action in the *Ramayan* serial. "What can we do?" complained Ghosh. "Sagar's got us by the short hairs." The very next day, that remark was on the front page of *The Indian Post*.

Then, he went off to Sri Lanka, where he interviewed High Commissioner Mani Dixit about the failure of the Lanka accord. "It's the fault of these Tamils," moaned Dixit. "We've done everything for Prabhakaran. We've pleaded with him. We've threatened him. We've even paid him."

"Paid him?" said Bhagat, trying to look cool.

"Oh yes," said Dixit, "we paid the LTTE to get them to agree to support the accord."

It was another scoop.

Other such scoops were to follow. Among them, the revelation that RAW was importing rocket launchers packaged as telecommunications equipment and that the home ministry was on the verge of banning *The Satanic Verses*. By the summer of 1988, Bhagat was no longer regarded as a gadfly or a mere iconoclast. Suddenly, he had heavy-weight credibility. And all of those who had refused him appointments when he first moved to Delhi, now invited him over.

None of this went to his head. Till the end, he remained his own man. One month, Congress MP's would toast him for attacking the *Express*; the next month, they would call him 'unpatriotic' for endangering the Lanka accord. He accepted the praise and the abuse with equanimity, conscious that his job was to print the truth and not to win friends and influence people.

At SUNDAY, he was a regular contributor from early 1987 onwards and then, started his own column (*Letters from a Conservative*). By 1988, he had worked out a pattern whereby he would break stories in *The Indian Post* and then do the longer, detailed follow-ups for us. All his big stories - the Mulgaokar letter, the Lanka payments, the RAW arms imports, etc.—appeared here after he had first flashed them in the *Post*.

It goes without saying that we will miss him. The loss to Indian journalism is as great. At 31, he was undoubtedly the most promising journalist of his generation.

Vir Sanghvi



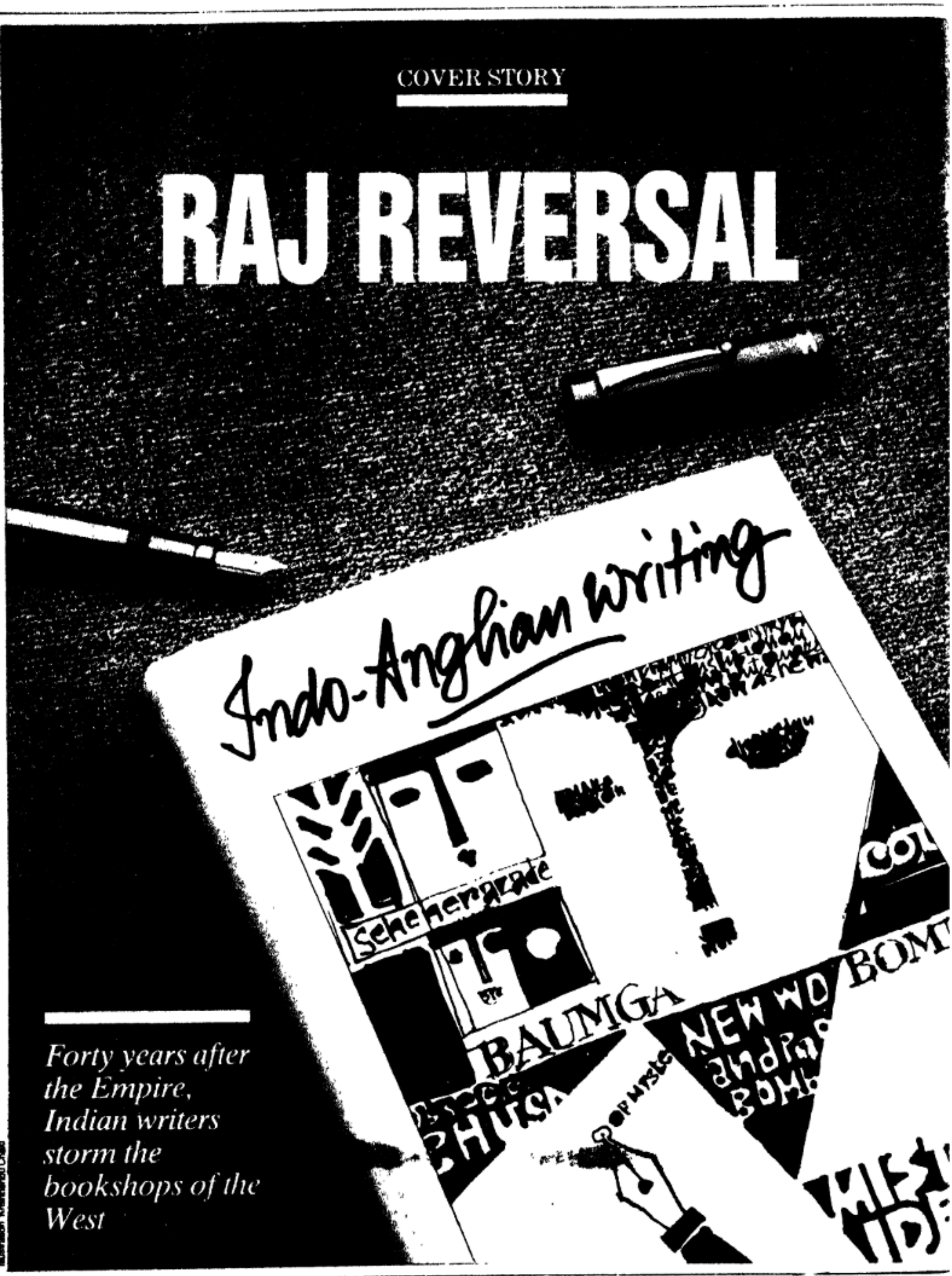
The story of Dhiren Bhagat's decade in journalism is one of such unlikely confrontations and similar smart retorts. He lived by his own rules; he played no favourites; he stood up for what he believed in; he took on whoever he felt needed to be fought; and he always managed to have the last word



Illustrations: Khahmendu Chaki

COVER STORY

RAJ REVERSAL



Forty years after the Empire, Indian writers storm the bookshops of the West

There's a novel happening in India nowadays. And it's happening with increasing regularity. Of late, more and more Indians are writing fiction in English. What's more, they're finding publishers, both abroad and at home, with remarkable ease; securing impressive sums of money as advances; and fetching reviews in reputed literary journals and magazines. If in the past, Indo-Anglian fiction was something of a literary backwater, the new surge of writing has swept it squarely into the international mainstream. Says Rajan Mehra, managing director of the publishing house, Rupa and Co.: "What we are witnessing is a boom. Indian writers are being recognised more widely than ever before.

So large have the numbers become that, suddenly, it is no longer possible to keep track of the new crop of writers. Take the list of those who have had their first volume published in the last decade: it would include Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Amitav Ghosh, Allan I. Sealy, Namita Gokhale, Nina Sibal, Gita Mehta, Boman Desai, Partap Sharma, P. Ranga Rao, Rohinton Mistry and many, many more.

True, that not all of them can lay claim to excellence or genuine creativity. But even after the chaff is sifted from the literary grain, you are still left with a number of names. Rushdie, Ghosh, Seth and Sealy would certainly find a place in any literary honour roll. So probably would Upamanyu Chatterjee and a few others. Says Peter Carson, publishing director of Penguin UK: "There is more and more fine writing coming from India. And the interest in it is growing."

To some, the sudden burst of creativity in Indo-Anglian writing was only to be expected. Says poet Keki Daruwala, whose *Landscapes* won the Commonwealth Prize for Poetry last year: "More Indians are reading and writing English than ever before. I understand that the number has risen to four million from a quarter of this at the time of Independence. Moreover, there's the vast immigrant population all over the world as well. All this has to make for some creativity and, therefore, I am the least surprised by it."

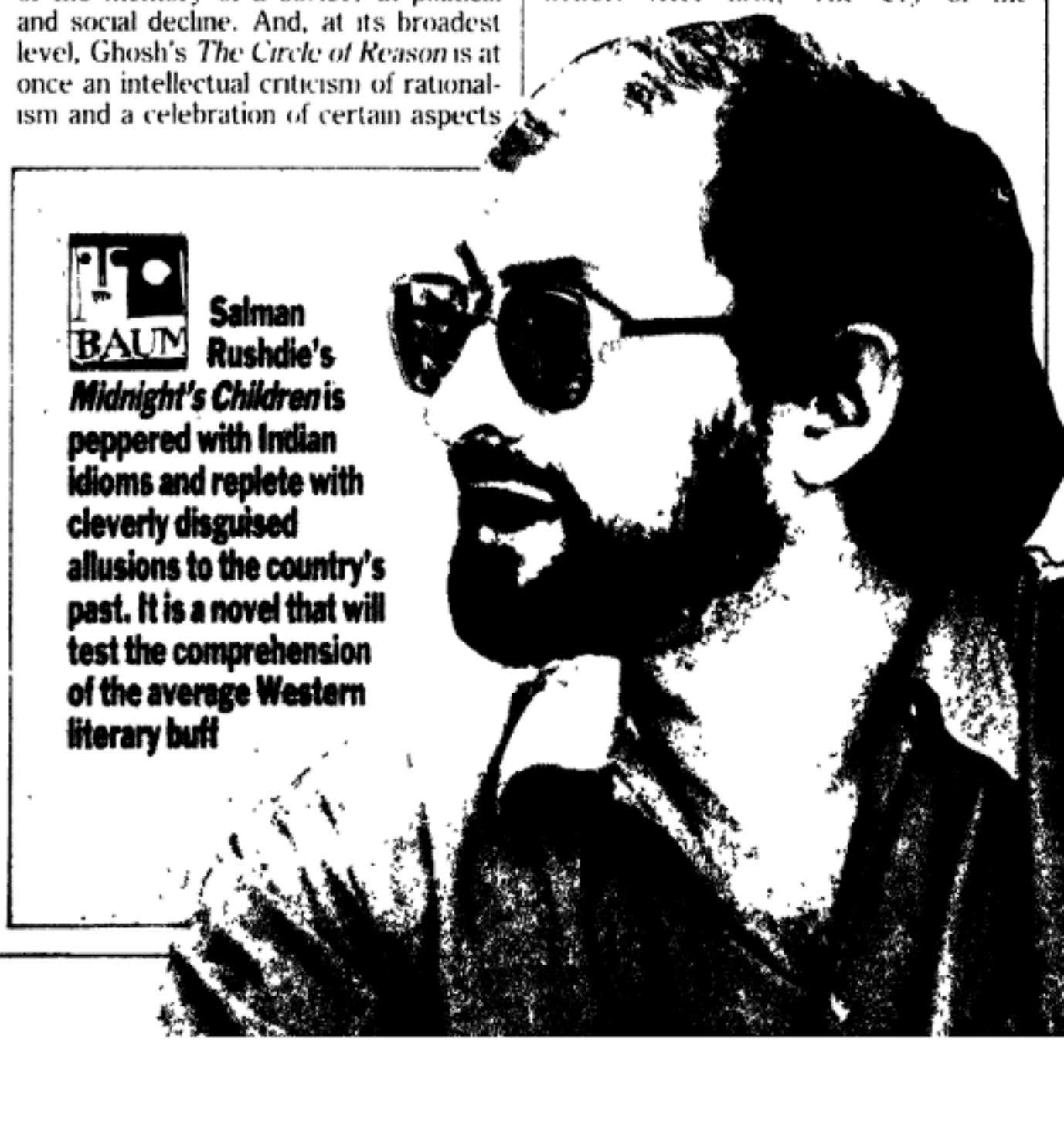
Bombay-based poet and literary critic, Nissim Ezekiel, adopts a similar view. "English has been the medium of instruction for the past 150 years. And then, it is used at the government level. So, the literary outburst in English is only natural." But why has it taken place now? Replies Ezekiel: "Did anyone anticipate the magazine boom? The time for such things just becomes ripe--and unexpectedly."

But this, surely, is not the whole answer. In part, the surge is related to increased interest in Britain and the USA in literature from abroad. For example, novels of Latin American authors such as Marquez, Borges and Llosa jostle for bookshelf-space with those of writers native to these countries. In a climate where fiction has become internationalised, it is perhaps natural that the new group of Indian writers—almost all of who have been first published either in Britain or the USA—has found a following and a market abroad. Says Farrukh Dhondy, London-based playwright, short story writer and television producer, of the interest Indian authors have generated in Britain. "They are talking of a whole world outside Britain and her decline."

The interest could also have something to do with what has been referred to as the crisis in Anglo-Saxon literature. Of late, English and American authors have attracted criticism for being far too inward-looking, provincial and obsessed with the idiosyncrasies of their own societies. Of lacking the universality of, say, Marquez and the Latin American school. Some of the new Indian writing represents a departure from this kind of insularity. Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh exemplify this best. Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, for instance, is not so much a family saga as the exploration of the memory of a society in political and social decline. And, at its broadest level, Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason* is at once an intellectual criticism of rationalism and a celebration of certain aspects of irrationalism. Says Mukul Kesavan, history fellow at Delhi's Nehru Memorial Library and literary critic: "Both Rushdie and Ghosh are novelists of ideas. A good part of their appeal and their merit lie in this."

Nothing illustrates the enhanced interest in Indian writing abroad better than the ease with which the new bunch of writers has been able to find publishers. Most have had their first novels accepted with the minimum of fuss. For instance, Ghosh, who put a literary agent-friend on the job, found Hamish Hamilton approving *The Circle of Reason*—the first publishing house that the manuscript was sent to. Similarly, Upamanyu Chatterjee, who used the same agent for his *English August: An Indian Story*, was snapped up by Faber and Faber. Partap Sharma (*Days of the Turban* published by Bodley Head) was treated likewise and Namita Gokhale found to her delight that two publishers--Chatto and Windus and Jonathan Cape--were keen on *Paro* (she opted for the former)

Contrast this with, say, the trouble that R.K. Narayan had in launching himself as a writer--he has described his travails movingly in his autobiography *My Days* (And this, despite his first novel being *Swami and Friends*, which, if not his best, is at least his best known.) Or Anita Desai, who had to publish in India to establish her reputation as a writer. (Her first, *The Cry of the*



Peacock, was published by Rupa some 18 years ago.)

If boom is the right expression to describe the creative surge, then, it was the London-based expatriate Salman Rushdie who provided the spark. After an unexceptional beginning (his first novel *Grimus*—a surrealist fantasy—received indifferent reviews after being turned down by eight publishers), Rushdie, by his own admission, found his "true voice" in *Midnight's Children*. A vast, ambitious novel, written in a narrative style that is exuberant, frenetic and devilishly clever, *Midnight's Children* won instant acclaim in Britain. Hailed as the modern James Joyce and India's answer to the Latin Americans, Rushdie went on to win, in 1981, Britain's most coveted literary prize—the Booker McConnel. The cash award of £ 10,000 was only the icing; the spin-offs in terms of sales were enough, as Rushdie admitted later, to keep him going for a few years.

Rushdie was Indo-Anglian fiction's first major international success. "The credit for the boom in Indian writing must go to Rushdie," says Bikram Grewal, managing director of Dass Media publishers. "It was his spectacular success that has led others to write." With *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie showed that there was both international recognition and money in Indo-Anglian fiction.

But he also demonstrated another thing. *Midnight's Children* was the most unself-conscious novel written about the subcontinent until then. Peppered with Indian idioms and replete with cleverly disguised allusions to the country's recent and not-so-recent past, it is a novel that will test the comprehension of the average Western literary buff. Yet, it offered no explanations, proffered no apologies, sought no compromise.

This was a refreshing departure from the past. For long, Indian writers had been far too apologetic about writing in English. Recalls Vrinda Nabar, head of the English department at Bombay University: "In the Sixties, there was a strong feeling against English and writers were criticised for using it." But that's not all. In the past, writers also had to contend with the prevalent theory that the very concept of an Indo-Anglian was a non-starter. An idea predicated on the belief that the only language which can adequately describe or comprehend the idiosyncrasies of a culture is the one which that very culture has given rise to. For example, the famous poet and novelist, the late S.H. Vatsyayan, declared after switching from English to Hindi: "India cannot have a literature except in an Indian language."

One result of such ideas was that it made Indian writers in English look more closely at their own cultural moorings. Raja Rao, whose *Kanthapura* is de rigueur Indian literature courses at universities, once wrote: "Curious as it may seem, the writers in regional languages look outward for inspiration and dialogue; the writers in English look inward and to tradition." However, much of this introspection consisted in the use of a visual imagery, borrowed from one Indian language or the other, and Indian words and phrases, which were always explained at length in a glossary or in the text itself.

Midnight's Children, in contrast, is a confident novel: the work of a man who makes no apologies for the genre. And no less successful for it. One writer it appears to have inspired is Amitav Ghosh, who took to writing *The Circle of Reason* after *Midnight's Children* was published. Published by Hamish Hamilton in Britain, the novel received mixed reviews in that country; largely, it seems, because the reviewers saw too much of Rushdie in it. However, the book received the acclaim it deserved in the USA (Viking were the publishers), where the tone of future reviews was set by novelist Antony Burgess' in the *New York Times Review of Books*. In his effusive article, Burgess referred to Ghosh as "a brain" and suggested that American writers "could technically learn a lot from him". Significantly, the review forecast that the future of English fiction lies in the subcontinent!

Within months of *The Circle of Reason* hitting the bookstands, literary circles were marvelling over the work of another Indian writer—a shy student of economics at Stanford University, California. Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate*, a gentle humorous satire on the fallibilities of West Coast yuppies, composed of some 600 sonnets, created a sensation in America. Novelist Gore Vidal dubbed it "the great Californian novel", critic D.J. Enright thought it was "a technical triumph unparalleled in English"; and the reviewer of the *Los Angeles Times* (which, incidentally, carried a five-page biographical feature on Seth) gushed, "Such fluency has not been heard in English since Alexander Pope went around letting heroic couplets tumble from his lips." Three major American publishers bid for *The Golden Gate*, and, finally, Seth handed over the rights to Random House. The publishers were both delighted and surprised when the book made the bestseller list, where it stayed for weeks—a remarkable thing for a novel of such literary merit; all the more so, since it is in verse.

Since Ghosh and Seth, there has been a profusion of new writing in English. Namita Gokhale achieved fame and a little notoriety with *Paro*, particularly after a Bombay-based weekly magazine chose to excerpt the steamier sections of the novel. Although *Paro*, on



Some Indian critics feel that Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English August* was too autobiographical, too much a novel of experience. But this is in keeping with Chatterjee's conception of the novel. "All fiction is autobiographical. It's about what you have heard, seen, felt," he says

the whole, received an indifferent and dismissive press in India (one publisher said that Chatto and Windus undertook it only because it would interest Western readers to know that India also f..s), it was reviewed with seriousness, and often favourably, abroad. There were some good reviews in India, too. Literary critic Maria Couto in the *Indian Express* felt it was clear that *Paro* was not written merely for "laughs" or "sales value" and commended Gokhale's "candour" and "ability and courage to write within wider contexts".

Published around the same time as *Paro* in 1984, was another first novel by the well-known painter Balraj Khanna, who has been living in London for the last two decades. *The Nation of Fools*, an affectionate and amusing account of a Punjabi family, didn't receive much notice in India though.

The Eighties saw many other firsts, too. Bombay-based Partap Sharma wrote the *Days of the Turban* (Bodley Head), the saga of a joint family in transition. Rohinton Mistry's short stories in *Tales from Firozsha Baag* have their moments of charm and wit while portraying the lives of Parsis in Bombay. *The Memory of Elephants* by Boman Desai made interesting use of a narrative device that allowed his hero to relive and explore his familial past.



Vikram Seth: 'The Great Californian Novelist'



An Indian Story has attracted a considerable amount of literary attention in India. The novel charts a year in the life of a young IAS officer posted to a small town in middle India. Bored, the university graduate from Delhi takes to smoking pot, fantasising about women and longing to be somewhere else. Chatterjee uses the slow but engrossing pace of his narrative to weave in a few themes such as the pettiness and absurdity of the bureaucratic system and the alienation of the urban Indian.



Anita Desai: critical sensitivity; (inset) photocopy of *Baumgartner's Bombay*

Anita Desai cannot be counted among the new crop of writers...But Desai has been at her most creative only lately. Two of her novels were shortlisted for the Booker Prize a few years ago. And her latest, *Baumgartner's Bombay*, is likely to be a strong contender for next year's award

There was also Ranga Rao's largely forgettable *Fowl Filcher*. And Nina Sibal's indifferently-written *Yatra*, which has the protagonist (a woman who is part-Greek) wandering around India in search of her Sikh parentage. The woman's skin turns darker and darker as the novel progresses—an obvious and unsophisticated metaphor for her Indianisation.

Two novels, both brought out by English publishers earlier this year, deserve special mention. The first, Allan I. Sealy's *Trotter Nama*, hasn't received the recognition it deserves in this country. An expansive saga of an Anglo-Indian family (the Trotters) spanning about 200 years, this uninhibited rumbustious yarn, crammed with eccentric people and bizarre events, is delightful for its sustained creative energy. The author punctuates the narrative with digressions to throw in a few erudite observations, touches of humour and charming bits of nonsense. In contrast, Upamanyu Chatterjee's *English August:*

The book attracted a mixed bag of reviews in England. But those critical of it focused mainly on Chatterjee's irreverent prose, which is crammed with four letter words. (Lucy Ellman in *The Guardian* wrote: "I'm sure I'm as interested in male genitalia as the next man, but 50 b...s jokes per book is about my limit.") In India, some felt that the book was too autobiographical, too much a novel of experience (Chatterjee is an IAS officer who studied at Delhi University). But this is in keeping with

Chatterjee's conception of the novel. "All fiction is autobiographical. It's about what you have heard, seen, felt, experienced or imagined," he says.

At 50, and having been a novelist for about 20 years, Anita Desai cannot be counted among the new crop of writers. But her reputation as a major writer took some time to make. Desai has been at her most creative in this decade. Two of her novels, *Clear Light of Day* and *In Custody*, were shortlisted for the Booker Prize a few years ago. And her latest, which many believe is her best, *Baumgartner's Bombay*, is likely to be a strong contender for next year's award. Characterised by self-conscious restraint and understated sophistication, Desai's meticulously crafted novels have a crystalline structure. The ability to explore the psyche of her characters with critical sensitivity is her greatest asset.

The burst in literary activity is clearly not about to subside. Other first novels are in the offing. Geneva-based United Nations officer and political columnist, Shashi Tharoor, is about to have his first published by Viking, immodestly named *The Great Indian Novel*. Shobha Dé, the high priestess of gossip and innuendo, is set to have hers published by Penguin India. Gita Mehta (who created a flutter with *Karma Cola*, a book on hippies and their bumbling flirtation with Hindu spiritualism), has finished writing *Darbar*, a novel that has been in the making for quite a while now. Accepted by Simon and Schuster, this book on Indian maharajahs, is due to be launched next year. (Dass Media's Bikram Grewal says that it is a book "to look out for", "a spectacular 70mm novel", "the Sholay of Indian books".) And Ravi Dayal, the former editor of Oxford University Press who now runs his own publishing house, has won the rights to publish Jayant Narlikar's science fiction novel called *The Return of Vaman*. "I am excited that India's best astro-physicist is going to be published by me," he says.

Then, there are those first novelists who, encouraged by success, are working towards their second. Vikram Seth's next novel will be set in India and written in prose. Seth, who currently lives in Delhi and is in "the throes of writing", is keeping details of the work under wraps and refuses to speak about it to the press. Namita Gokhale is working on a novel set in the Kumaon Hills called *A Himalayan Love Story*, which she says "is not a love story at all". Both Rushdie and Ghosh, of course, have been already published a second time. Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*—in many ways a better and more self-contained novel than *The Circle of Reason*—was released this year. And Rushdie has had *Shame* and the controversial *The Satanic Verses* since *Midnight's Children*.



Nina Sibal: Indifferent prose



The *Trotter Nama* (inset); Allan I. Sealy: sustained narrative energy



Allan I. Sealy's *Trotter Nama* has been largely ignored in India. An expansive saga of an Anglo-Indian family, this uninhibited, rumbustious yarn, crammed with eccentric people and bizarre events, is delightful for its sustained creative energy

It is difficult to identify a literary quality that the new bunch of writers share. They are varied in style, content and purpose. But what, perhaps, distinguishes them from the earlier Indo-Anglian authors is their confident and unself-conscious approach to the novel. Says Ravi Dayal: "The newer lot are much more assured." But have the new writers also improved the quality of Anglo-Indian fiction? There are some who believe that any surge which includes names like Rushdie, Ghosh, Sealy, Seth and Chatterjee speaks for itself



Amitav Ghosh: cerebral writer

qualitatively. That, after all, Indo-Anglian fiction in the past has thrown up only very few names in the many decades of its existence. "If you take away the novels written by R.K. Narayan, V.S. Naipaul and G.V. Desani (whose only novel, *All about H. Hatter*, is a neglected classic), you are left with almost nothing of substantial merit" says a publisher.

Some, like poet Nissim Ezekiel, take a more moderate view: "Indo-Anglian fiction is better than it was before. All of it may not be good literature, but I'd prefer to have it than none at all." Writer Dom Moraes takes an extreme view: "I don't think anything significant has happened. There have been no real departures." (Incidentally, Moraes describes Seth's *The Golden Gate* as a "sentimental Mills and Boon story".) Calcutta publisher P. Lal, who founded Writers Workshop, believes that it is a misnomer to refer to the new writing as Indo-Anglian. "People like Salman Rushdie may have a certain technique, but novelists like him have nothing to do with the Indian literary tradition. This is not Indian writing in English."

Whatever the truth, there is no doubt that the new writers have become commercial successes. All Indo-Anglian writers have looked to publishers abroad (publishing in India being much less rewarding in terms of money and recognition). In the past, foreign publishing houses have been readily available only to some writers like R.K. Narayan, Anita Desai, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand. However, the new writers have found them without difficulty and, what's more, have received impressive sums as advances.

Ghosh received a £ 3,000 advance from Hamish Hamilton for *The Circle of Reason* and then many times this amount after translation rights were sold to publishers in a number of European countries. Namita Gokhale received £ 5,000 from Chatto and Windus for *Paro* and Partap Sharma got a similar sum for *Days of the Turban*. Commercially, of course, there has been no greater success than Rushdie: his *The Satanic Verses* was flogged for a staggering £ 850,000—the largest advance ever paid to a literary novelist in England. (The novel is still on *The Sunday Times* bestseller list—it was ranked number five last week.)

Clearly, they are selling well abroad—an important market for any Indo-Anglian writer. Once again, Rushdie heads the pack. For instance, Viking printed 40,000 copies of *The Satanic Verses* in hardcover and, like *Midnight's Children*, it appears headed for a reprint. Seth is the other major commercial success. The initial print run of *The Golden Gate* was 20,000 and, since then, the verse-novel has sold many more copies. In Britain alone, it sold 5,000 copies in hardcover and 18,000 in paperback. Relatively, the other writers have not sold as well. Ghosh's *The Circle of Reason* sold about 4,000 copies of the Hamish Hamilton hardcover; Upamanyu Chatterjee's recent *English August* has sold about 2,000 so far; and Partap Sharma says that the entire print run of the first edition of *Days of the Turban* sold out in just five months, which he thinks "is amazing for a hardcover". Says Anne Elletson, press and publicity officer of Faber and Faber: "Even 2,000 copies is a good figure for a

BAUM *The Circle of Reason* received the acclaim it deserved in the USA, where the tone of future reviews was set by novelist Anthony Burgess' in the *New York Times Book Review*. Burgess referred to Ghosh as "a brain" and suggested that American writers "could technically learn a lot from him"





R.K Narayan (left) and V.S. Naipaul : two old masters

first novel by an unknown author in hardback."

Given that the money and a good part of the market for Indian writing exists abroad, it is no surprise that Indian publishers have failed to discover new authors. Most are content to buy the rights for an Indian edition, and then print it, usually, as a cheap and affordable paperback. The only publishing house which was set up with the express purpose of discovering new authors is Penguin India. A company that does have a great edge over others because of its tie ups in the marketing of English fiction abroad—in England, USA, Canada and Australia. Moreover, Penguin India also has the facility to tap foreign professional expertise. Yet, it has failed to unearth any good English fiction at all.

The publishing house bid for Partap Sharma's *Days of the Turban*, but the author says that he turned down the offer because "it would have had limited distribution" and doubts about "printing quality". The company has been successful in winning the rights for Shobha Dé's forthcoming novel though, which associate editor David Davidar describes as the "Indian *Lace*". Davidar says in explanation of Penguin's lack of success: "We've been around for only a year and will be publishing more people in the next year or two."

As in the West, the Indian publishing trade has been responsive to the new authors. Most of them have been able to sell the Indian rights of their novels. To an extent, it was *Midnight's Children* that was responsible for this trend; copies of pirated editions flooded the pavements before the paperback edition reached India. The publishers got wise after this and became more attentive to the possibilities of acquiring the rights of Indo-Anglian fiction published abroad. They also tried to ensure that the Indian edition reached the stand on or around the time of the foreign edition. For example, Rushdie's second novel *(Shame)* was simultaneously published by Rupa and Co. and Jonathan Cape.

The new authors have done moderately well in India. Roli Books printed 5,000 copies of *The Circle of Reason*, most of which, according to editor Manju Dubey, have been sold out. Roli also ran 2,000 copies of Nina Sibal's *Yatra*. *The Golden Gate* was distributed by Oxford University Press at a special discounted price and was a huge success, having sold 14,000 copies already. And Ravi Dayal broke new ground by printing Ghosh's second novel, *The Shadow Lines*, in hardcover recently. Rukun Advani, an editor at OUP, believes that the proliferation of Indian editions is related to a change in the economics of publishing: "Today, production costs are not as closely related to the size of the print run as they were in the past. It is possible for an Indian publisher now to print a few hundred copies of a novel and still make a profit."

With both money and recognition coming from abroad, the new writers have become social celebrities at home. Namita Gokhale has been the subject of innumerable magazine and newspaper interviews. Salman Rushdie was named 'Man of the Year' by a Bombay-based glossy. Recently, another glossy ran an interview with Upamanyu Chatterjee—the attention clearly on the man and not his work— the pages dominated by at least half a dozen large photographs of Chatterjee in various poses and moods. And when *Society* magazine interviewed Amitav Ghosh after the success of *The Circle of Reason*, he was asked questions such as: "What do you think of marriage?" and "Did you have any exciting experiences with pen friends?".

But celebrity status is only a (possibly dubious) spin-off from what is, in the main, a remarkable literary surge. With it, Indian writing in English has found new character, greater depth and wider acceptance. The Empire has more than just written back. It has colonised a part of the literary world.

Mukund Padmanabhan with Shiraz Sidhva/*New Delhi*, Anuradha Mahindra/*Bombay* and Dipankar De Sarkar/*London*



Namita Gokhale achieved fame and some notoriety with *Paro*, especially after a Bombay-based weekly excerpted the steamier sections of the novel. Although *Paro*, on the whole, received a dismissive press in India, it was reviewed with seriousness, and often favourably, abroad

Shuffling the pack

Despite the frequent changes, the AICC(I) general secretaries remain little more than yes-men

The power centre of the Congress(I) is no longer the AICC(I) headquarters in the capital, but the Prime Minister's office. With little work to justify their attending office, the six general secretaries put in a brief appearance—for only a few hours, sometimes even a few minutes a day. All decisions emanate from the Prime Minister's office or his residence. Even the Congress Working Committee meetings are held at the Prime Minister's house rather than the party headquarters.

Only two general secretaries enjoy direct access to Rajiv: Ghulam Nabi Azad who, despite repeated *faux pas*, continues as the official spokesman for the Congress(I), and Oscar Fernandes who is known to be very close to the Prime Minister and his family.

Rajiv Gandhi as the party president has changed 18 general secretaries since assuming office, moving around party functionaries according to his whim. The reasons, if any, are known only to him and his group of advisers at that time. The result has been predictable. The few 'selected' (elections were last held well over a decade ago) to 'lead' the party are very careful about what they say, lest they offend someone in the corridors of power. The general secretaries have found safety in silence. It is rather pathetic that when a reporter on the beat asks seasoned Congress leaders for comments on any political event, they simply mumble "I do not know" or "This is the first I am hearing of it", unwilling to commit themselves for fear of incurring the high command's wrath.

The practice of appointing malleable persons as general secretaries began in 1982 when Indira Gandhi removed Vasantdada Patil, Satyanarayan Reddy and other such leaders as general secretaries and replaced them with those who, in her opinion, were more pliant. And from then on, each group of general secretaries has been more reticent and 'loyal' than the last and possibly, less powerful.

At the time of the 1984 elections, Rajiv Gandhi had seven general secretaries. Three of them, Arun Nehru, Abdul Ghafoor and Chandulal Chandrakar, were subsequently inducted into the Council of Ministers on 31 December, 1984.

Seven days after these three were inducted into the Union ministry Rajiv Gandhi appointed Abdul Ghani Khan Chowdhury, Srikant Verma and Dalbir Singh in their place, taking the total number of general secretaries to six. They functioned along with the constant factor G.K. Moopanar, who has now been sent back to Tamil Nadu as the PCC(I) chief, after nearly eight years at the Centre as general secretary. Interestingly, while in Delhi, Moopanar stayed at a small place at Western Court, having given up his allotted bungalow 24 Akbar Road for the AICC(I) headquarters. A.K. Antony and Rajendra Kumari Bajpai were the other two general secretaries who were retained at the time. A few months later, more specifically on 29 March, 1985, R.L. Bhatia was included as the general secretary, taking the total number to seven. In September the same year, Ghani Khan Chowdhury, Srikant Verma, Rajendra Kumari Bajpai and Dalbir Singh were dropped.



Rajiv Gandhi with Oscar Fernandes and G.K. Moopanar (extreme left): trusted lieutenants

Rajiv Gandhi as the party president has changed 18 general secretaries since assuming office, moving around party functionaries according to his whim. The result has been predictable. The general secretaries have found safety in silence: unwilling to commit themselves on any issues lest they offend those in the corridors of power

They were replaced by Jitendra Prasad, Margatham Chandrashekhar, Tarun Gogoi—who had to be accommodated for his work in Assam—and two former parliamentary secretaries, Ahmed Patel and Oscar Fernandes. All of them are out of favour today, except for Oscar Fernandes, who after serving in his home state, Karnataka, as the PCC(I) president for a while, is back again at the AICC(I) on a surer footing than before. However, this new group lasted for just about three months before Rajiv Gandhi decided that another reshuffle was required at the AICC(I). And this time, he brought in Bhagwat Jha Azad who till then had been a fairly vocal dissenter,

Nawal Kishore Sharma, Najma Heptullah, T. Anjaiah and Ram Dhan.

This was, in fact, the first reshuffle of which much was made. It was thought that the new set would last. And Rajiv Gandhi held his first and last press conference at the AICC(I) in his capacity as the party president on 1 January, 1986, to announce that the new team would revitalise the party. It was at this time that Arjun Singh was brought in as the vice president, a post created by the Prime Minister and for which there is no provision in the party constitution.

For a short while, it seemed that there would be a change in the AICC(I)'s line and tire style of functioning. But very soon, it became obvious that Arjun Singh was controlling the show, and the other general secretaries had been pushed to the sidelines.

Ram Dhan was the first to go from this new 'dynamic' group of general secretaries. He resigned within four months of his appointment to protest against the "shabby treatment meted out to the Harijans, especially in case of nominations to the Rajya Sabha".

The rest survived for a year, but were virtually inactive and powerless. And the AICC(I) slunk back to its decrepit state. The summer of 1987 brought the Bofors scandal and it was around this time that Ghulam Nabi Azad came into the limelight, portraying himself as a 'true and loyal servant' of the Prime Minister. On 5 September, 1987, Azad resigned as the Union minister of civil supplies, calling all true Congressmen to resign from the government and join the party organisation to check the "propaganda trade launched by the reactionary, feudal and communal forces throughout the country".

There were no takers for Azad's call. Rajiv Gandhi waited for two days and then decided to make his move. On 7 September, Rajiv removed Najma Heptullah (who has since recovered lost ground and come back as deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha), R.L. Bhatia, Nawal Kishore Sharma and Bhagwat Jha Azad. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Naresh Chandra Chaturvedi, K.N. Singh, Oscar Fernandes and Ram Rattan Ram were the newcomers. The new general secretaries totalled six with the retention of Moopanar.

Much was made of electoral reforms, but not a single concrete proposal has been announced till date. Even more was made of holding party elections, but apart from a weak attempt to enrol members, the entire plan was abandoned after Kamlapati Tripathi raised the issue of bogus memberships

Moopanar was removed in February 1988 after having remained in the post for nearly eight years--a record time--including the time he occupied the position under Mrs Gandhi. Chaturvedi followed soon after, as the leadership discovered his 'rightist' leanings. Ram Rattan Ram went along with him.

After Moopanar's exit, K.V. Pancker was made the general secretary, but he died in office. And on 9 May, 1988, Sheila Kaul and Jagannath Pahadia replaced Chaturvedi and Ram. Then, on 1 September, V.N. Gadgil was brought in, resulting in the present AICC(I) set-up.

The general secretary in charge of the southern states, including Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala, Jagannath Pahadia, is presently in the United States for treatment. He is the second general secretary in the present batch (the first being K.N. Singh) to go to the USA for medical treatment. His absence is scarcely felt. In fact, Pahadia has not made much of an impact since he assumed office in May.

After his appointment as general secretary and before he went abroad, Pahadia was only in the office occasionally. Unwilling to commit himself on any issue, his answer to all questions was a standard: "This is the first I am hearing of it from you." If a dogged correspondent pressed on and asked what he was going to do about, say, a proposal to ally with Jayalalitha in Tamil Nadu, Pahadia had a second stock answer: "The people want us to serve them and we will do this to the best of our ability."

Then there is Sheila Kaul, a relative brought in by Rajiv Gandhi to offset Arun Nehru and to prove that the 'family', or at least part of it, is still on his side. In charge of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman and Diu, Sheila Kaul does not attend office, or if she does,it is during hours when she knows that the compound will be free of reporters.

K.N. Singh is the general secretary credited with more brains than most of the others. That, however, is a matter of opinion. In charge of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Chandigarh and Delhi, Singh was once, years ago, associated with the communist party. It is a past that he likes to cling onto to establish himself as a left-of-centre Congressman. He has a



Tarapada Banerjee

large photograph of Marx in his drawing-room. And as for those who ring him up, the PA ensures that they do not miss the connection by informing them that Singh Sahab has gone to the Russian Embassy. After all, these 'leanings' are partly responsible for him having beaten other contenders to the post of general secretary

In fact, there are two reasons why Singh got the job. One, that he is a 'leftist' whose presence in the AICC(I) will mean that the leadership can point out that it has not deserted the left-of-centre path altogether. As a matter of fact, when Rajiv Gandhi was under attack, he revived the old Socialist Forum of which K N. Singh was a prominent figure, in the hope that it would silence those who were accusing him of swerving towards the right. Secondly, K.N. Singh is from Sultanpur—a key constituency in UP. It was hoped that Singh would be able to lead the attack on V.P. Singh—Sultanpur being fairly close to Allahabad and both belonging to the same caste.

But socialism for K.N Singh is a doctrine to be followed only as long as the Prime Minister approves. For example, Singh had initially taken a strong stand against the entry of multinational giant Pepsico into India. But once the Prime Minister approved of the contract, K N. Singh had no hesitation in loudly applauding the decision at a meeting near Bhatinda in September, where Rajiv Gandhi announced that Pepsico had been given permission to set up its unit in this country.

When Kamlapati Tripathi wrote a letter to the Prime Minister suggesting that he seek an alliance with the Left, K.N. Singh welcomed the suggestion. But he lapsed into silence after Rajiv Gandhi rejected Tripathi's proposal outright. For Singh, the Prime Minister's will is his command.

Among the six present general secre-

The AICC(I) set-up

The allocation of states and party functions among general secretaries



Oscar Fernandes
Orissa, West Bengal, Andaman and Nicobar, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Nagaland and Sikkim as well as frontal organisations, cells and trusts



K.N. Singh
Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Chandigarh and Delhi as well as the working committee and the parliamentary board



Jagannath Pahadia
Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Lakshwadeep and Pondicherry as well as plenary sessions



Ghulam Nabi Azad
Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, administration, press publicity and publications



Sheila Kaul
Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman and Diu as well as AICC meetings



V.N. Gadgil
Policies and programmes of the party

AICC centenary session: a 'Yes, Prime Minister' organisation?



taries, V.N. Gadgil is the most recent appointee. Sometime back, he was dropped from the Union ministry, unceremoniously and without explanations. Little was heard of him until he was resurrected as head of Socialist Forum. The forum, after a couple of grand meetings and statements, never really got off the ground.

Gadgil is a gentleman, soft-spoken and polite. As general secretary, he is in charge of formulating the party's policies and programmes.

That leaves the two 'powerful' general secretaries: Oscar Fernandes who has direct access to the Prime Minister and his family and Ghulam Nabi Azad who is close to Rajiv Gandhi alone. Oscar Fernandes wields considerable clout and, if reports are to be believed, he is amongst those responsible for the imposition of President's Rule in Mizoram. On paper, he is in charge of the north-eastern states, including West Bengal and Orissa, but his jurisdiction extends beyond this.

Fernandes influences events in his home state, Karnataka, as well. Although Janardhan Poojary was the PCC(I) president for nine months he had not been able to form the state executive simply because Oscar Fernandes did not want him to continue. He got Moilly and Bangarappa appointed as special invitees to the working committee, much against Poojary's wishes. Poojary met Rajiv Gandhi thrice on this issue, but was unable to get his own way. He resigned and has been replaced by Veerendra Patil as the state party chief.

Ghulam Nabi Azad, after a great beginning, has lost some ground. But he is still powerful. He looks after Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, administration and publicity, which makes him the party spokesman. He holds additional charge of Madhya Pradesh. Azad's organisational career began when he resigned from the government and called on others to follow suit. Actually Rajiv Gandhi wanted to use the occasion to get rid of Kamlapati Tripathi who was proving to be something of an embarrassment and others like Bhagwat Jha Azad. Of course, as it turned out when there were no other volunteers besides Azad, subtlety had to be discarded for direct action.

Azad made a mistake in his handling of the Allahabad byelection. He was sure that the Congress(I) candidate would win. Fernandes' friend, Santosh Mohan Dev, who went to Allahabad as a last-minute observer, realised that the ruling party's chances of victory were slim, and lost little time in telephoning the Prime Minister and informing him of the "true position". When the results were announced, Dev was proved right and Azad's calculations drastically wrong.

After the debacle, he went to the United States to let the heat die down. The story has it that Rajiv Gandhi wanted to send him to Jammu and Kashmir—either as the deputy chief minister in case the Congress continued its alliance with the National Conference, or as the PCC(I) chief in case the alliance broke down. But Azad pleaded with the Prime Minister not to do anything that could be interpreted as a 'defeat' for him in political circles. He persuaded Rajiv Gandhi to keep him at the Centre for some more time. Having got another chance, Azad is now making himself useful by organising the campaign against V.P. Singh.

But he continues to blunder. For example, briefing correspondents after the Congress(I) Parliamentary Party meeting during the last session, he completely forgot to mention what were supposed to be the two most important decisions taken at the meeting. Namely, to give a socialist thrust to the party's economic programmes and decentralise the planning process, as well as to reiterate that India was in a strong position to successfully ward off a simultaneous attack from Pakistan and China. The Prime Minister's advisers were appalled to find that these two points had been missed and lost no time in pointing this out to Rajiv Gandhi. This incident, of course, did nothing to improve Azad's standing particularly as it came on the heels of the Allahabad defeat.

And that was not the last of his gaffes. After a working committee meeting, he announced that it had been decided to observe the long forsaken 'one man-one post' rule. Obviously, this announcement generated much excitement as politicians and scribes wondered aloud and in writing whether Rajiv Gandhi would set an example. The next day, Azad had to retract. He said that he had referred to a "consensus" and not a "decision", whatever that might mean. That was the last one heard by way of 'reforms'.

In charge of administration, Azad has still not managed to organise the party properly. PCC(I) presidents have been appointed, but the executives have still not been formed in several states, including Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir and West Bengal.

Much was made of electoral reforms, but not a single concrete proposal has been announced till date. Even more was made of holding party elections, but apart from a weak attempt to enrol members, the entire plan was abandoned after Kamlapati Tripathi raised the issue of bogus memberships in his first letter to Rajiv Gandhi. Initially, questions about party elections received a "soon" answer. This changed over the months to a sheepish look. Now, it is a blank stare and perhaps more honest: "We cannot say" reply.

The party as an organisation has ceased to exist. The various posts are filled only by those who can either deflate an Opposition leader's ego, give a leftist image or speak loyally for the Prime Minister without adding his own views—in other words, by individuals whose role is limited and who are willing to be utilised by the Prime Minister for his own short-term ends. Free and frank debate, a victim of the Emergency, has never been revived and despite initial assertions to the contrary, Rajiv Gandhi has succeeded far more than his mother in transforming the AICC(I) at the Centre into a subservient "Yes, Prime Minister" organisation.

Seema Mustafa / *New Delhi*

In charge of administration, Ghulam Nabi Azad has still not managed to organise the party properly. PCC(I) presidents have been appointed, but the executives have still not been formed in several states, including Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Jammu and Kashmir and West Bengal



Rajesh Kumar

Flying high

once again



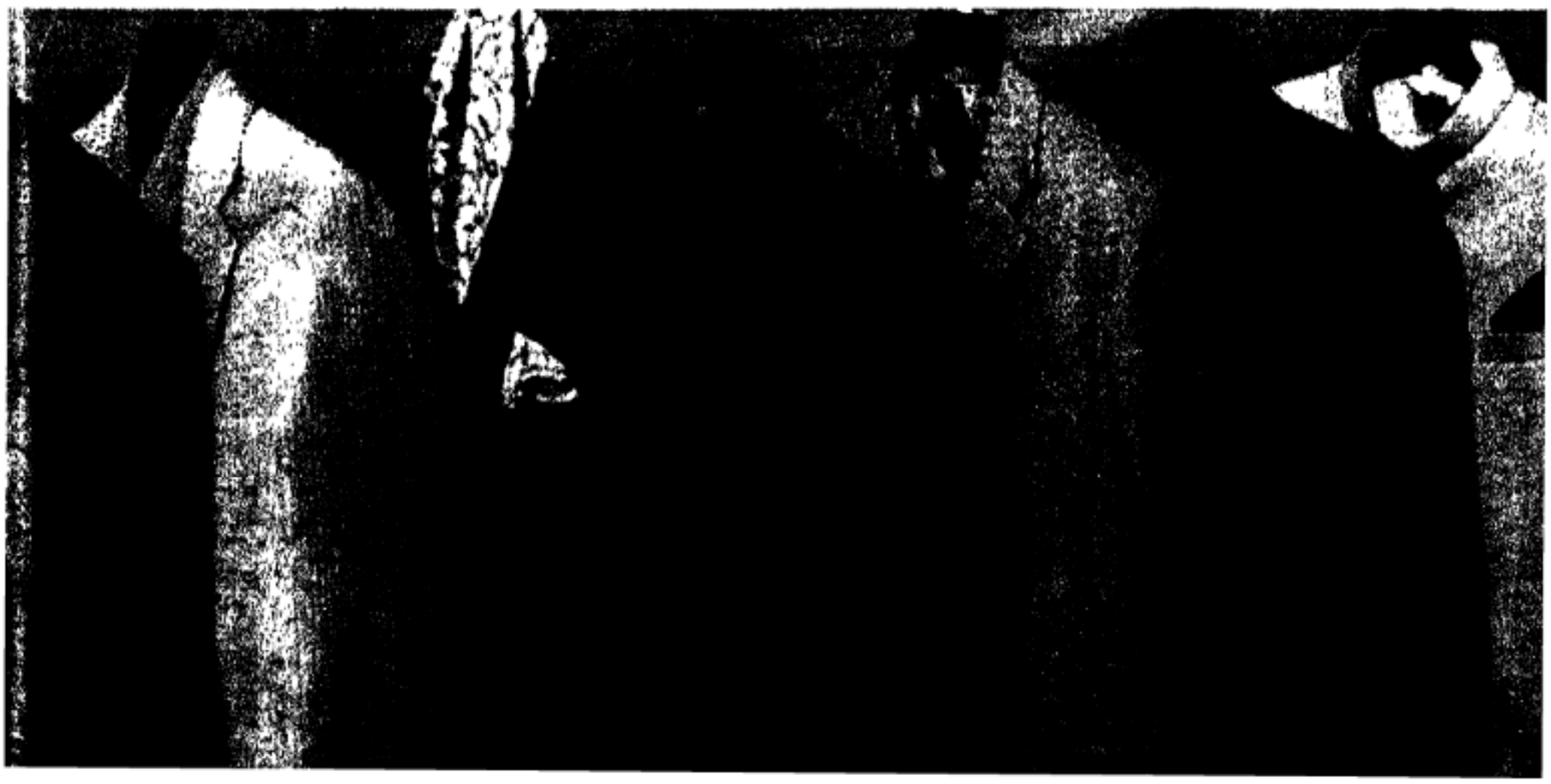
Suitings exclusive
for all seasons



Lal-imli Dhariwal

The Unforgettable Twins

In Quest of Nehru's Dream...
BIC Weaves





Chandeliers on sale 'hang 'em high'

Through a glass lightly

Chandeliers—showpieces of wealthy drawing rooms—are now available on Indian pavements. And cheap!

The gentle tinkling sound and the sparkle of shimmering prisms attract your attention as you walk or drive past They are chandeliers—displayed in the open by their makers, travelling artisans from Rajasthan In groups of 40 or 50 they move all over India with their fragile products No longer are chandeliers considered rich men's baubles Their increasing affordability is making them appear in middle class homes as well And these glass workers of Jaipur, who camp in wide open fields alongside main roads have helped create this trend

Their forefathers sculpted marble in Jaipur Says Amar Singh, head of the chandelier-making venture, "The coming of sophisticated machinery became a substitute for our artistic skills" Which is why they were reduced to manufacturing grinders for chillies and *ayurvedic* medicine Slowly they moved into the delicate zone of glass These craftsmen offer a wide variety of chandeliers, prices ranging from Rs 40 to Rs 12,000 The cut glass variety sells for anything between Rs 200-350 Profits on each chandelier are sometimes as low as Rs 5 and as high as Rs 300

For these artisans, the struggle to gain recognition for their talents has not been easy The technique of working with glass was perfected in factories in Delhi where they were employed But enraged by their employers stinginess and the constant refusal to increase their meagre salaries, Amar Singh and Lakhmi Chand left to form an association of their own Their particular knowledge of glass cutting gave them the necessary confidence, and they began working on pavements Today, the two of them head this group that travels from place to place "displaying the beauty of palaces on the pavements of cities"



Bombay, Bangalore, Kashmir, Goa, Calcutta have all been visited by this group They move from one place to another by train and bus, as dictated by the demand for their products All fragile materials are carried personally with them and the heavier cargo follows in lorries Travel expenses between Jaipur and Calcutta costs around Rs 200 for one person, according to Lakhmi Chand

Chandelier-making is a full-time job Glass, which is their raw material, is obtained in bulk from Ferozabad The cleaning and shaping of glass is done in Jaipur by a few well-known families. Even young children playing around the house are trained to observe the do-s and don't-s of glass-shaping Then they go through various stages of learning, in time becoming fullfledged workers Trade secrets are closely guarded.



The artisans set up shop: finding buyers from all social classes



Involved in domestic chores: in the open

Work is the name of the game. From six in the morning this group may work all night by candlelight to meet the demands of a particular customer. And if they are lucky, a family might save Rs 800 a month. It is a tough life, particularly for the women. This Rajasthani community is very close-knit. No intercaste marriages are permitted. If a person happens to fall in love with an "outsider", he or she is banished immediately.

Wives work alongside their husbands, and also perform household jobs. According to Swaroopi, "Men merely sell chandeliers. We do the intricate job of glass-fitting." Meena and Yashodha are also resigned to their fate, yet at times feel confined and restless. "We are not unhappy but we are not happy either."

Work is the name of the game. From six in the morning this group may work all night by candlelight to meet the demands of a particular customer



Busy women: pride in their craft

But despite all hardship, the pride and satisfaction in their work sustains them and keeps them going. "We sell the real thing," says Meena. "No customer coming to us will be cheated or disappointed." And for the men, this life of travelling and working together is a great source of joy.

Though they have sometimes accepted loans from the government, they are unwilling to restructure themselves on modern business lines. They are well aware that their lack of formal education is a great barrier when it comes to dealing with government officials. But they manage as best they can, and like all good tradespeople, they pay a 10 per cent sales tax on the items they sell.

The end of each day finds them making ready for yet another, mostly in the open, frequently in a city far from home. In the muted light of the setting sun, the carefully crafted chandeliers glow with a light no less beautiful than the artificial electric light which they will soon reflect. Perhaps the craftsmen too have moments when they enjoy this beauty which brings light and colour to all the cities they visit.

Subadhra Rangamani/ Calcutta



All in a day's work: last minute touches

Photographs: Santosh Dutta



CALCUTTA

Ian Jack on the many faces of Calcutta

It is easy to feel ignorant in Calcutta. Glaswegians like to be known for their friendliness, Liverpudlians for their wit, New Yorkers for their abrasion; but these are mere mannerisms. Calcuttans go for deeper stuff. They will crack open their intellects as quickly and easily as a hasty breakfaster breaks into a boiled egg. Intellectuality is what matters in Calcutta. You meet a Calcuttan for the first time, you shake him by the hands, and then:

"Tell me, is Gramsci greatly regarded by your Labour Party?"

"What do you think of Kurosawa's latest?"

"Settle an argument. Can Dover sole be found much outside the English seaport of the same name?"

The writer R.P. Gupta tells a famous story which illustrates the point. In the early 1970s the French director Louis Malle came to Calcutta to make his documentary *Phantom India* (later the country banned both the film and Malle). He wanted to film that typical Calcutta entertainment, an angry demonstration, and set up his cameras outside the West Bengal legislature to await developments between a noisy mob and the police. A police officer approached and brusquely demanded identification Malle announced he was Malle. The policeman beamed in recognition. "Ah," he said, "*Zazie dans le Metro*"—Malle's first film — and then obligingly ordered a brisk police charge so that the director could get the violent footage appropriate to his theme.



The remote view of Calcutta—chaos, Mother Teresa, pavement-dwellers—is also hopelessly inadequate. Even writers such as Paul Theroux and Geoffrey Moorhouse go badly astray, when they turn apocalyptic and portray Calcutta as the urban doom, a kind of living necropolis, which awaits the city-dwellers of the West

Any visitor to the city will hear this story at least ten times within the first week, and for quite a long time I held out against it on the grounds that it was boring me. But in the past dozen years I've got to know the city rather better, partly by taking the drastic step of marrying into the place. And the more I got to know it, the less fanciful the Malle story seemed. Calcuttans — which is to say Bengalis — have an appetite for cultures outside their own (though they have a keen appetite for that as well) which reduces the averagely sophisticated European to the level of the Essex lager lout. I am no longer surprised when R.P. Gupta, who is a friend, suddenly decides to recite W.H. Auden while standing in the next stall in the urinal of the Great Eastern Hotel; nor when the city's biggest newspaper proprietor announces that all the world's best cartoonists are Belgian; nor when my Bengali nephew, who has never seen England, displays his fierce knowledge of the entire canon of P.G. Wodehouse.

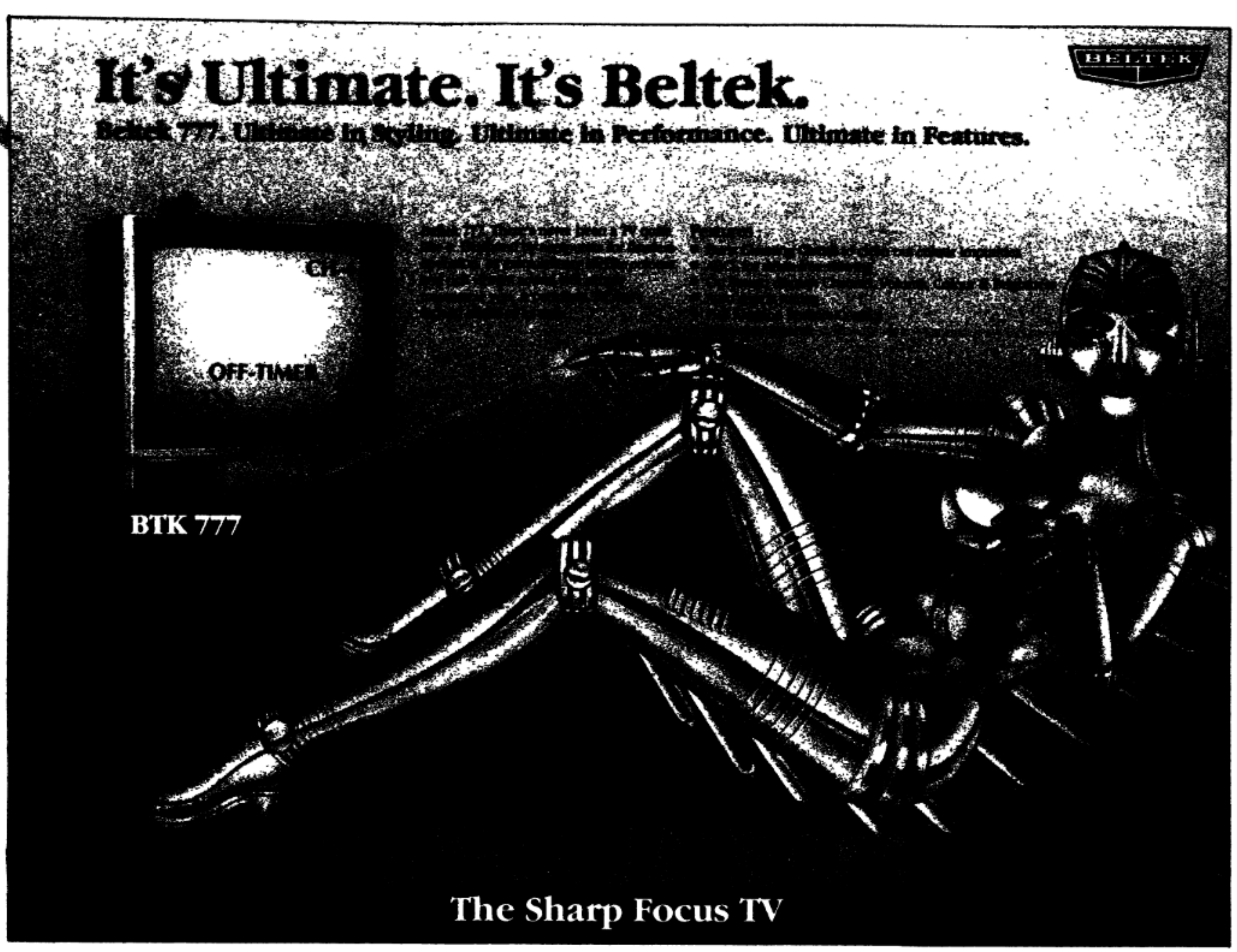
All this is immensely diverting, if sometimes provoking; there is nothing a Bengali male likes more than an *adda*, a wideranging argument which no mild-mannered European can hope to win, however fatuous the opening statement (I remember losing in the Belgian cartoonist debate). Here is a city of crumbling imperial ruins, soaked in poverty and squalor, an international byword for over-population and urban collapse; and here are the citizens calmly debating foreign abstractions, and sometimes unfashionable foreign abstractions such as Marxism, amid the broken masonry.

The ironies are certainly rich. Even as loyal a Calcuttan as Gupta will readily concede that nothing much will improve in his city unless, as he once told me, "the concrete can somehow be made abstract". Or, in other words, not until good drainage can be rendered as fascinating a topic for an *adda* as the later works of V.I. Lenin. And yet the remote view of Calcutta—chaos, Mother Teresa, pavement-dwellers—is also hopelessly inadequate. Gunter Grass simply followed in a despairing tradition, begun by Kipling and his City of Dreadful Night , when he wrote of a city that ate its own excrement, its citizens "white-shirted maggots in a shitpile with Victorian excrescences, a shitpile that dreams up new curlicues every minute". Even less easily disgusted writers such as Paul Theroux and Geoffrey Moorhouse go badly astray, I think when they turn apocalyptic and portray Calcutta as the urban doom, a kind of living necropolis, which awaits the city-dwellers of the West.

Theroux looked at Calcutta and thought he saw what New York or London might become, given nuclear war or natural catastrophe. Perhaps we should be so lucky. When the power goes off in the Bronx, the result is looting, arson and rape. When the power goes off in Calcutta, as it does with predictable frequency, nothing much happens at all. Fans cease to spin, tramcars stop their grinding, rickshaw pullers hiss and click their bells to warn pedestrians lost in the dark, plump women in saris with heavy baggages are pulled from lifts; and in a million homes families take out their candles and

It's Ultimate. It's Beltek.

Beltek 777. Ultimate in Styling. Ultimate in Performance. Ultimate in Features.



The Sharp Focus TV

their paper fans and regret that they have missed that day's television episode of *Yes Minister* or *Ramayan*.

Once, on such a night, when I left Mr Gupta's house, I fell into a drain on the way to the tram stop. But then some small quantity of rum and water had been drunk and minor accidents are to be expected. No arson, however. No looting. No rape. In Calcutta women walk fearlessly through the streets late into the night, which cannot be said of Islington or even Delhi.

It would be wrong, as well as dangerous, to conclude from this that Calcuttans are a pacific race. Bengalis have a tradition of assassination and bombing outrage almost as old as the Fenians (from whom they learned some early lessons), and little tolerance was displayed during the riots and massacres that preceded Indian Partition. But side by side with this tradition, and always wrestling with it, is a potent strain of humanism, most famously exemplified by the writings of Tagore or the films of Satyajit Ray, but everywhere apparent, even among the people scratching at the bottom of the heap.

Another irony of Calcutta life and perhaps a richer one than the first, is that the isolation caused by economic decay has helped to preserve old virtues, which in turn has made the decay more endurable. It may still—just—be the largest city in India in population, but, in terms of prosperity and dynamism it has long since been overtaken by Delhi and Bombay. Some would argue that it started downhill as early as 1912, when the British moved their Indian capital to Delhi; others that the refugee influx from the Bangladesh war and the urban terrorism of the 1960s' marked the point of no return. Whatever the case, Calcutta feels increasingly cut off. Twenty years ago you could fly there direct by half a dozen European and American airlines. Today, the only direct flight from Europe starts in Belgrade. There is even something called the Save Calcutta Airport Committee.

No doubt the airport will never close and no doubt the consumerism which has already overtaken Bombay and Delhi will eventually set up its flag in Calcutta, if it hasn't done so already. But the pros and cons of this outcome will be at least debatable. In Delhi and Bombay the new rich squeeze into safari suits and Japanese cars and grow fat on butter chicken. Carved woodwork wrenched from temples and old palaces is now a favoured feature in their homes, together with the video and the air-conditioning.



In Calcutta, the respectable middle classes still go about in *dhotis* and perch on rickshaws pulled by the sweat and muscle of other men. They are, it is boasted, the oldest middle class in Asia, and evidence of their Victorian roots shows through in almost every aspect of their lives: their love of documents and the printed word, the needlework of their womenfolk, their accomplishment in singing and instrumental playing, which in this city is still considered just an average social grace. R.P. Gupta reckons that 500 new magazines are launched in Calcutta every year.

Calcuttans are pretty snobbish about the new India that lies to the west, and in return the new India is far from kind about the old idlers that lie to the east. Perhaps it amounts to no more than old money fighting with new. Nobody who looks at these portraits of Calcutta by the photographer Raghubir Singh, however, can doubt that in the city's domestic interiors a fine culture still survives which has almost completely vanished elsewhere. The humanism and universalism which marked this way of living may be Calcutta's chief contribution to the world, even though the world has grown differently.

Reprinted with the author's permission.

Photographs: Raghubir Singh

For the gracious people

Quality that's forever

CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

The fight for survival

A showdown is in the offing over the issue of the Janata Party's identity

KARNATAKA

This seems to be the season for revelations. First, it was Vishwanath Pratap Singh who threatened to reveal all about the Prime Minister's alleged Swiss bank account. And now, it is H D. Deve Gowda, former Karnataka chief minister Ramakrishna Hegde's *bete noir*, who has begun to hint at the existence of "dirty documents". Deve Gowda, in true V.P Singh fashion, says, "I will come out with it at the appropriate time."

Hegde's supporters, of course, allege that they too have enough material to embarrass the dissident leader and say, "Wait till we show you what we have on Deve Gowda." But that has not deterred Deve Gowda and his men. "Hegde gifted away 64 acres of good land in Mysore ," charge the dissidents. "Deve Gowda has a farm in Chennapatna ," counter the loyalists.

Deve Gowda has quite a few surprises up his sleeve, much to the discomfort of chief minister S.R. Bommai. The issue of the dissidents formally declaring themselves to be members of the Janata Dal seems to be the single-most important event for the survival of the Bommai regime in the state. If the dissidents refuse to do so, and the strength of the government is reduced by even 25 legislators, it would make the Janata Party—with its 225 members in the Assembly—a minority government. Party members feel that "with Governor P. Venkatasubbaiah deciding things it will be difficult for the government to survive".

The dissidents recognise a bargaining point when they see one. And they have kept the pressure up by demanding that all five ministers who had resigned and the other who was dismissed during the anti-Hegde campaign be reinstated in the council of ministers by Bommai. The state party presidentship is another bone of contention and the dissidents have begun to pressure Bommai to nominate a candidate of their choice and not Dr Jeevaraj Alva who belongs to the Hegde camp. The loyalists on the other hand say, "Let the party split, let the government fall, we are prepared to face the elections. But we cannot allow Bonmai to toe the dissident line."



Ramakrishna Hegde with Deve Gowda: crossing swords

H.K. Raashekar

Bommai, of course, has to make up his mind about which side he is going to favour before the Assembly reconvenes in another eight weeks' time. But in the tense interval between now and then, there are other contentious issues which will have to be resolved. For instance, the much-delayed Cabinet expansion, the appointment of chairpersons for boards and corporations and the nomination of a new president for the state unit of the Janata Dal. And each of these has the potential of triggering a major crisis.

With both sides gearing up for a showdown, the drama is all set to be staged when both Hegde and Deve Gowda return from their respective tours of the USA. Even so, the differences between the two groups spilled over in an ugly manner during the New Delhi convention held to ratify the merger of the parties into the Janata Dal. The pro-Hegde and anti-Hegde workers actually came to blows when the dissident Legislative Council member, Vyjanath Patil, got up to speak. Admits a Hegde supporter, "The incident was ugly. But we did not start the trouble."

Hegde's followers are furious that the dissidents have chosen to castigate their leader in public. "How can they expect us to cooperate with them in governing the state?" asks a Hegde supporter. The dissidents, on the other hand, insist that it was Ramakrishna Hegde who defaulted by reneging on his promise to make their candidate, Siddaramaiah, the party president in return for their cooperation with the Bommai government. Loyalists say that there was no such 'understanding'. Moreover, they feel that Deve Gowda was unable to secure the chief ministership and, therefore, in a fit of pique is trying to make things difficult for Bommai by dashing off one memorandum after another to the party leadership.

Hegde maintains that the dissidents have not been able to kick their "bad habit" of sending memoranda. Be it as it

may, the dissidents have apprised the Janata Party president, Ajit Singh, of the entire gamut of their grievances including their doubts about the wisdom of sinking the party's identity. After another round of meetings the dissidents came up with a petition to the Election Commission staking first claim for the Janata Party's name, flag and symbol. To show that they meant business, prominent dissidents N.S. Khed and M.S. Narayana Rao made a trip to the commission's New Delhi office on 21 November.

So, they keep going round in circles. And a showdown seems to be imminent. While in the first phase there is likely to be a rush for the Cabinet berths, the second will have both sides crossing swords over the party presidentship and finally the third phase will witness a test of strength on the floor of the House. Could Bommai be thinking on the lines of a mid-term poll to put an end to the entire controversy? The chief minister replies that he will decide "when the time comes".

Even if there is a mid-term poll, the scenario is not very promising for Bommai as he is caught between Ramakrishna Hegde and the dissidents. While Hegde's supporters feel that their leader's charisma will override the spate of scandals and win the elections for the Janata, the dissidents feel that the key for victory in the elections is the name, flag and symbol of the Janata Party. For Bommai, who is not really a mass leader, there seems to be no way out of this dilemma.

Prakash Belawadi/*Bangalore*



S.R. Bommai (left) with Dr Jeevaraj Alva: whom will he appoint as party president?



The divided fundamentalists

The Babri Masjid Coordination Committee is on the verge of a split

UTTAR PRADESH

It is a dispute that rages on. Sporadic bursts of communal violence, bloodshed and curfews are followed by a spell of peace and quiet. But never for long. Agitations by one or the other warring groups are never far away and the threat of yet another blood-spattered riot is just another protest march away. The Babri Masjid/Ram Janambhoomi controversy refuses to die down, thanks to the leaders of the two communities who are determined to keep the feud alive for political considerations. The Babri Masjid Coordination Committee (BMCC), which claims to safeguard the rights of Muslims in this continuing dispute, is now itself embroiled in a controversy which threatens to split the committee into two groups.

The controversy has its roots in the BMCC proposal to hold a protest march to Ayodhya on 14 October for the restoration of the disputed shrine. This gave rise to fears of a fresh bout of violence. Soon after, the Hindus called for a *yagna* to be held between 11 and 15 October and a clash between the two groups seemed imminent. In fact, as the date of the march neared, riots broke out in four towns of Uttar Pradesh. However, at the eleventh hour the march was postponed by the BMCC convener, Syed Shahabuddin, following an assurance by the UP chief minister N.D. Tiwari and Union home minister Buta Singh about a settlement of the issue.

Though a showdown was averted, Shahabuddin earned the ire of the other BMCC members with his action. "Shahabuddin who has appointed himself the convener of the BMCC had no business to give repeated calls for a march to Ayodhya and then postpone it himself," said a visibly upset Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the Naib Imam of Jama Masjid. This is the second time that a march to Ayodhya was postponed.

This time, however, the BMCC members felt that the postponement was not justified as Shahabuddin had failed to win any major concessions from the government regarding a solution to the problem. "By prolonging the negotiations, the government wants to keep the issue pending till the next elections," said Zafaryab Jilani, convener of the UP Babri



The disputed shrine; (inset) Syed Shahabuddin the committee cracks up

Masjid Action Committee.

The dissent soon developed into a major issue and five out of the BMCC's ten members, including Shahi Imam Syed Abdullah Bukhari, Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, Muzaffar Hussain Kachochvi, Zafrayab Jilani and Mohammad Azam Khan, decided to break away and hold a separate convention in Delhi on 26 and 27 November. The reaction from Shahabuddin was not long in coming. He warned the organisers that they would have to face the consequences for their "ill-advised action" and appealed to all activists to boycott the conference. He castigated the breakway faction of the BMCC and charged that they were "fundamentalists" who were incapable of organising enough support for a march.

With this split in the BMCC, Shahabuddin is bound to lose the support of a large section of fanatic Muslims in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. Meanwhile, riots and communal clashes continue to plague the state as politicians keep the issue alive. Faizabad, which had never witnessed a communal violence before, succumbed to the growing trend in October this year. Nearly 400 lives have been lost in various parts of the state over the Babri Masjid/Ram Janambhoomi dispute. And the split in the BMCC leadership only marks the beginning of a new phase in communal politics.

Faizan Ahmad/*Faizabad* and *Lucknow*

Looking to the farmers

Vasantdada Patil revives the Rashtriya Shetkari Sena in a bid to come out of political oblivion

MAHARASHTRA

Vasantdada Patil loves birthday bashes, especially if they are thrown to celebrate his own. So, on 13 November, the veteran Congressman, who turned 71, declared: "I feel like a new man and within a few days I will throw away this walking stick." Also, it was the perfect occasion for Patil to create few ripples in the political scene which he did by announcing his plans to revive the Rashtriya Shetkari Sena.

It was during the celebrations of his 70th birthday that the leader had launched the Sena amidst great fanfare in Sangli. But nothing was heard of the Sena after that nor of the Rs 12 lakhs that he had been presented by the farmers on the occasion.

According to Dada's supporters, the Sena had been forced to keep a low profile as the Centre was not too enthusiastic about it. It was at this juncture that Patil was put in charge of the farmers' cell at the AICC level, and Dada lost interest in the Sena.

But his detractors feel that Patil remembers the farmers and their rights only when "he is down in the dumps".

Always on the lookout for ways and means to find his way back into the high command's favour, Patil hopes to cash in on the Congress' fears of the Shetkari Sanghatana that has nearly swept all of Maharashtra's farmers into its bandwagon. By reviving the Rashtriya Shetkari Sena, Patil perhaps hopes to convince the Centre that he can stop Sharad Joshi and his Sanghatana from sweeping the next elections.

The Congress(I) is already in a quandary as the Sanghatana's *karz mukti* agitation is gaining momentum with more and more farmers applying for relief in the courts. Sharad Pawar's announcement waiving loans totalling nearly Rs 200 crores is going to wear thin as the farmers realise and Pawar too has admitted this -- that the waiver applies only to some departmental debts while loans from the cooperatives have only been rescheduled.

And so, Dada's threat to start a farmers' agitation, regardless of whether it receives the blessings of the Centre or not, is a significant development. Some have interpreted Patil's plan of reviving the Sena as a shrewd move: they feel that the septuagenarian leader is out to prove that it's the Centre that does not care about Maharashtra's farmers.

Prof. Kamble, a former Maharashtra Pradesh Congress(I) Committee chief, added to the confusion when at Patil's felicitation function he said that it would be a great achievement if Dada succeeded in turning Delhi's attention towards Maharashtra.

Vibhor



Vasantdada Patil and Pawar at the former's birthday celebrations

The political scenario in the state continues to be uncertain as ever despite the fact that Sharad Pawar, who has created a mass base in the rural sector, is at the helm of affairs. And the reason for this is New Delhi's whimsical appointments to man the party organisation in the state. Already, with Mrs Pratibha Patil's arrival on the scene as MPCC(I) chief -- who is known to be loyal only to Delhi -- the coming election year promises to be a turbulent one.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

Rage of the Governor

Govind Narain Singh accuses chief minister Azad of humiliating him

BIHAR

Hell hath no fury like a Governor scorned. It was left to chief minister Bhagwat Jha Azad to make this discovery but not before he had a taste of Governor Govind Narain Singh's mercurial temper. Though Azad and Singh have never been the best of friends, it was on 15 November, the day of the Chhat festival, that the showdown took place. Ever since, it is being referred to in Patna's corridors of power as the "political boat tragedy".

Both the chief minister and the Governor were scheduled to be taken on a cruise on the Ganga so that they could witness the lamp-lighting ceremony. While Azad was provided with a motor boat when the Governor reached the spot well before the appointed time, he was dismayed to find that his launch was anchored some distance away in slush and mud. Moreover, the launch, which did not carry the tricolour, refused to come to life for quite some time. An incensed Governor refused to board the launch, stepped into an ordinary country boat and proceeded to witness the lamp ceremony.

The incident naturally created a major flutter and more so, when the Governor alleged that by providing him with a barely functional launch that did not even possess a tricolour, the chief minister had deliberately insulted him. The district administration promptly trotted out an explanation about the missing tricolour: since the Governor was expected only after sunset, when the flag could not be unfurled, they had thought it best not to have the flag at all. However, Singh was not willing to be pacified.

The chief minister, on hearing of the incident, instructed the chief secretary and the director general of police to personally tender an apology to the Governor. Azad too tried to call up the angry Governor but in vain. Singh refused to talk to him and instead dashed off an angry letter to the chief minister. "I have learnt my lessons and will now stay within my limits in the interest of maintaining my dignity," the letter read. "There is no need for any further discussion between the two of us." But strangely enough, copies of this letter were circulated amongst newspersons, causing great embarrassment to the government.

According to sources close to the chief minister, Singh has been on the lookout for a way to embarrass Azad and this incident provided him with the opportunity. They maintain that Singh had also written to the Prime Minister levelling charges against the CM, a copy of which was forwarded to Azad as well. "Discussing any point with the chief minister is like fighting a duel .He even does not know anything about the legal and constitutional status of the Governor. He does not listen to anyone unless he is threatened. My conscience does not allow me to adopt the kind of harshness which is required to deal with him," read the letter.

Singh, on the other hand, staunchly denies that he had ever written such a letter to the PM. But Azad's supporters are not convinced. They believe that the Governor is in constant touch with the high command and it is he who has been sending reports, critical of the chief minister, to Delhi. Many even maintain that Singh is uncomfortable with his gubernatorial duties as he is keen on remaining in active politics. He is believed to have had his eye on the chief ministership in his home state, Madhya Pradesh.

Whatever be the truth, the high command is unlikely to be pleased with the Governor's act of drawing public attention to his private dislike of the chief minister. And if the Governor continues to let his prejudice influence him, he may find that he is in for some stormy weather ahead.

Faizan Ahmad/Patna



Azad (left) with Governor Singh; (inset) the controversial letter: row over a motor boat

Absolution, Syedna-style

The Bohras now have to possess a 'green card' or risk the wrath of their head priest

RELIGION

First it was the announcement that all Dawoodi Bohras would have to withdraw their money from banks that sent a shiver of apprehension among the affluent members of the community. Next it was the diktat that all Bohra men must wear caps and all women the veil that caused a great deal of indignation. And now it is the clause that every Bohra must produce a green card or an identity card for entry into mosques, community meeting places, for the performance of rites during marriages and deaths, that has made some of the Bohras voice their protests against the head priest, Syedna Burhanuddin.

The latest diktat of the religious leader, however, is the most devastating since a green card will be issued only to those who have paid up all their dues, that is, the seven taxes that are collected by the Syedna. According to one estimate, the Syedna's followers in the country, who figure nearly one million in number, pay an annual sum of Rs 15 crores by way of taxes!

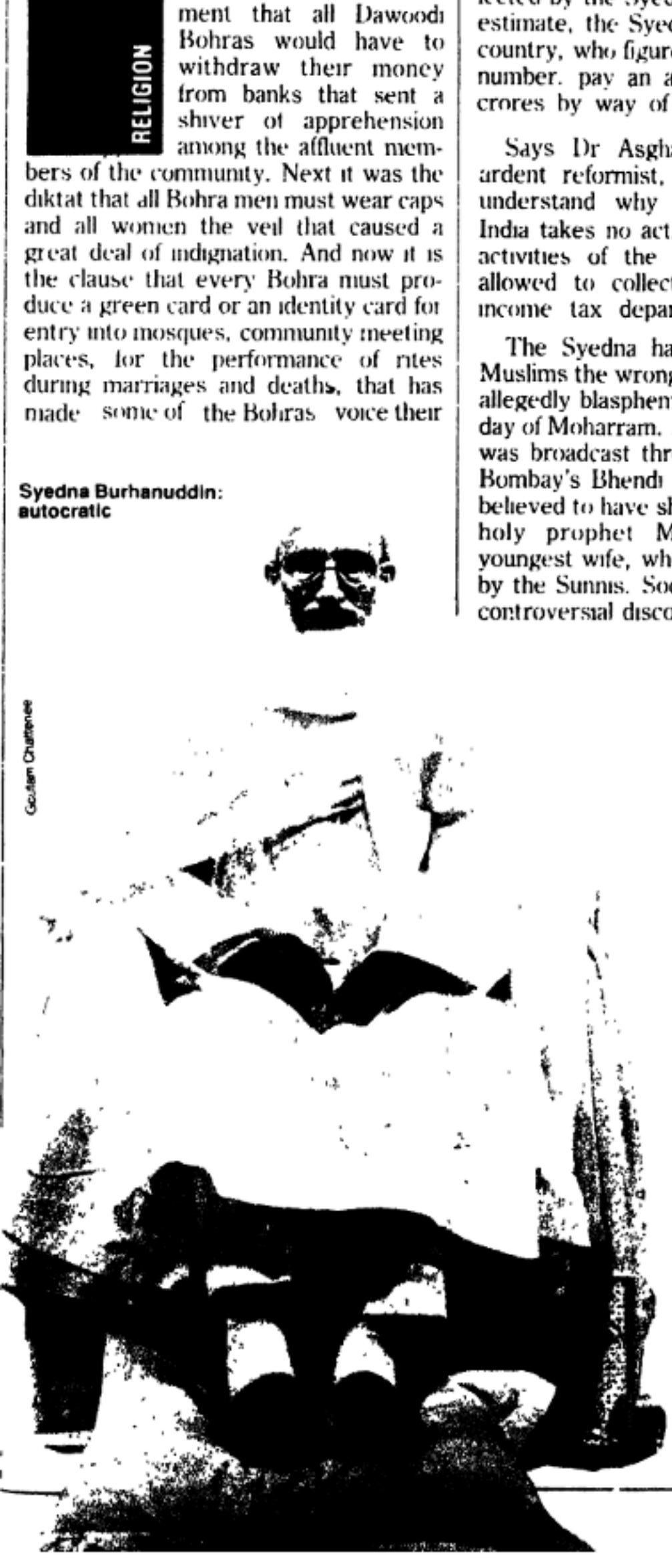
Says Dr Asghar Ali Engineer, an ardent reformist, "I am at a loss to understand why the Government of India takes no action against the illegal activities of the Syedna. How is he allowed to collect taxes just like the income tax department does?"

The Syedna has also rubbed Sunni Muslims the wrong way by delivering an allegedly blasphemous discourse on the day of Moharram. In his discourse which was broadcast through loudspeakers in Bombay's Bhendi Bazar, the Syedna is believed to have showered abuse on the holy prophet Mohammad and his youngest wife, who are greatly revered by the Sunnis. Soon after the Syedna's controversial discourse, riots broke out in Null Bazar, Bhendi Bazar and the J.J. Hospital area in Bombay on 2, 3 and 4 September.

With more and more Bohras feeling disenchanted with the Syedna's autocratic ways, the head priest now faces a law suit under Sections 153, 296 and 298 of the Indian Penal Code. Besides, the Syedna had to backtrack and tender an apology for his blasphemous utterings on Moharram day, after chief minister Sharad Pawar pressured him to. The outcome of the criminal case against the Syedna is being eagerly awaited by the entire Bohra community as it could well shape their future.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

Syedna Burhanuddin: autocratic



Goutam Chatterjee



The scene at a fish market: few customers

The killer disease

Forty people die after eating fish afflicted by the ulcerative disease syndrome

ASSAM

It is a bizarre phenomenon. A mystery disease that has struck some species of fish in the ponds of Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh and even in some districts of north Bengal, has made the largely fish-eating people of these states wary. And their fears are not unfounded. Nearly 40 people have died after consuming the diseased fish and in Assam—which has been the worst-hit—the government has banned or regulated the sale of fish in Cachar, Karimganj, Nagaon, Jorhat and Golaghat districts.

According to P.C. Boro, the director of fisheries in Assam, the disease, known as ulcerative disease syndrome (UDS), causes the afflicted fish to break out in a rash of lesions. 'Scale erosion' and 'degeneration of the epidermal tissues' can also occur in the advanced stages of the disease. The syndrome was first noticed among fish in the toxin-rich South Pacific shores of Australia in 1972. It then spread to the Asia-Pacific region and freshwater fish in Malaysia developed deformed skeletons in 1986. Next, the syndrome was noticed in Bangladesh in April this year and within months shoals of diseased fish entered Assam's border district of Karimganj and contaminated the freshwater species in this country.



A deserted fish market in Silchar: baffling phenomenon

Experts are baffled by the sudden outbreak of the disease. According to an official report, the *aeromonas hydrophilia* bacterium has been found to cause the disease in some carp species. S.D. Tripathi of the Bhubaneswar-based Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture says that a Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) team comprising experts from the UK, USA and other countries is investigating into the causes of the disease which afflicts fish and turns some species into poisonous entities resulting in gastro ailments and even paralysis of the limbs.

Meanwhile, the syndrome has hit the fishermen hard as demand for fish in these regions is almost non-existent now. The 4.5 lakh-odd fishermen in the state are now forced to eke out a living by other means as nearly 20 per cent of Assam's 22,896 ponds and *bheels* and 4,820 km of fish-bearing rivers have been swamped by fish afflicted with the killer disease.

The state's minister for fisheries, Umesh Chandra Das, said that his ministry has sought Rs 1.11 crores from the revenue department to help rehabilitate the unemployed fishermen and another grant of Rs 1.95 crores for providing pesticides and medicines to help them combat the UDS. It has also been suggested that instead of issuing a blanket ban on the sale of fish certain selected species, which are susceptible to the UDS like the carp, be sold after carrying out proper checks. The Bhubaneswar-based institute has advised the use of unslaked lime in ponds and fisheries to help prevent the spread of the disease.

While the north-east is still grappling with the killer disease, north Bengal has already come under the grip of the UDS. If the authorities fail to come up with a quick remedy, not only will fish disappear from the numerous markets but also from the dinner tables of most homes in the region.

Santanu Ghosh/*Silchar*

Terror in the marketplace

Businessmen flee Guwahati as ULFA activists continue to extort money

ASSAM

A deathly quiet spreads over Fancy Bazar soon after sundown. Gone are the hawkers and the windowshoppers and shopkeepers down shutters long before closing time. And though policemen stand guard over prominent business establishments, their presence does not instill confidence. The commercial hub of Guwahati, and the nodal point of trade and commerce in the north-east, is in danger of losing its pride of place.

The trading community is in a panic. Many prominent Marwari traders have already fled the city and still more are planning to leave. The exodus is a result of the growing belligerence of the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) whose members have been extorting huge sums from the traders. Not content with just extorting money, they have even resorted to issuing death threats, bomb blasts and murder.

Rampal Aggarwalla, ex-president of the Kamrup Chamber of Commerce (KCC), has not only stepped down from the post on receiving a missive from the ULFA demanding Rs 15 lakhs from the chamber but also fled the city. No one is willing to take his place and there is every possibility that this body will eventually be dissolved. Mahalchand Moolchand Raichand Kothari, the biggest foodgrain wholesaler in the north-east, has also shifted to Bombay after receiving a death threat from the ULFA. His family members, however, deny this saying that he is only away on a "pilgrimage" to Rajasthan even as they awkwardly field questions as to why his godown and residence are heavily barricaded by the police.

"This panic and fear have been created by the *goonda raj* of the AGP (Asom Gana Parishad)," said a well-known Marwari businessman. "Earlier too, during the agitation, we were frequently held to ransom by the All Assam Students Union (AASU) boys but the government was not theirs, so we basically felt secure. But under the AGP, extortion has virtually been legalised. Either we cough up the money or die." His fears are confirmed by the director-general of police S. V. Subramaniam who admits that the problem of extortion has reached "menacing proportions" not only in Guwahati but also in the affluent and developed pockets of Upper Assam like Sibsagar, Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Golaghat and the central districts of Nagaon, Nalbari and Barpeta.

A series of events that occurred over the last six months confirm Subramaniam's admission. But the climax was the murder of G. L. Harlalka, a high-profile businessman who was known to have hobnobbed with politicians of all hues. In his dying declaration, Harlalka is said to have named Munim Nobis, a former AASU luminary and now associated with the ULFA, and two of his men.



G.L. Harlalka who was murdered by ULFA activists. Fancy Bazar observes a *bandh*, a state of anarchy

as his assailants. Harlalka had allegedly been victimised by the AGP time and again. His godown was raided and he was arrested, allegedly for not paying Zoinath Sarma (now a minister for accord implementation) a donation of Rs 10 lakhs for the AGP convention. In September this year his godown was raided again and his goods seized. When Harlalka moved the High Court for the release of the seized goods, the administration backtracked.

The police maintain that Harlalka's killing was an isolated case of "personal vendetta" rather than another instance of ULFA terrorism. Sources claim that weary of Nobis' demands, Harlalka set up a provision store for him in Guwahati. But even so Nobis and his accomplices were not appeased and on the day of Harlalka's death made yet another demand for a hefty sum.

The only solution the administration advocates for the traders is "self-defence". "Let them arm themselves and their *durwans* with *lathis* and other weapons," Subramaniam advises. But as one trader points out, "We are not a violent lot. We have just come here to carry on with our business peacefully."

The upshot of all these developments is that suppliers have become wary of sending their wares to Assam. One trader claims that "the inflow of products has come down by 25 per cent during the last six months." While the impact of this has not yet been felt, Assam could be in for a prolonged spell of shortages of essential commodities, the traders



feel. And with the government showing no signs of putting an end to the ULFA's reign of terror, the Marwari traders are a demoralised lot.

Radhika Ramaseshan/*Guwahati*

Dark deals in the disco

A call-girl racket is busted but the disco owner claims that he has been framed

DELHI

Psychedelic lights, pulsating music and young couples gyrating on the dance floor are the stuff that the capital's teenyboppers thrive on. But on Friday 18 November, a police raid on Pussycat, Hotel Rajdoot's in-house disco, led to startling revelations. Apparently, the disco was being used by its proprietor to run a thriving racket in flesh trade.

It was the disarming simplicity with which the hotel's proprietor, Lala Kishen Lal, his wife Kamla and four other employees operated the call-girl racket that prevented them from being discovered by the police all along. But on 18 November the cat was out of the bag. Acting on a tip-off, the police first surrounded and sealed the hotel, then sent in two sub-inspectors who persuaded a man to be a decoy. The man then approached a girl and asked her for a dance. On the floor, he struck a deal and soon the police had nabbed the girl along with 75 others, who are all allegedly call-girls. The police also recovered Rs 20,000 from the Pussycat management.

Delhi police sources feel that the racket had flourished unnoticed as most of the deals were struck on the dance floor amidst the blaring stereophonic music. The couples then moved out from the floor and into one of the rooms in the hotel itself or drove away elsewhere. The police also claim that the hotel management made a cool Rs 300 for every deal struck in the disco while each girl pocketed as much as Rs 1,500 to 2,000 from every patron.

Kishen Lal, however, vociferously denies that he has been using his hotel for prostitution. And the explanations that he gives to justify his claims paint an even more bizarre picture. According to Lal, it was his estranged son Babu, who had ganged up with DCP (crime) Amod Kanth to "frame" him. Lal's version goes thus: Babu runs Asraf Management, a company which deals in supplying labour to the Gulf countries. Lal objected to the "racket" as "many of these poor people end up as bonded labourers". He adds, "My son would pose as the proprietor of Hotel Rajdoot to woo the rich Arab sheikhs who came looking for cheap labour in India." After a showdown between father and son, Babu moved his operations to the Sofitel Surya Hotel but vowed to teach Lal a lesson. As for DCP Kanth's role in this whole affair, Lal alleges that the policeman is trying to stall his own transfer by claiming to bust a call-girl racket.

Lal is indignant that the police should "barge in and frisk and arrest ladies without any search warrant or policewomen in attendance". The Rs 19,900 that the police seized, he says, is only

Kishen Lal, proprietor of Hotel Rajdoot, vociferously denies that he has been using his hotel for prostitution. And the explanations that he gives to justify his claims paint an even more bizarre picture. According to him, it was his estranged son, Babu, who had ganged up with DCP (crime) Amod Kanth to "frame" him

the gate money that the 199 ticket-holders had paid to gain entry into the disco at the rate of Rs 100 per head. "And if these so-called call-girls were charging as much as Rs 2,000 from every customer, where is all that money?"

One police official said that the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act did not allow for the arrest of customers and so none of the 30 men rounded up that night were arrested. He, however, added that six of them had agreed to act as witnesses for the prosecution. In a bid to prove his innocence, Lal addressed a press conference at his hotel on 22 November and claimed that the police had failed to find a single call-girl on searching the hotel's rooms. He also presented his hotel manager, Ramanan, as a victim of police brutality in their efforts to frame him. Even as Lal made his charges against the police he lavishly distributed glasses of liquor, only giving rise to the suspicion that Lal is desperately trying to cover his tracks.

Alka Saxena/*New Delhi*

BUSINESS HOUSE

A new twist to the feud

The Bharat Rams have turned to old enemy Swraj Paul to get a stronger grip on DCM

As it approaches its centenary year, Delhi's DCM Ltd is lurching from one controversy to another. Only two weeks ago it seemed that the three warring factions of the Shriram family who control the company had finally settled their differences and agreed to go their own way by amicably dividing their company into three parts. Before the ink has even dried on the agreement, a fierce row has erupted once again.

The latest fight in the family came to the surface on the eve of a crucial board meeting which was to ratify the three-way division of the company. It was triggered by the discovery that the Bharat Ram family had initiated a series of moves that would give them a stronger grip on DCM.

The moves by the Bharat Rams have put the three branches of the family on a collision course once again. The Bharat Rams now control close to 20 per cent of the company's shares

The Bharat Rams have turned to an old enemy—corporate raider Swraj Paul. During the last few days Shriram Fibres, a DCM subsidiary controlled by Arun Bharat Ram, has bought almost Rs 4.5 crores worth of DCM shares back from Paul who has held the shares ever since his abortive raid on DCM in 1982.

How the Bharat Rams raised the cash to finance the repurchase of the shares is another story altogether. From all indications the family has struck a deal with the powerful Delhi-based property magnates, the Ansals. Under the deal the Ansals will be given a share of the action when the DCM land deal which has been hanging fire for years, finally goes through. Under the trifurcation agreement which was signed recently, the Bharat Ram family will get the right to redevelop the land at Bara Hindu Rao where the Delhi Cloth Mills is located at present. The land was originally to have been developed by another Delhi property company, Kailash Nath. Under the present agreement, Kailash Nath and the Ansals will share the job of redeveloping the land. Kailash Nath, meanwhile, who was supposed to have advance of Rs 4 crores to DCM, has not done so, and nobody in the company appears to have pushed for it even though they are chronically strapped for cash.

Swraj Paul: selling his stock back

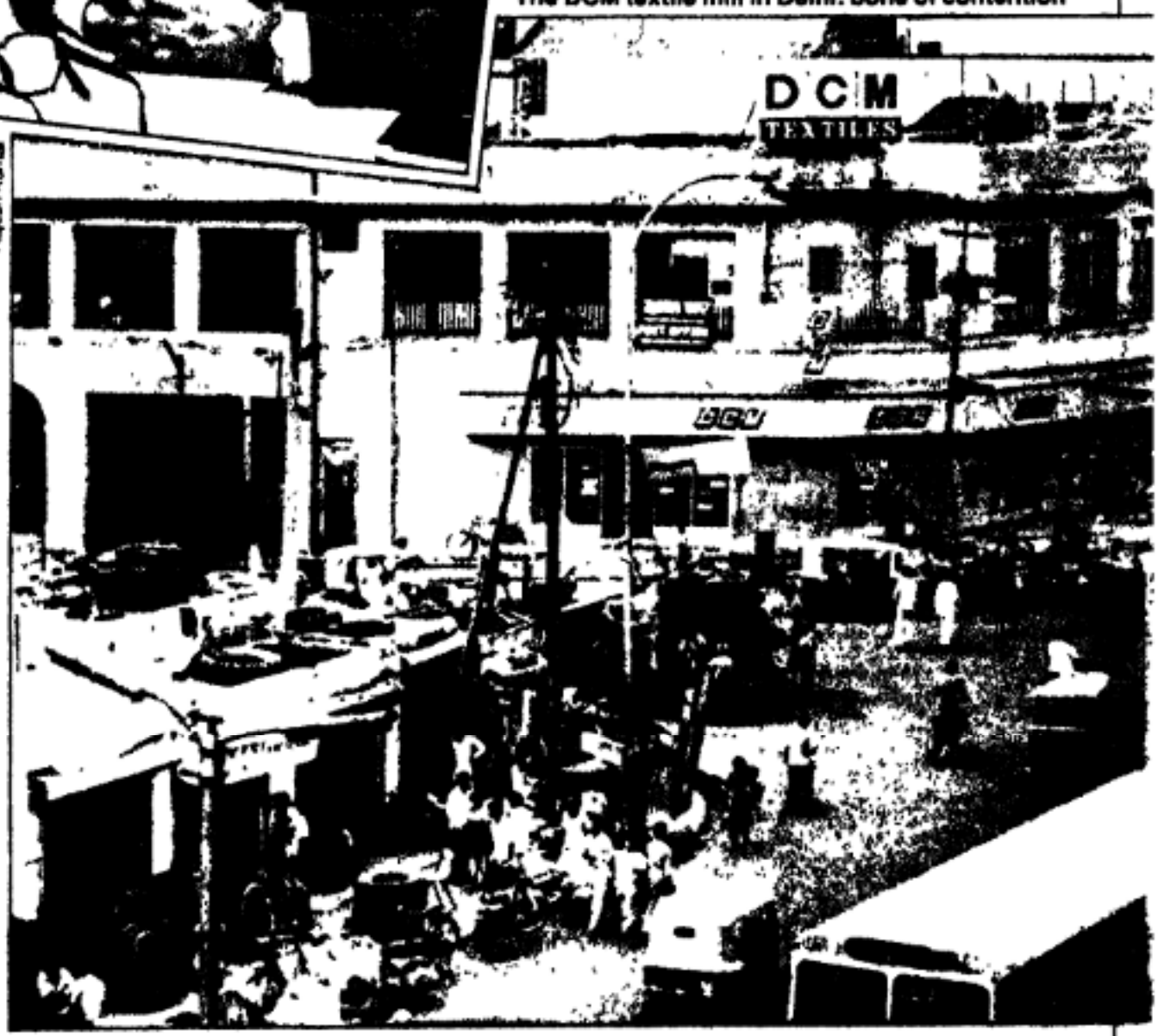


Ashok Chakraborty

The moves by the Bharat Ram family, inevitably, have put the three branches of the family on collision course once again. The Bharat Rams now control close to 20 per cent of the shares. And more shares are still easily available. Swraj Paul's stockbroker, Harish Bhasin, for one, controls another five or six per cent of DCM's shares bought during the raid on the company.

But as the family got ready for another bruising round, even the trifurcation agreement seemed in a certain amount of doubt. There are many in the company who believe that the three-way split will do nothing to help the company. As it is the three groups enjoy a certain degree of autonomy—DCM chairman Bansi Dhar already runs the DCM Kota complex by himself. Similarly, Vinay Bharat Ram runs DCM Data Products without much help from the others. In

The DCM textile mill in Delhi: bone of contention



Rajesh Kumar



Bharat Ram: unexpected move

addition there are other problems: for instance, a division of the company would do nothing to lower the company's debts which are reckoned at around Rs 80 crores totally.

Initially the financial institutions were apparently strongly against any division of the company on the grounds that such a move would not bring sufficient benefits to justify it. But during the course of the last few weeks they appear to have done a sudden turnaround. According to sources in the capital this was caused by high-level intervention from the finance ministry. This about-turn is attributed to the clout which the Bharat Ram family, especially Vivek Bharat Ram, is said to wield within the Prime Minister's inner circles.

But whichever way the financial institutions turn at this moment, it is certain that within the family itself there are serious doubts about the DCM trifurcation. Under the trifurcation the Bharat Rams would have a clutch of companies including Shriram Fibres, DCM Toyota, DCM Data Products and the DCM foundry. Apart from Shriram Fibres which has always been run independently by Arun Bharat Ram, all the other companies are losing concerns. However, the Bharat Ram family hopes to collect on the land bonanza which could run into several hundred crores. Last month as the negotiations on the trifurcation were taking place, the Delhi administration gave the thumbsdown to DCM's plans to close down their factory at Bara Hindu Rao. DCM sources believe that despite the latest setback the deal will go through sooner or later. The row in the family is as always taking its toll on the company. On 26 November a special meeting convened by the board took place. But no agenda for the meeting had been circulated till the night before. And as the family fight rages, the agenda for DCM is going to remain very unclear.

Paran Balakrishnan / *New Delhi*

LABOUR

A boss turns union leader

A former managing director of Ennore Foundries makes corporate history

It was an event without any recorded precedent in corporate history. On 30 October, the former managing director of the Madras-based, Hinduja-owned Ennore Foundries Ltd (EFL), C.S.S. Setty, made it a second homecoming by walking in as the president of the workers' union. Setty contested the union election and won with an overwhelming majority beating seasoned labour leader R. Kuchelar.

"I am thrilled," says Setty about his new role. In 1979 he had quit as the managing director of EFL, subsidiary of Ashok Leyland, because of some differences of opinion with the board of directors and settled down to a peaceful but busy schedule heading his own metallurgical firm. Just when he thought that his friends at EFL had forgotten him, three workers knocked on his door one day in early October with a strange request—that he should become the union president.

Setty was a bit dubious at first on whether the threesome represented the decision of the entire 1800-strong workforce. Way back in his MD days at EFL, Setty had told an amused group of workers that he would like to be the vice-president of the union, even while he was the chief executive of the company. His aim, he had said, was to be a spokesman of the workers who would be able to solve their problems and not just a boss who would sit across the table.

Three days later, 12 workers came to Setty to pledge their faith in him. But the former managing director made it absolutely clear that he would abide by the old slogans—the evolution of systems and procedures for all matters concerning their functioning and strict discipline at the workspot as well as within the union.

The workers accepted the conditions. Setty was naturally overwhelmed by the gesture. After all, the workers had now accepted him "as their leader, in a different role from what I had held nine years ago in the same premises", he said. And on 29 October he emerged victorious.

For the workers, the choice of Setty to head the union was, perhaps, a logical one, given his knowledge of EFL's working and in view of the wage agreement slated for review at the year end. Most of the top executives in EFL had



C.S.S. Setty: making corporate history

been appointed and trained by Setty and the present managing director, D. Vasudeva Rao, was finance director at that time.

On the other hand, however, speculations were rife that the EFL management was not too happy with the new turn of events. Perhaps Setty's thorough knowledge about the working of EFL as well as its shortcomings posed a threat to them. But Vasudeva Rao denies these rumours saying that Setty's new role would now ensure smooth running of the company as he would be a useful bridge between labour and management.

For the workers, the choice of Setty was a logical one, given his knowledge of EFL's working. On the other hand, speculations were rife that the management was not too happy as Setty posed a threat to them

And that leaves EFL in a unique situation. Not that those problems which forced Setty to quit nine years ago have all disappeared, but he will now have to deal with them differently. Of course, he has the advantage of knowing what card the present MD holds. All in all, it is an experiment which the corporate world will keenly watch.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

COMPANIES

Still not okay at Orkay

With falling production and a continuing liquidity crunch, the textile mill is yet to come out of the woods

C'est la vie is the Rs 38-lakh well-furnished, air-conditioned launch that Orkay Silk Mills' Kapal Mehra had purchased a year ago when he was already in deep waters. Little did the Orkay boss then realise that the name of his ocean-going vessel, which means 'this is life', could well signify his plummeting fortune. The launch itself got Mehra into further rough waters with his company's shareholders demanding a justification for its purchase. Mehra said it was needed to transport yarn; the shareholders wondered why air-conditioned comfort was required to transport yarn. But despite all his optimistic assertions, Orkay is now caught in a vicious whirlpool which has created a severe liquidity crunch for the company.

Between August and October, Orkay's production has fallen from a peak of 800 tonnes to a meagre 250 tonnes. There has been a consequent reduction in stocks from a high of 800 tonnes to an all-time low of 100 tonnes. The steep fall in production has resulted from non-availability of funds to purchase the raw material DMT, from Bombay Dyeing. Orkay reportedly owes Rs 3 crores to Bombay Dyeing. Since Bombay Dyeing does not give credit, it has suspended supplies of DMT to Orkay. And the reduced stocks in turn is affecting the company's borrowing capacity against hypothecation. In fact, Mehra has had to hypothecate his luxury vessel to Nagarjuna Finance to secure a loan of Rs 31 lakhs.

The funds crisis has hit Orkay on another front too. Under an American Express loan scheme, the company had imported 100 Sulzer looms for its Patalganga plant in 1985-86 at a cost of Rs 100 crores. Only 12 were installed while the rest are in bond as Orkay has been unable to fork out Rs 10 crores to pay the duty. Mehra obviously lacks the clout of Reliance's Dhirubhai Ambani for he has been unable to make the textile commissioner agree to clear the Sulzer looms under the 100 per cent export scheme which has a duty component of only 25 per cent. Since the looms were to be paid for in Swiss francs, Orkay is caught in double bind: the appreciating value of the Swiss franc and an increase in the import duty from 45 per cent earlier to 95 per cent this year.

While Kapal Mehra was not available for comment, industry sources feel that his troubles stem from his efforts to artificially shore up his balance sheet and keep his share prices high. Mehra's difficulties date back to 1985 when he suffered a personal loss of Rs 50 crores on the stock exchange while allegedly manipulating the Orkay share prices. At that time, he had renounced his rights in shares at a premium of Rs 75 to Rs 101 per share. Orkay shares were then ruling between Rs 185 and Rs 200, and Mehra made a hefty profit of Rs 27 crores. Then came the crash a. shares of filament yarn companies and Orkay slid to Rs 18 in one year and Mehra was saddled with a loss of Rs 50 crores. He paid up by reportedly diverting about Rs 30 crores from Orkay Silk Mills to investment companies owned by him and other associate companies.



Kapal Mehra: in a tight spot

Interestingly, in this context, the chairman of the State Bank of India, D.N. Ghosh, has observed: "The present difficulties the company has landed into have been due to (a) delay in implementation of their modernisation plans, while huge capital expenditure liabilities have been incurred, and benefits thereof could not accrue on account of non-installation of Sulzer looms; (b) diversion of short-term resources into long-term uses; (c) unscrupulous practices reportedly followed by the company like customs duty evasion, trading in their own shares, shady deals with their associate concerns."

Orkay is also saddled with a host of showcause notices from the customs, income-tax and excise departments for non-payment of arrears aggregating to more than Rs 10 crores. Besides, the

The Orkay office: multiple problems



company owes Rs 3 crores to its fixed deposit holders and the interest on this has gone up to Rs 40.5 lakhs. The company also owes around Rs 40,000 to the banks as brokerage on fixed deposits. All these are not reflected in Orkay's balance sheet which has been window-dressed to show a profit-before-tax of Rs 61 crores.

The financial crunch has taken its toll on many of the company's plans too. Orkay has jettisoned its much-publicised plan to come out with a cancer drug last year. Earlier, it gave up its plan to start the country's first five-star floating restaurant in tie-up with Ravi Ghai of Kwality. In desperation, Orkay recently started trading in timber products imported from the Eastern bloc countries into Kandla port. This strategy has paid off because timber suppliers give a credit period of 180 days and Orkay sells the goods through four agents in northern India on cash basis, particularly solving its massive liquidity problem.

It is not without reason that Orkay's bankers are unhappy with the functioning of the company. In June, the SBI chairman had commented: "The company has neither adhered to any financial discipline nor fulfilled its commitments. Despite the various unsatisfactory features in their operations, we did come to the rescue of the company in the recent past and in the process we have an irregularity of about Rs 10 crores."

Kapal Mehra's troubles stem from his efforts to artificially shore up his balance sheet and keep his share prices high. His difficulties date back to 1985 when he suffered a personal loss of Rs 50 crores on the stock exchange

While Kapal Mehra may, in resignation, say "This is life", he is for the present using his luxury launch to take bankers and foreign collaborators on sea rides from Bombay to Patalganga in 20 minutes of absolute comfort against a car ride lasting more than three hours. But as the SBI chairman remarked, "The company should not harbour an impression that they can take the banks for a ride." The warning bell has been rung for Mehra: he has to sail Orkay to safe waters—and soon.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*



Rajiv Gandhi with Mikhail Gorbachev: striking new deals

COLLABORATIONS

Impressing the Russians

Rajiv Gandhi's whiz-kids turn an after-dinner meeting with President Gorbachev into a brainstorming session

What did Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi do after dinner on the Soviet President's last day in Delhi? Instead of retiring for an after dinner sherry and cigar the two leaders decided it was time for heavier fare.

To impress the Russians, the Indian side wheeled out some of the country's brightest and best. Leading the way was India's telecommunications czar Sam Pitroda. He was followed by Hindustan Lever chairman Ashok Ganguly and defence ministry's scientific adviser V S Arunachalam. The three men gave the Russian leader a one-hour-forty-minute rundown on India's achievements in a host of hi-tech fields.

Pitroda began by talking about his brainchild C Dot and its achievements. But he didn't restrict himself to just that. He also went on to to give the Russians a bird's-eye view of India's burgeoning computer industry with special reference to personal computers. Ganguly and Arunachalam took the ball further into the arena of high technology. Ganguly gave the Soviet President a closer look at India's achievements in the controversial field of biotechnology. Arunachalam followed it up with a talk on aviation and aviation-related metals. Amongst other things he talked about was the hyper plane.

Partly of course, the aim was to impress the Russians with the fact that India is also a technological power in its own right. But beyond that the government was also keen to show the Russians that there might be areas where the two might profitably work together or even set up joint ventures. For instance, the Russians are a long way behind the West in the use of personal computers. And from the Indian point of view, a tie up with Russia would give the industry an enormous fillip and a vast new export market.

In the field of aviation, too, the Indian team was careful to stress that it could fill a lot of gaps for the Russians. The Russians have a powerful and well developed aviation industry but there are areas like avionics where they are relatively backward compared to the West. Arunachalam hinted that India could supply some of the technology which the Russians need.

But it was not just a case of the Indian side trying to impress the Russians with our technological prowess. But, apparently, Gorbachev was equally keen to get an idea of India's abilities in the hi-tech fields. His chief scientific advisor, Ossipian, who was also present at the after-dinner meeting at the Prime Minister's house, was also said to have responded positively to the exposition. And the results of the meeting were perhaps reflected in the final communique issued at the end of the Russian visit which includes a paragraph saying it "is necessary to meet the increasing requirements of countries for high quality products of latest technology by offering to each other latest indigenously developed technologies and work out specific projects of cooperation, through joint research and development" But oddly enough the Indian government has been reticent about publicising the meeting which ended around midnight on Saturday, 19 November. But if things work out the right way, then, perhaps we will be seeing results flowing from it in the near future.

Paran Balakrishnan/*New Delhi*

Pricetag for private jets

Indian businessmen who want to have the pleasure of flying about in their own locally-made private jets will now have to pay heavily for the privilege. Already several heavyweight businessmen including the Hindujas, Manu Chhabria, the Singhanias and several others have applied to buy the Dornier 228 which is being produced at the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) factory in Bangalore. But there is one—or rather several catches. The planes which come ready for takeoff from the HAL production line are going to be relatively expensive propositions—each one will cost around Rs 7.5 crores. That is a pretty steep price when it is possible to buy Dorniers made in Germany for around Rs 5 crores. The catch here is in the high excise and other duties which are slapped on locally-made planes. Since most Dornier buyers are government organisations like the air force and the coast guard, they aren't complaining. But a number of private buyers are beginning to feel that they are getting a raw deal.



The Dornier aircraft: costly

Strategic acquisitions

Turning a non-resident has not prevented liquor baron Vijay Mallya from eyeing companies back home. He is vying for the Rs 45-crore Pune-based Alfa Laval whose Swedish parent is the world leader in equipment for dairy, food processing and brewery units, areas in which Mallya has interests. Mallya is trying to become the Indian partner and is chasing Alfa Laval shares owned by chairman Kamaljit Singh and the Unit Trust. Meanwhile, Mallya's former chief executive N.K. Somani, who has started his own firm in Pune, is looking after United Breweries' latest acquisition, Western India Engineering. It is a strategic takeover given the UB empire's Rs 500-crore expansion projects.

Vijay Mallya: takeover moves



Tapan Das

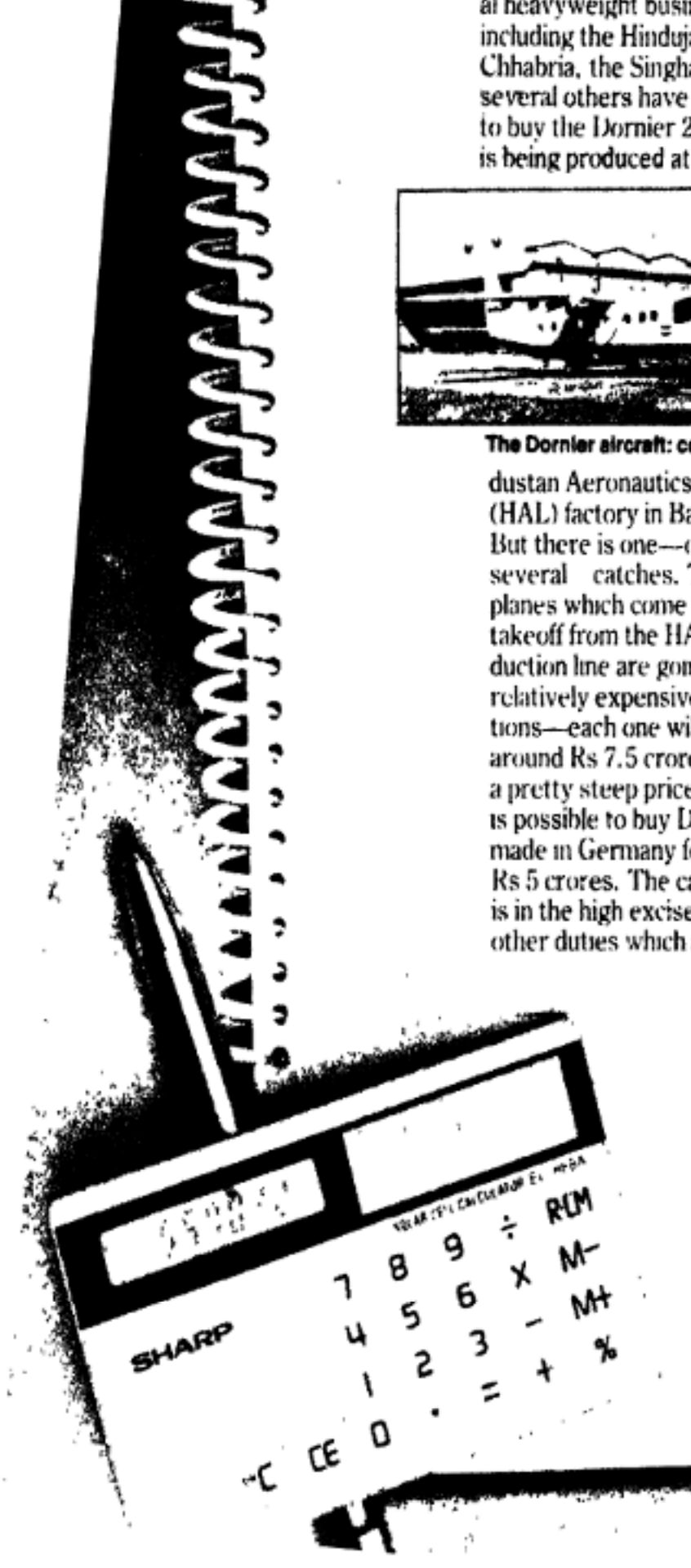
An open proposal

With most of their takeover bids coming a cropper in the course of the year, the controversial Hindujas have now come up with a more open proposal: a tie-up with Indian Airlines to float a joint sector air-taxi company. The non-resident Sindhi brothers have offered to contribute 60 per cent of the equity in the new company and have invited IA to put in the balance 40 per cent. Moreover, they will contribute to the shareholding in hard currency.

What's The deal?

The ripples of the Reliance-Larsen and Toubro merger are beginning to subside but the questions remain. How did the Ambanis manage to prove that they had enough shares to wrest control of the company? Had they presented their shares for registration at the time when they were invited to join the board? And if they didn't, how did they convince Larsen and Toubro chairman Niky Desai that they did indeed have the controlling interest in the company? And are they not getting the shares registered with the company?

But even if these questions still remain unanswered, it is probably academic now as the Ambanis are obviously firmly in saddle at L&T.



Rajiv comes calling

The Prime Minister's visit to Amethi and Rae Bareli is marked by fiery speeches and rousing receptions

The rumours flowed thick and fast. That Rajiv Gandhi was in danger of losing his constituency to the Opposition's Sanjay Singh; that the prime ministerial motorcade would be greeted by black flag demonstrations in case Rajiv Gandhi's trip to Amethi did materialise; that it was time Rajiv Gandhi started looking around for a new constituency; and so on. But the Prime Minister's three-day visit to Amethi and Rae Bareli between 22 and 24 November laid to rest all these rumours. It confirmed yet again that, Bofors or no Bofors, Rajiv Gandhi still enjoyed the confidence of the people.

The Prime Minister's motorcade which passed through 50 remote villages was stopped frequently by curious villagers who awaited his arrival with flowers and garlands. And as the Prime Minister and his wife moved from village to village, accepting petitions (totalling almost 10,000) for jobs, construction of roads, hospitals, schools, etc., the Congress workers raised slogans like: "*Hame na chahiye sona chandi, hame chahiye Rajiv Gandhi* (We do not want gold or silver, we want just Rajiv Gandhi)" and "*Sonia bhauji aayee hain, nayi roshni layee hain* (Sonia, our sister-in-law, has come with new hopes for us)".

Not only were the black flags of the Opposition's supporters missing but so was their leader, Sanjay Singh, who was away on a *padayatra*. The tumultuous welcome that the Prime Minister received from the people only emboldened him to launch a virulent attack on the Opposition, especially the National Front. Denouncing the front as a collection of "*rajas, maharajas, zameedars*" and a few owners of big newspapers, Rajiv heaped abuse on the front's leaders at all his public meetings in Rae Bareli, Jagdishpur, Gauriganj, at the Congress workers' meeting in Amethi and at the Youth Congress convention.

The Prime Minister singled out the National Front for his scathing attack brushing off suggestions that he should not refer to any one group. Before independence, it was the "*rajas*" who helped the British and later conspired to divide the nation on communal lines, he thundered. And once again, "these *rajas, maharajas* and *zameedars* alongwith a few big newspaper owners have ganged up to form the National Front and divide the nation".

Rajiv also reverted to the time-tested Congress slogan of "*garibi hatao*" and declared: "*Rashtriya morcha ka kaam hai roj roj jhande badalna aur afwaah failaana lekin hamara kaam hai garibi hataana* (The National Front changes its flag every day and spreads rumours but we work to eradicate poverty)".

In Rae Bareli, however, the Prime Minister received a much subdued reception. Arun Nehru, who now represents the constituency in the Lok Sabha, too is in no position to capitalise on the Prime Minister's plummeting popularity in Rae Bareli. (In fact, Nehru is said to be looking around for a new constituency.) It is little wonder then that Rajiv Gandhi has turned down the offer to contest the Lok Sabha elections from Rae Bareli.

Even as the people of Amethi bent over backwards to welcome their "Rajiv *bhaiyya*" and "Sonia *bhauji*", the Prime Minister responded by declaring that he would contest the elections from Amethi only. Even if he did not "come to campaign, the people will ensure that the Opposition candidate loses his deposit", he thundered. And as if to challenge the Opposition, the motorcade drove past Sanjay Singh's palace thrice, but there was not a whimper of protest from the Opposition camp.

So, the Prime Minister returned to Delhi a much more confident man. Now it is the Opposition that will have to take a second look at its strategies, if it hopes to take on Rajiv Gandhi in the next elections.

Rajiv Shukla/*Amethi*



Rajiv Gandhi during his visit to Amethi: popular as ever

Even as the people of Amethi bent over backwards to welcome their "Rajiv *bhaiyya*" and "Sonia *bhauji*", the Prime Minister responded by declaring that he would contest the elections from Amethi. And as if to challenge the Opposition, the motorcade drove past Sanjay Singh's palace thrice but there was not a whimper of protest from the Opposition camp

The plot thickens

New documents published by The Hindu *expose the cover-up*

It is a gun that India has paid Rs 1,600 crores for in the hope that it will rip apart the Pakistani army. But so far, all that the Bofors FH 77B field howitzer seems to have done is pound away at this government's credibility.

The latest Bofors explosion came on 25 November, with the publication of new secret documents by *The Hindu*. The paper had last printed Bofors' telexes and receipts six months ago and there was speculation that it had withdrawn from the attack. But the publication of these documents as well as the tone of the article (by N. Ram and Chitra Subramaniam) made it clear that *The Hindu* had plenty of ammunition left.

The latest documents did the following things:

- Rajiv Gandhi had suggested in his Sunday interview that Bofors might have paid for "genuine work" such as industrial espionage, in which case the government could not object. *The Hindu* demonstrated that the payments were not for industrial espionage but for "special promotion of our (Bofors) business in India". In other words, they were commissions paid to agents.
- Rajiv also said that the government need not be unduly concerned because there was no evidence to suggest that the money went to Indians or that it was paid to influence the selection of the gun. But, Bofors' contract with Svenska (published by *The Hindu*) noted that the payments were "subject to you or the Bofors sole representative in the territory giving us a satisfactory confirmation that the order is the result of your efforts". As Bofors' sole representative was Win Chadha, the contract proved that at least one Indian was involved and that the whole deal was specifically about getting the Bofors gun selected.
- The Hindujas have consistently claimed that they were not involved in Bofors and *The Hindu* documents mentioning them are forgeries. The government seems to have supported this stand.

But *The Hindu* reproduced a page from the diary of former Bofors' president Martin Ardbo in which he referred to meetings with the Hinduja brothers in London. The diary entries suggested that from the time the scandal broke, Ardbo, the Hindujas and the present management of Bofors had planned the cover-up together.

Anybody reading these documents could not fail to be struck by the fact that the story they told was completely at variance with the version trotted out by defence minister K.C. Pant while participating in the recent parliamentary debate on Bofors.

In the circumstances, it was inevitable that *The Hindu* disclosures would set off another storm. On the day they appeared, Janata MP Madhu Dandavate moved a motion in the Lok Sabha demanding that K.C. Pant make a fresh statement on the issue (the Deputy Speaker said he would allow considering the motion), and Opposition members spent half-an-hour on their feet demanding that the Bofors issue be reopened. It was clear that the Congress(I) had no strategy to cope with the disclosures and the best the party could manage was a brave effort by Priya Ranjan Dasmunshi, the minister of state for commerce, to raise the death of a press worker in Bengal instead.

The government was also embarrassed by a memo written by Rajiv Gandhi on 22 November, outlining his response to the privilege motion on Bofors. Rajiv made his memo available to the Opposition members who had raised the privilege issue, but the stand it took had already been rendered inoperative by press revelations. For instance, it sought to disregard *The Hindu* disclosure of June 1988 by saying "The question of the authenticity of certain papers published by *The Hindu* which purport to reflect payments made by Bofors... stands referred to the CBI for inquiry." In fact, the Swedish prosecutor has confirmed to the CBI that the documents are authentic and so the defence seemed ill-chosen.

Faced with these new revelations, the Congress(I) decided that offence was the best defence. Ghulam Nabi Azad issued a long press statement claiming that the whole thing was a conspiracy to defame the government and, incredibly enough questioning *The Hindu*'s patriotism. Other Congress(I) MPs fell back on the time-honoured expedient of calling Vishwanath Pratap Singh names, hoping to link his irresponsible charges about Rajiv's Swiss bank account to these new, substantial, well-documented disclosures.

What the government will do now is unclear. The BJP president L.K. Advani suggested in a press statement

The latest Bofors explosion came on 25 November, with the publication of new secret documents by *The Hindu*. Anybody reading them could not fail to be struck by the fact that the story they told was completely at variance with the version trotted out by defence minister K.C. Pant while participating in the recent parliamentary debate



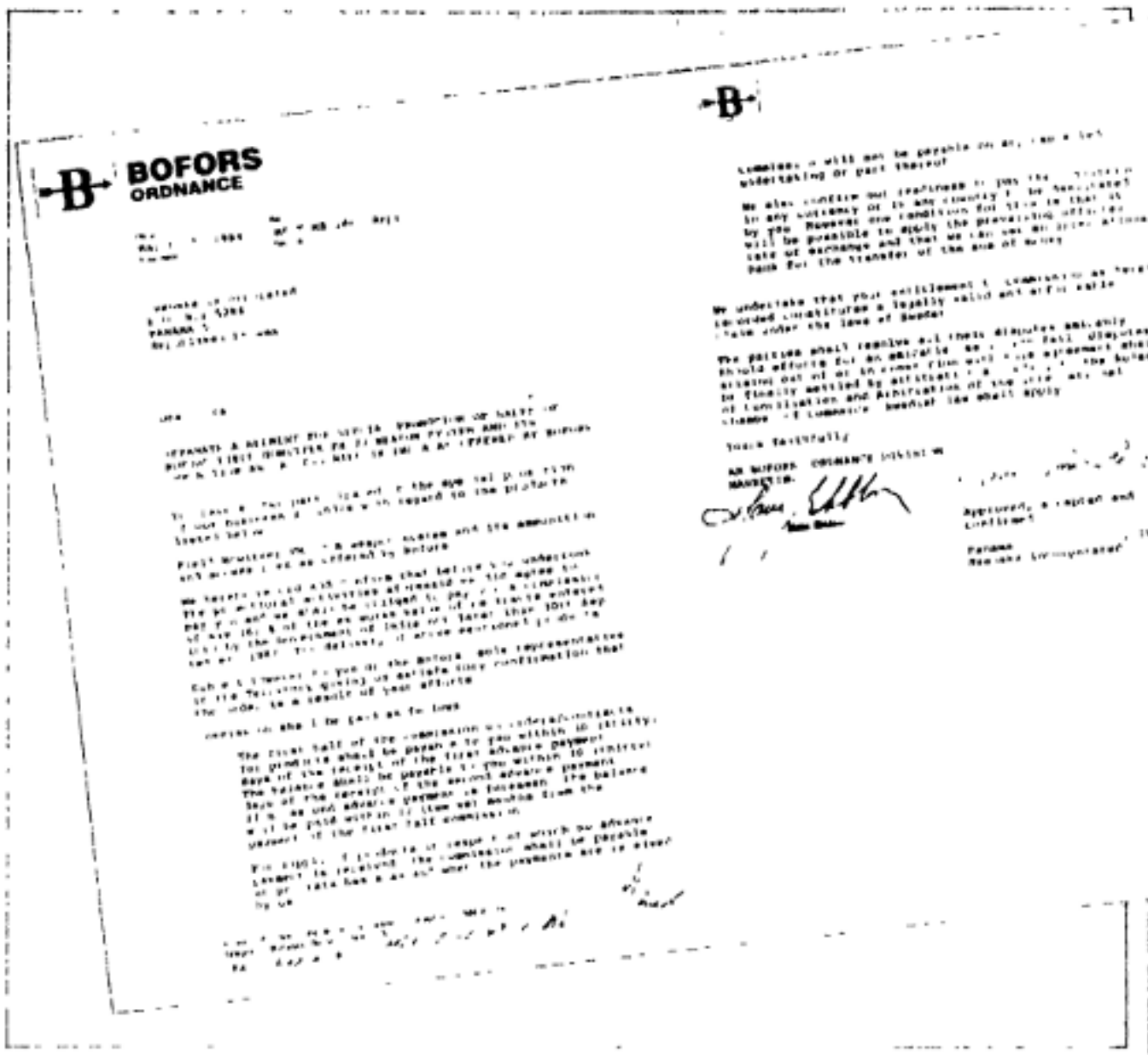
that there was "talk in government circles about asking Bofors to pay back the Rs 64 crores", but insisted that "the crime is too serious to be atoned in this manner since the country has been defrauded by Bofors" Certainly, asking for the money back would be the easiest approach. In his SUNDAY interview, Rajiv said quite clearly that this option was "still open".

Bofors would, in all likelihood, agree to this demand. The company assured the government in 1985 that it would not use any middlemen. Then, when the Swedish Audit Bureau revealed that it had, in fact, paid out Rs 64 crores, Bofors took refuge behind the winding up charges argument. It said that it had discharged its middlemen, but had paid them off anyway. This defence was accepted by the Joint Parliamentary Committee, though nearly everybody else regarded it as laughable

The Hindu documents showed how Bofors had lied. The paper reproduced invoices in which the company listed the payments to the agents as "commissions due to you" and many of the payments were made on a percentage basis, varying according to the value of the material shipped. Clearly, these were no winding-up charges.

Bofors now has little choice but to accept that it misstated the case to the JPC. But given that Rajiv has said on more than one occasion that the government will not cancel the contract, why should it bother to repay the Rs 64 crores?

Well, because, the armaments manufacturer is now engaged in negotiating the second part of the contract. The second order relates to the supply of more guns and will earn Bofors hundreds of crores more. At the same time, it appreciates that given the prevailing climate in India, the government cannot give it more business. If, however, it makes some gesture such as paying back the Rs 64 crores, then it could be said to have absolved itself of its earlier breach of faith. And could then be regarded as clean enough to do business with again.



Bofors' 1984 agreement with Svenska: no 'industrial esplonge'

In the circumstances, Rs 64 crores may seem like a small price to pay, particularly as Bofors could easily work this additional cost into the amount it will charge India for the second order.

This, of course, is only hypothetical. So far, India has not confirmed that it will buy more guns, but at the moment it seems like the cleverest course of action. The Congress could then claim that Rajiv—once he was convinced that there had been a breach of faith—had talked tough to Bofors and got the country's money back. In fact, this could even be turned into a positive achievement at the next election!

It is this possibility that worries the likes of Advani. They feel that Bofors has been guilty of a terrible crime and must be made to suffer a terrible retribution. In fact, this stand is difficult to sustain. All arms dealers pay commissions; there is nothing unusual or morally reprehensible about this. Besides, though Bofors assured the government informally that it would not use middlemen, there was no such provision in the contract.

So, if one is to get moralistic about Bofors, then the Swedes make bad fall guys. There is room for moral outrage,

The Bofors gun: smoking once again



however, on two grounds

- If it can be shown that a portion of the commission came back to India as a bribe or a pay off.
- If it can be demonstrated that the Government of India participated in a cover up that prevented the truth from being known

The first ground is virtually impossible to sustain. So far, no evidence that connects Rajiv or any member of the government to the pay offs has surfaced. The best that the Opposition has been able to manage is to suggest that the Hindujas who received part of the money are friends of Amitabh Bachchan's. And Bachchan is a friend of Rajiv Gandhi's. This is hardly conclusive. And equally, it could be pointed out that the Hindujas' greatest friend and biggest defender is Ram Jethmalani. So far, nobody has suggested that Jethmalani has been paid off.

Nor is it possible to prove that the wrong gun was selected because bribes were paid. Of the two principal contenders, both Bofors and Sofma are excellent weapons and the decision to choose one over the other was a subjective one that nobody can seriously question. Further, the government accepted the negotiating committee's endorsement of army headquarter's choice of Bofors within 24 hours. To argue that the wrong gun was bought, the Opposition would have to say that General Sundarji was paid off because it was his recommendation that prevailed.

Critics of the regime have only one real ground for moral outrage—the cover-up. Even before *The Hindu* disclosures, the government changed its story so often that it became something of a laughing-stock.

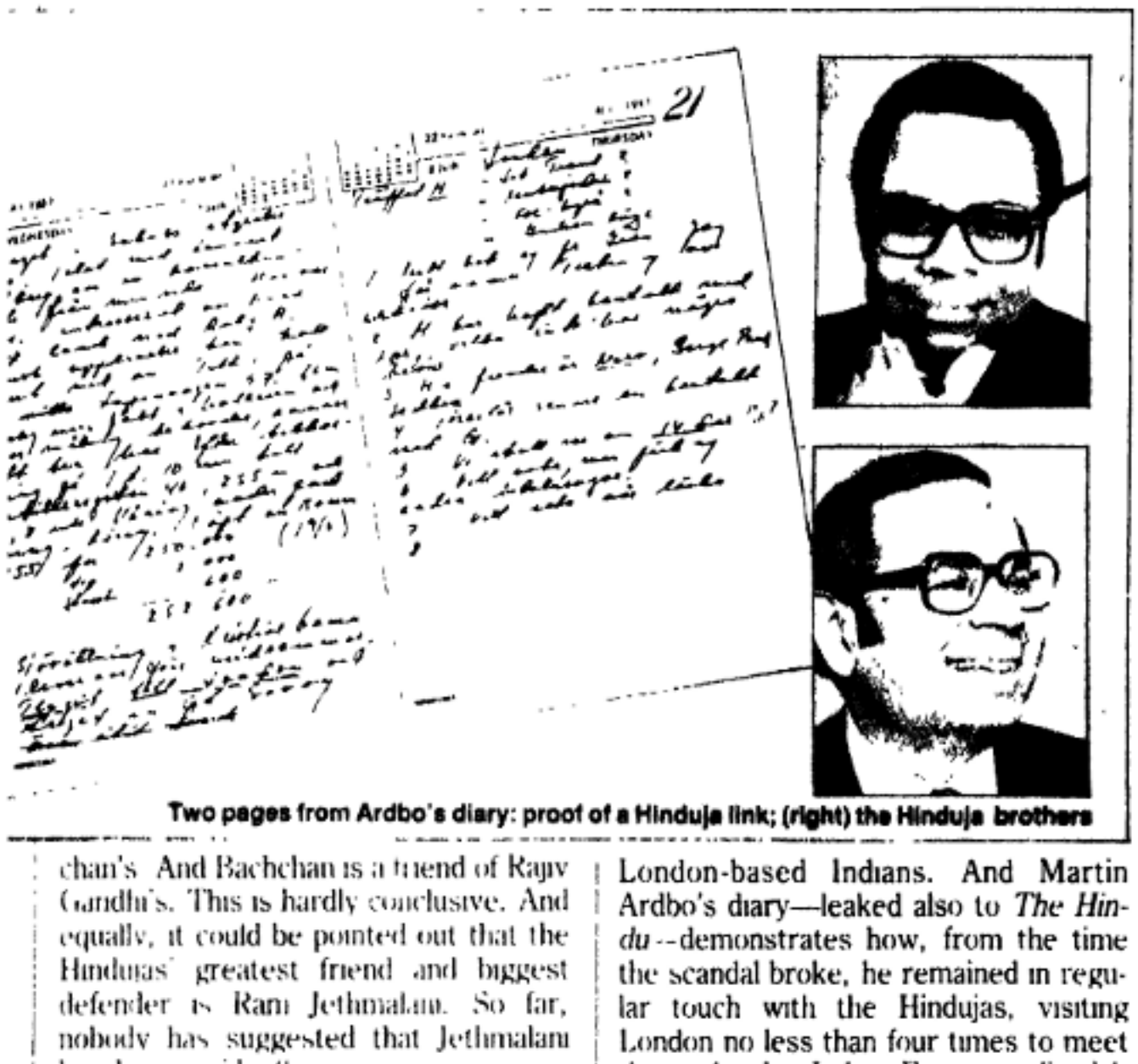
The Hindu documents, however, have served to confirm the belief that a cover-up was in progress. They show that commissions continued to be paid right up to the time that Swedish Radio first broke the scandal. Once that happened, Bofors concocted the winding-up charges story and backdated termination letters to support it.

The documents prove also that at least one of the three companies that received the money—Pitco—is owned by the Hindujas, a family of wealthy, London-based Indians. And Martin Ardbo's diary—leaked also to *The Hindu*—demonstrates how, from the time the scandal broke, he remained in regular touch with the Hindujas, visiting London no less than four times to meet them. As the *Indian Express* editorialised last week: "Will the facsimiles of the diary entries budge Rajiv from the position he took in the SUNDAY interview—namely, that no evidence had surfaced against any Indian? Alas, no. And for a simple reason: the Hinduja brothers have been managing crucial witnesses—like Martin Ardbo and Win Chadha."

The Hindu, too, argues that the Hindujas have manipulated the cover-up with—it suggests—help from New Delhi. "The documentation establishes that from the start crisis management was guided from London with official inputs from India." The paper refers to (but does not reproduce) a letter from S.K. Bhatnagar, the then defence secretary, to Bofors' president Per Ove Morberg. This letter, it says, was "made available to Ardbo on a privileged basis, but through unorthodox channels". Further, it says, a reading of the letter suggests that, in private, the government took a very different attitude to the commissions "from the stance adopted by the JPC and the government in public".

Given this voluminous documentation, any government should have taken some action. Strangely, all this regime has done is defend the gun selection and duck the substantive question of Hinduja involvement. When *The Hindu* demonstrated last June that Win Chadha was linked to the pay-offs, he was picked up for questioning. On the Hindujas, however, the official line has been to dismiss *The Hindu* documents as forgeries, despite the fact that similar *Hindu* documents were enough to lead to an investigation of Chadha.

Two weeks ago, SUNDAY disclosed that the Swedish prosecutor had confirmed the authenticity of *The Hindu* documents, so this defence was no longer available to the regime. Since then, another, more aggressive, stance that includes questioning *The Hindu's* patriotism has been adopted.



Two pages from Ardbo's diary: proof of a Hinduja link; (right) the Hinduja brothers

Oddly enough, the government is probably most secure on the issue of Hinduja involvement. While there is no doubt now that they got the money and that the regime has chosen not to act against them, this is a hot potato that few members of the Opposition are willing to touch.

With the possible exception of the Ambanis, no Indian business family has as much clout among politicians and journalists as the Hindujas do. The Opposition—with a few honourable exceptions—has been content to hammer away at Rajiv, without ever raising the real issue of the Hindujas' cut. Even Ram Jethmalani, once Rajiv's most ardent questioner, actually went on national TV to defend his old friends, the Hindujas!

Many in the government believe that the charges of cover-up cannot be substantiated without reference to the role of the Hindujas. As few in the Opposition have the stomach or the inclination to take on this family, officials think it probable that the cover-up issue will not take off.

In that case, assuming that the new deal with Bofors goes through and India gets the Rs 64 crores back, then this issue might finally be buried in time for the next election.

Whether this will be a just solution is, of course, a matter of conjecture.

Vir Sanghvi

After all that adulation, obscure retirement must be a trifle difficult to take. So, the chinless wonder among chocolate-box beauties, Poonam Dhillon has decided to make a comeback. No, not as leading lady (that would entail too many aerobic sessions) but as director.

And sharing your horror is husband Ashok Thakeria. Harbouring visions, no doubt, of having to provide the moolah to finance beloved *biwi's* latest piped-ream, he is trying every trick in the book to dissuade her.

But those who have witnessed the stubborn slant to Poonam's jaw (or what passes as such), say that all such plans are doomed to failure.

Poonam Dhillon: a comeback?



N Prasad

Juhi Chawla: a new love?

The Juhu Khans have always been womanisers. But the wife's place was always sacrosanct. Not any more. Feroz, the eldest of the brothers has divorced wife Sundari, all for the sake of a Lolita-like lady love. Sundari is extremely tight-lipped about the parting of ways and Feroz was too busy painting the town red with Jyotika (the self-same Lolita) to offer any comment. Honestly, the older he gets, the younger he seems to like them!

Give a man a few video-hits and he begins to think himself God Almighty. Aditya Pancholi, child husband of Zarina Wahab and prize scalp of Pooja Bedi, for one.

Recently, the light-eyed charmer was shooting at Film City, when a group of friends dropped by to visit him. Security stopped them at the gates to be met with an arrogant: "We are friends of Aditya Pancholi."

"Big deal," came the unimpressed rejoinder and a free-for-all ensued among the outraged friends and equally increased security.

Enter: the star himself. This was the supreme insult, he told the harried producer



Raju Upadhyay



Rishi Kapoor: strenuous denials

and proceeded to walk out with his friends, doubtless, right into some night spot. Remarked one bystander: "*Saala, apne aap ko Amitabh Bachchan samajhta hai!*"

Are they? Aren't they?

The whole industry is asking this question. Are Juhi Chawla and Rishi Kapoor having an affair? Or, are they not?

Yes, say informed insiders. No, says Kapoor.

Okay, okay, we believe you. But then, (merely as a matter of interest, you understand) why are you recommending Ms Chawla to all your producers? And why those nightly phonecalls all the way from Switzerland, to wish her good night?

A mere platonic interest, did you say?

Oh sure, we believe you. ■

Durgadevi

FOR THE man who launched a dozen celluloid thrillers (the best known among them *Dewaar*), life doesn't always imitate art. As it did not the other day at Basti, when **Haji Mastaan**, smuggler-turned-president of the Dalit Muslim Suraksha Mahasangh arrived, all prepared to electioneer for one of his proteges, aspiring to the presidentship of the Basti Municipal Board.

The way Salim-Javed would have had it: a large gathering; Mastaan makes fiery speech, public ecstatic; rapid cut to election day; brisk polling; Mastaan protege clear winner; a hundred demented violins going on in the background.



Haji Mastaan: art, anytime

But the real-life scenario worked out slightly differently. Protests from the other contestants and political parties led the district authorities to pick up the star campaigner and put him on the next flight out.

Such then is life. As for Mastaan, give him art anyday.

◆

THE SPHINX-LIKE **H.Y. Sharada Prasad** has saved many a situation in his time, but this must surely rank as a first.

The former information adviser to the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, presently officiating as the chairman of her memorial trust was supervising arrangements at Vigyan Bhavan, where President **Mikhail Gorbachev** was to be honoured with the Indira Gandhi Award for peace, disarmament and development for 1987. All went well until the Soviet visitor decided to depart a little from the original programme. Having said his bit, he asked his foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze on stage to announce that the proceeds of the award would go towards building an Indo-Soviet cultural centre in the capital.



Sharada Prasad: saving the situation



Mikhail Gorbachev: communication gap

But even before the *Russi-Hindi bhai bhai* act could get under way, the musicians (thinking it was all over) swung into the Soviet national anthem with relish. Upjumped Sharada Prasad, flailing his arms wildly, enough to put any self-respecting windmill to shame. Cottoning on at last, the musicians piped down. And Sharada Prasad sat back, pleased no doubt, at having done his bit for Indo-Soviet amity.



Wilson Cherian: wedding bells

THIS MIDDLE distance runner is lonely no longer. **Shiny Abraham**, ace athlete of India, said goodbye to single blessedness and married national swimmer **Wilson Cherian** at the Lalam Cathedral Church, Palai, Kerala. Not surprisingly, the guest list looked like a roster of champions, past and present. Among those attending the occasion were P.T. Usha, Vandana Rao, Bula Chowdhury and Sani Joseph. The hot topic of discussion was whether the wedding was a culmination of a mid-track or a poolside affair.

◆

IT WASN'T something you'd quite expect of a former Naxalite. But **Mithun Chakraborty** has always been one to surprise. And surprise he certainly did with Mimoh City—a dreamland named after his son, coming up at his 45-acre farm close to the hill station of Matheran. When completed the *desi* El Dorado will contain an exotic farmhouse, a *dak* bungalow, a *haveli*, a log hut, 12 five-star huts, an artificial lake, scenic streams, provision for horse and camel riding and vast acres of landscape. (Sounds familiar?



Shiny Abraham: lonesome no longer

Well, it should, considering it's straight out of your favourite Hindi movie!)

The project has the blessings of the Maharashtra tourism minister, Vilasrao Deshmukh, who has even offered to finance it, to the tune of Rs 2 crores, (under the tourism development scheme). It is slightly mystifying, though, how the minister intends to swing this: the construction is, after all, illegal. The saturnine star has neither applied for a no-objection certificate, nor sought the mandatory permission of the Bombay Metropolitan Development Authority. Also, environmentalists are girding up to fight the project, which they feel will contribute to ecological imbalance.

If the going gets too rough, Mithun can always take comfort from the fact that the Shiv Sena owes him one.

◆

LIFE FOR the *Kabaret* girl is one continuous round of experimentation. And with the release of her latest album *Yeh Mera Dil* pop star **Sharon Prabhakar** signals the beginning of her folksy period. For the music this time is far removed from the cacophonic tunes she churned out earlier. This time there are *shehnais*, *dholaks*, *tablas* and *sarangis* in the background and the effect is—well, different.

Why the switchover? Says Prabhakar: "I think the market is saturated with electronic wizardry." To which her contribution has not been inconsiderable. But then, we understand Sharon, some things *are* better forgotten.

◆

STRANGE ARE the ways of the bureaucracy. But **Shriram Lagoo**, theatre and cine actor and London and Montreal trained ENT specialist, is not complaining. Readers will remember how the Maharashtra Medical Council had some time ago cancelled his medical registration be-

Vivek Saraiwalkar



Mithun Chakraborty: dream city

Pradeep Bandekar



Lagoo: all's well that ends well

cause, in contravention of rules, he had advertised for *ayurvedic* medicines. Lagoo had sat back philosophically, reconciling himself to a handleless existence.

But one can always depend on governmental incompetence to set things right. And the *sarkar* did not disappoint this time, either. Lagoo got a notice reminding him that his registration had expired and would he please pay his dues and renew it. So, he's back at playing the good doctor with a vengeance.

Sharon Prabhakar: going folksy

N Prasad



SENATOR JOE Bidden could have told her that plagiarism wouldn't pay. But **Jayanti Natarajan**, glamour girl of the Congress(I), didn't see fit to consult him before passing off other people's ideas as her own. Result she was dumped as unceremoniously as the unfortunate Democrat.

A member of the Congress Reforms Committee, Natarajan was assigned the onerous task of examining the electoral system of the country and recommending ways to reform it. But too much thought being bad for the complexion, the lady decided to take the easy way

Gautam Patole



Jayanti Natarajan: plagiarism doesn't pay

out. Reading up all that had been written on the subject (by experts such as former chief election commissioner, S.L. Shakhder and jurists Nani Palkhivala and Soli Sorabjee), she rehashed the stuff and presented it as her own work.

But the little trick was discovered and the Congress(I) promptly booted her out of the committee.

Not bad going for an organisation that hasn't itself had an original thought in decades.

Compiled by Seema Goswami



Bachchan revisited

Déjà vu *with Raj Babbar*

Most people who enter politics say that they were inspired by the example of a great man. Indira Gandhi used to say that it was Mahatma Gandhi whose sacrifices moved her. V.P Singh says it was Lal Bahadur Shastri who inspired him. And no doubt, we will learn in due course, that Arun Nehru was influenced by the records of Richard Nixon and Spiro Agnew.

Raj Babbar, however, is probably the only aspiring politician in the world to be spurred on by the example of Amitabh Bachchan.

Amitabh Bachchan?

Oddly enough, yes. Like sequences out of a bad Hindi movie (the kind that are written and directed by Mahesh Bhatt, perhaps), Babbar's and Bachchan's lives have become inextricably intertwined.

There were, first of all, the superficial parallels. When Babbar hit the Bombay film industry in 1979-80, his mentors announced that they had discovered the new Amitabh. Babbar was tall, brooding, lean and had a theatre background. Besides, he even sounded like the superstar—so much so that some producers tried to get him to dub for Amitabh.

To be fair, the man himself disclaimed the comparisons. "*Woh to hamare* senior artiste *hain,*" he would tell interviewers, modestly shrugging off the suggestion that he was going to be the film industry's next megastar.

As it turned out, Babbar had much to be modest about. After the success of *Insaaf Ka Tarazu*, hits were hard to come by. As flop followed flop (he had 14 turkeys in a row), the 'next big thing' tag began to seem like a bad joke.

But then, around 1984, Babbar's luck turned and his love life too began to look up. Leaving his actress wife Nadira and their children at home, he took up with the talented Smita Patil. While her friends and family were appalled by the relationship, he was clearly Smita's type (till then, the great love of her life had been another Punjabi hunk: Vinod Khanna) and the two fell madly in love. A bigamous marriage followed and then, he told Nadira, that he was leaving her for Smita.

Sadly, Smita died in 1986. Shortly after the birth of their first child and in the aftermath of the tragedy, Babbar fell out with her family: Smita's relatives saw him as money-grabbing and cynical and felt that he was unwilling to take care of the baby. Some set about mobilising influential opinion in the film industry against him.

Two of them even went to see Amitabh and asked him to intercede. Bachchan was polite but unforthcoming. Then, Babbar himself dropped in on him.

"Sir," he said, "I am worried about the financial security of my baby."

Bachchan looked vaguely concerned. "There isn't enough money," he complained. "So, I am hoping to use it to produce a film. Then with the profits of the picture, the baby's future will be secure."

Yes, fine, said Bachchan, but wasn't Babbar taking a risk? After all, the movie might flop.

"Sir," agreed Babbar, "you are very right." He then left.

A few days later, he was back. This time he was unshaven and had dark circles under his eyes.

"I've been thinking about what you said," he began. "These days, making a movie is a big risk. Supposing I lose all the money, then what will my child do?"

Bachchan nodded, but wondered how all this involved him. He was soon to find out

"So, sir," Babbar continued, "I've thought that there is only one way of making sure that no money is lost. I can make a profit—for the baby, of course - by selling the rights in advance..." And here, he paused, "If you agree to be the hero."

At this stage, it rapidly became clear that the whole thing was no more than a scam designed to result in an Amitabh-starrer and so, Bachchan went into one of his famous laconic moods and a disappointed Babbar was escorted from the premises.

But that was not the end of the Bachchan parallels. Within months of Smita's death, the film magazines were full of stories——many with eyewitness accounts—about Babbar's affair with Rekha, Bachchan's cast off girlfriend. Throughout this phase, Babbar proclaimed his chastity and denied the rumours.

He was not above telling interviewers, though, that he had heard that a 'certain big star' was angry with him because of the alleged Rekha connection.

As in bed so at the ballot. Shortly after the Fairfax scandal broke and V.P. Singh announced that he had discovered the root cause of India's poverty (it was because Amitabh Bachchan had run away with the nation's wealth), Babbar declared his willingness to be the Raja's Hanuman.

When V.P. Singh paid his first post-resignation visit to Bombay, Babbar hung around him like a lovesick puppy. He, too, would join the fight against the nation's enemies, he declaimed. Did these enemies include Bachchan, he was asked. "Well," he said humbly, "*woh to hamare* senior artiste *hain.*" Off the record, he was much more forthcoming.

Since then, Babbar has become an integral part of the Jan Morcha/National Front/Janata Dal road show. He provides the glamour at public meetings, waves to his fans and sings the Raja's praises.

He hopes to be the combined Opposition candidate from Agra (though Devi Lal has promised the ticket to Ajay Singh) and plans on a full-time political career.

Not everybody in the Opposition is wild about Babbar. At a recent Agra rally, Ram Dhan cautioned against replacing one Bachchan with another. Predictably Babbar thinks he is a terrific replacement and the caution is unnecessary.

But, considering the mess Amitabh has landed himself in, why on earth would anybody wish to follow his example?

Ask Babbar and all he will say is—yes, you guessed it—"*woh to hamare* senior artiste *hain.*"

As in bed so at the ballot. As if Rekha wasn't enough,

Babbar wants the Lok Sabha too

Calcutta vignettes

On his first visit to the city 11 years ago, Gunter Grass was shocked by the appalling poverty and filth. A decade later, Grass returns to rediscover Calcutta

A train journey



Our crate arrived before us by sea freight. After the long train journey (since three days we are in Calcutta), today we travelled, for the second time, from Baruipur to Ballygunge station. We are living in a garden house southwards beyond the city. As if extradited, (too close to one and all) because skin rubs against skin, sweat mixes with sweat. Nevertheless we remain alien everywhere, evident in the way we are exploringly stared at. Distance and proximity lose their concept.

Canned in the tin box. At six or seven intermediate stations people get in and get off simultaneously: each time this brief mute struggle. After the fourth station begins the city, villages that turn into slums. Slums line even the railway embankment, behind them the ruins of recent buildings. Above us fingers clutching onto handles; each one overoccupied. Not a single fan is moving. In spite of open windows, the head wind does not reach the centre of the compartment. A fresh thrust, and with it, over the heads, jute sacks full of green coconuts, baskets of bananas, bundles of rags tied with strings, hens in cages.

Each wagon is a wreck. Seats are missing. What remain are twisted holding fixtures, cumbersome iron pipes. Wildly tossing lamps hang from their entrails with bulbs in wire netting. Everything is sticky, the floor snotty with red betel juice. Clusters of young lads, clawing into one another, block like corks the wagon doors which are always open. To them belongs the head wind.

In these suburban trains the Indian society is (as long as the journey lasts) casteless. Even in compartments reserved for ladies they sit and stand crammed, rub against each other, their many fingers sharing the handles: haggard-looking peasant women and plump matrons, well-to-do daughters in flourishing sarees with their college bags and scraggly women holding something living under their rags, ragamuffins, spruced up children. None can move away. Bleary-eyed beggars amidst advocates and middle-level government officials. High-school pupils with bundles of school books intermingle with lads of the same age, for whom school has never "happened". Everyone clings to everyone. Not only does the shadow of the untouchables fall on Brahmins, identifiable by their white thread; they remain subjected to their impure breath, sweat, constant touch. A social order which considers itself to be unalterable, is abolished. For these seven stations the rules do not work.

We shall often travel this stretch (to and fro) and get used to it. I am already thinking about techniques of boarding and disembarking. Already—with two fingers clinging to one of the handles—I am drafting sentences, encased as we are in the suburban trains to Ballygunge.

Writers Building

Today at last in Writers Building, an edifice of the British days, where the yuppies of the past, those young gangsters of East India Company made their money fast. At present, about 6,000 men and women—who cannot be sacked—are primarily busy with themselves on the floors of this mansion. They are sitting in the big office rooms and gossiping. They are drinking tea, reading newspapers, dozing off. Some of them are moving files but as if in a trance, others are sleeping uninhibited. Quite a few seats under the fans are empty but certainly not free. A good one-fourth of the employees here work elsewhere too; in the market as agents or in other offices, their subsidiary businesses. The good-for-nothing middle class is concentrated here in all its density. Expectedly, rubbish lies heaped on the corridors, on the open staircase, inside the courtyard, knee-high offal is pushed often to the corners. And on the corridors tea and snacks are served. In between, the petitioners stand in their usual postures. They are willing to wait for weeks, months, years with their pleas. They are different from cows in only one respect, their patience is hornless.

We are presented to the minister of culture. Uneasy small talk. Over him, on the wall, side by side, faithful to each other hang the portraits of Lenin and

They fell once—when, one forgot to note—
from whose hand, forgotten too,
and now they lie across
increase on the rows of pavements,
covered by shadows or they tower
into view: called pavement dwellers.
Pass by and it is over: none
leaves a gap.
Mark only the sleepers, must be
sleeping to death, on their bellies,
as you see in photos, so true



Tagore. Quick, without tea, we leave. Material for many more tales can be collected from the heaps of files stacked here after a close filtering, in the same way Premchand found material from his bitter village stories from close observation. More corridors, more floors. In each and every room bundles of paper heaped almirah-high, layered with dust. None has interest, only the fans move struck by the wind. No decision is taken in this building, everything here falls prey to diurnal corruption, or all problems are simply burned by shoving them between the files. Here sits now, as the Congress once sat before, the Left Front government dominated by the CPI(M), distributing fruitless hope as wages in advance.

The salaries of the employees vary between Rs 800 and Rs 2,000 per month. In comparison, those who teach in the slum schools run by the Calcutta Social Project earn on an average Rs 400. Daud claimed that everyday, in these huge rooms, quite a few dozen lyrics blossom apart from the work supposed to be done. Writers Building, once the centre of British colonial praxis and therefore well versed in exploitation, has developed into a production centre of Bengali poems. With a smile we leave the parasitic palace.

Bustees

Brick-laid, walled, large sprawling slums called *bustees* are a part of Calcutta. They have grown over decades, some of them even since the time of the British rule. Other small and medium-sized slums, displaced from the



Gunter Grass: candid views

Illustration: Subrata Ganguly

centre, lie along railway tracks and exit roads. They crop up overnight, as tents, sheds, decrepit huts, disappear suddenly, grow elsewhere, alongside sewer canals or beside colonies of new buildings. For example, near Dhapa, along the approach in the direction of Dum Dum Airport and against the street embankment rages a rampant slum. Sustained only by a medium-high wall and ducking under the chimneys of an adjacent factory belching black fury.

Slightly inclined away from each other and held by wire ropes, the metal chimneys shielded by pointed caps from the 19th century (when Engels described the situation of the working class in England) tower into our time which is used to running away to the point of extinction. Leaving aside the misery—and habit demands "leaving aside"—the slum belongs to the factory and its daily rubbish discharge: roofs made of tarred felt, fragments of plastic sheets, plywood and remains of roof tiles, plugged with rags, each roof matted differently. Sacks, straw mats, with stones and wood-blocks as weights.

Metal sheet rusting on metal sheet, car tyres on them, drooping hoses, a radiator hood flattened out. And tossed into each other--baskets, sieves, boxes. All tied with wire in sisal knots. Settlement after settlement with such strewn and discarded objects. Wretchedness or affluence of another kind.

If one were to lend one of these slum-huts, which grew out of sheer necessity, to the city of Frankfurt am Main for a fee and place it beside the skyscraper of the Deutsche Bank where the granite sculpture of the sculptor Bill says 'yes', always says yes to the towering bank, because like an endless loop in love with itself, only it is beautiful without any contradiction whatsoever and flawlessly confirms the eternal circulation of money...yes, if one were to remove the granite enjoying indispensability and place a single slum-hut instead, exactly the way it was made out of necessity, beside the glassy arrogance of the Deutsche Bank... then beauty would at once be on the side of the hut, and also truth and even the future. Because, the mirror-art of all the palaces dedicated to money will drop on its knees, whereas the slum-huts will always remain (and each one different) for tomorrow.

Later Daud took us to a slum in Behala, in the western part of the city. In a small area—could be 200 metres multiplied by 60—live more than 6,000 people, including 4,000 children. And in adjacent sheds, which offer more place than the huts, stalls, shacks, reside about a hundred black cows surrounded



Pavement dwellers: thrown out of their native soil, they have nowhere to go

by swarms of flies. This entire slum as well as the cows belong to a single person who lives outside Calcutta and charges Rs 50 to Rs 100 as rent for a room per month. Each room measures not even ten square metre. The passages between the rows of huts add up to a mere half a metre in width and accommodate an open drain which meets a canal on the right side of the slum carrying floating offal. I see only one waterpump, there must be another one near the cows.

Only one child, who is proudly presented to us, goes to school. A quarter of the inhabitants have found work as sweepers or rickshaw-pullers. With friendly gestures we are requested to enter the room. The bed, or better, the single bed for all inmates, stands raised on bricks because of the danger of flooding during the monsoon. The bed itself occupies most of the room. And all over, under the bed or from the ceiling, lie or hang household items sometimes stacked on each other (aluminium pots, water jugs, utensils). Everything is remarkably clean, the earthen floor swept free of dust; pillows on the bed, five or seven, neatly arranged, lying side by side. And almost everywhere colourful pictures of deities. I would dare to claim that these poor shelters, Calcutta's million slum-shacks are cleaner than the chaotic whirl of the rest of the city...

Dhapa

Dhapa, a sprawling landscape created out of piled garbage. Gorges in the garbage which had been dug into at several points. Crows, vultures, cows, goats and garbage trucks (which come out of the city day and night because there is no end to garbage) are part of this landscape.

Not only is the strike of the garbage removers organised but also everything else: who collects what and deposits where, who is allotted to which garbage truck; who forwards and to whom, the middlemen who know when the loaded garbage trucks come out of hotels and



Illustration Gunter Grass

hospitals—everything is organised. And amidst the garbage mounds stands a shanty used as a school where garbage children seriously concentrate and learn words which make sense in a different world (or landscape), far away, beyond the seven garbage hills...

Mrs and Mr Karlekar live in a villa of the colonial period, faithfully given to decay. They hail from Brahmin families; however, that's an old story forgotten like childhood diseases. She has trained women teachers all her life; he was engaged in shipbuilding. Now both of them are well over 70. Ten years ago they opened a kindergarten school in a neighbouring slum at Monoharpukur and then ventured to the garbage hills of Dhapa. Their organisation is called Calcutta Social Project. In spite of the resistance from the Communist Party which also politically controls this region, a plot was finally allotted for their project and permission to teach granted to the school. Many of the children come from peasant families who grow vegetables (quite a lot of cauliflowers) on old garbage land which turns into humus after three monsoons.

We travel with the old couple in a rattling jeep, first to the neighbouring slum and then to Dhapa. In the covered shed in front of the school shanty, about 30 small children are squatting on mats.

Classes are going on in all the rooms, as if knowledge could move mountains, as if all mountains were mere garbage mounds. Some of the young teachers (earning a monthly salary of Rs 350) are erstwhile pupils of the slum school in Monoharpukur. Later the children perform dances for us in which the movements are derived from peasant work—



A Calcutta slum: cleaner than the chaotic whirl of the rest of the city

Illustration Gunter Grass

sowing, hacking, harvesting, thrashing. Then a dance to the accompaniment of a charming song rendered in English, in which a patient is examined by the doctor, operated upon and cured. The seriousness of the children adds to the humour of the presentation.

We are already accustomed to the flies, the stink, the circling vultures above the school amidst the garbage mounds; they all seem natural.

Pavement dwellers

At midnight, at last, at the five-point crossing, where Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in bronze with heavy spectacles on rides towards Delhi through North Calcutta. Inferno in action. There they lie, pavement dwellers driven away from the downtown, thrown out from their native soil (Bengal, Bihar, Orissa). They will neither have slums nor retain them and for them, therefore, remain the pavements on both sides of the main road racing towards Sealdah station and beyond. In front of the walls they lie in rows, either shadowed or dimly lit up by the few lamps still in use, as if waiting for a film which none will shoot. Sleepers in family-groups, lone sleepers as well, stray dogs in between. Cows, holy and restless, watching their sleep.

Everyone is sleeping differently. Limbs propped up and folded. Rolled up like mummies or covered by small sheets. Bunches of children in rows,

By decree break this sleep.
Clear up! Who says clear up
and clear this field of vision as well
because none should be watched while dying.
Death (as employee of the city)
is smeared by all political parties



blocked by bundles of old paper, sacks full of dirt, they increase in number in sleep. A calf, full of bones and pale, appears in view...

Yet in between these thousand sleepers we see one single person awake, reading in the faint light. What is he reading—pious *mantras* or Donald Duck in Bengali version, poems which without a doubt must have been written by Tagore, or is the future spelt out in the pages: Netaji's return on a white horse, as the legend whispers.

What is India?

Back through the mattock. What is India? A motive for pictorial volumes, colourful or in black and white? Legacy of an empire, superpower on crutches? Or the last refuge of bankrupt reason? What should be resurrected here?

All statistics, even those finely scissored, place misery, flight from villages, spread of slums in cities in straight, uniform rows. Who slaughters whom, when and where is counted daily by thousand and more newspapers. the rich profusion of languages. And even greater growth: the shrinking of forests corresponds to the advance of the desert. And the rate of growth is still uncertain: around 17 million mouths are added every year, which is the population of East Germany. In the year 2000 AD, when all the world is determined to celebrate the arrival of the new century, 800 million Indians will reach the figure of 1 billion. And then expressions like chaos and catastrophe will be far too common and weightless in the usual commentaries. But the question is if a revolution could be of some help. Neither Marx nor Mao will be in a position to reply to the query, only Kali would be able to with her sickle.

* * *

Pictures everywhere which should not erase one another. How the young one with headband empties first the rubbish, then a number of buckets full of ash just outside the house right on the street. His eyebrows woven together. At a distance a crow is in flight. Or the old Sikh taxi-driver, a man of letters. Or that person with his endless shawl strung across his head, shoulder, body.

Shall I remain here. Draw cracked pavements. Go deep inside the rooms of the slums, note down the belongings inside. Be trusted as a foreigner and remain alien. Forget all that pointless talk on art. With a broad brush, with a thin drawing pencil, with dark bits of



Illustration Gunter Grass



(From top) Slum dwellers; the hammer and the sickle; the many faces of Calcutta

What are you looking for?
Finding yourself here—lost elsewhere—
Would mean calling out to yourself
as a bundle in between.
And still you babble about the
gains of land reform,
if it ever came





Illustration Gunter Grass



(From top) Crows in flight; Goddess Kali: can she solve the population problem?

As we passed by the betel vendors
and stepped up the stairs,
black crows perched on the wool of the sheep
sitting on the maidan,
now the city's park, once a firing range.
Someone with a drum had
a monkey tied to a string



coal, picture the ruin. Our mad dark mother who gives as she takes. A huckster, a bunch of crows. Headless, axed, heaped coconuts. Once again to begin from the start: arrange the rubbish once more. Pull up the filigreed bamboo frames once again round the big houses. Heaps of cudgels. Count the cow-dung cakes drying on the walls. Or spend one long day behind one single cow, waiting for that moment when she releases her shit; how she is like an island in the midst of traffic; how she lies in the shade for a moment occupied by crows, how she—it is already late—watches the sleep of the pavement dwellers...but our suitcases are all packed.

She was never here before nor did she wish to be here. Eleven years ago when he was here, alone, and was shocked by the city, he wanted to go away. But as soon as he had left he wished to be here again. (For reasons, which were like a litany for him, he sought long the exact expression for shame.) This appalling city and inside it its terrible goddess did not leave him free.

They travelled together elsewhere. But everywhere he said: when I was in Calcutta five or seven or nine years ago...he would make comparisons and prepare himself for the visit, she wouldn't. He wanted to be in Calcutta for one year, she would have to bear with it.

He came after eleven years. They took the train from Bombay across the heart of the country. They had already made provisions—a crate loaded with books had been shipped and reached before them. Not only he, the city had also changed. With highrise buildings and Metro construction sites, Calcutta looked advanced; its decay had also progressed. He said, "Eleven years ago, peddlars sat thick and dense on the right and left sides of the Howrah bridge. They have been removed. Moreover, the Communists are ruling now."

When they were in the city, she was shocked, he no longer. He blossomed, she shrank further and further. It is the climate, the poverty, the indifference and because I cannot do anything, said she. He wrote and drew, drew and wrote. His query uttered in between was, "Shall we go away?"

When they were sending back the crate and buying another suitcase, the fourth, he said, if we sometime come here again we shall again bring Fontane with us.

Translated from German by Subhoranjan Dasgupta and S.V. Raman

Zunge zeigen by Gunter Grass. Published by Luchterhand Literaturverlag, Darmstadt, West Germany.

A thirst for solutions

Is the technology mission on rural drinking water the answer to India's thirsty villages?



Public tap in a village. Insufficient supply

Alpaka Mitra

Neta speaks to another in front of a large and routinely bewildered election-time gathering of rural folk in a R K. Laxman cartoon. He whispers to his lookalike, "I wouldn't advise you to promise them drinking water. Promise them something simple."

Posted visibly in the cluttered office of the director of the technology mission on rural drinking water, Gourisankar Ghosh, this and other equally cynical cartoons hint that Ghosh and his team are not fazed by the difficulty of their task. Ghosh, also joint secretary in the ministry of rural development, is bearded, bright eyed behind spectacles, casually dressed and uses foul language to effect when work isn't completed as scheduled

To many, the rural drinking water mission's attempt to ensure some secure sources of drinking water to India's villages is qualitatively different from past efforts. Though promises of supplying drinking water have been heard in the rural areas for longer than even the *'garibi hatao'* slogan, India's villagers remain parched and forced to consume contaminated water that causes the bulk of deaths and disease in rural India. The killing drought that ended with this monsoon, moreover, proved conclusively that environmental degradation and overexploitation of groundwater over the past few decades had destroyed traditional systems of self-reliance.

The rural drinking water mission's strategy is based simply on incorporating lessons learnt from past government failures. Rural voluntary agencies are being relied upon to handle specific district-level projects, to provide field insights, and to develop water conservation methods based on trusted local

techniques. Fitful attempts are being made to involve "communities", in evaluation and maintenance of drinking water arrangements, a welcome move away from the target group mentality that spelt disaster for earlier programmes.

Two accepted truths for the technology mission are accurate information and maintenance. To date, government figures on "problem" and "covered" villages (the latter being problem villages that have been ensured dependable water through government programmes) have been totally inaccurate and the situation deliberately underplayed.

Mukund Ghare is an old hand on the rural drinking water crisis. Secretary of the National Association of Water Resource Development Agencies (NAWRDA), Ghare says "the technology mission will be a partial success. We will have understood the problem much better through good experiments and a good data base."

But experiments and data are not what the mission on rural drinking water wants to take credit for. In 1985-1986, the year before the mission began work in earnest, 46 per cent of the population of rural India lived in "problem" villages. By March 1990, at least one source of safe drinking water is to be developed within each of the 2.27 lakh villages in which these people live. Consumption levels are to be increased. Guinea-worm and other water-borne diseases are to be eradicated, and excess fluoride, iron and salinity controlled in the roughly 72,000 villages that are severely affected by one or more of these specific problems. Five years of such frenetic activity is to leave in place an "integrated approach for (*sic*) water conservation". Says Ghosh: "We will be able to cover 99.9 per cent of the villages with a source of good water, allowing for an inbuilt 10 per cent breakdown."

Some seasoned observers are convinced that these are achievable goals. Y.N. Nanjundiah, former managing director, and now adviser, of the Gujarat Water Supply and Sewerage Board, calls the technology mission "the greatest landmark in the history of drinking water". Both he and A.K. Roy, former chief engineer of Uttar Pradesh and now a consultant to the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme on water and sanitation, say that the mission's multipronged approach will achieve what could not be achieved in their years of government service.

Buoyed by such optimism, mission staff claim exceptional results in this mid-term period. Ghosh says that only a hardcore 37,000-odd villages are left to be covered. Guinea-worm afflicted villages have been reduced to a quarter of their 1984 number. A computerised management information system that will allow the mission in Delhi to monitor the functioning of drilling rigs and the million plus handpumps across rural India is virtually ready. And extraordinarily, both Ghosh and an upper-level adviser in his office claim that the mission's effectiveness is proved by the fact that villagers across India did not have to leave their homes during the just-ended drought.

Both Bunker Roy of the Social Work and Research Centre in Tilonia, Rajasthan, and Ghare say that the mission's claims of playing a major role in the drought are "exaggerated". On mapping



The mission's director Gourisankar Ghosh and his team are not fazed by the difficulty of their task. He notes: "We will be able to cover 99.9 per cent of the villages with a source of good water"

and the mission's strictures against random deep drilling, Bunker Roy says: "There are any number of government organisations collecting hydrological data, but this data doesn't reach the person who puts the hole in the ground." Ghare concurs: "The pattern of drilling deep bores without proper study continues under the technology mission. Drilling is invariably undertaken during emergency situations on a war-footing, with large budgets, haste, lack of supervision and disregard of data."

These criticisms, though important, signal little beyond minor disagreement as both Ghare and Bunker Roy are committed to the mission's attempt to bring about at least some change. More ominously, however, it is the larger question of the mission being an inadequate response to environmental stress and the ongoing over-exploitation of water resources that trouble Ghare and Roy. The same question troubles mission director Ghosh.

To critics such as Ghare and Roy, the technology mission approach is a limited response to a large and quickening crisis. The mission has brought change and cannot be criticised for a lack of effort, they say. Yet, according to Ghare, the mission approach effectively postpones the need to make tough decisions on legislation or on national water management. "Legislation on water use for any purpose and equitable distribution is something that everyone is afraid of," says Ghare. "Though very much necessary, neither the Opposition nor the ruling party is going to go through with such laws."

This grim perspective finds a surprising supporter in Gouri Ghosh. Fresh from managing Gujarat's water crisis in 1985-86 as state secretary for water supply, Ghosh says frankly, "We are still not coming out to tell the truth about the situation on water. This is an injustice to our future". Ghosh, in measuring what changes the mission can bring about, calls it "an infinitesimally small activity that is leading to a focus on the larger problems". Clearly the larger problems are still to be addressed, according to Ghosh, who calls the National Water Policy report on water management an "insipid document with no clear thrust".

Ghosh notes forebodingly that "even with a static demand in the rural areas, supplies are still falling short. In the next decade, if we do not take steps to manage water, we will be in a crisis situation."

The government would do well to heed this advice from an expert it trusts. Otherwise, technology mission or no technology mission, India's villagers will continue to find their drinking vessels as empty as their government's promises.

Siddharth Dube/*New Delhi*

Fusion and beyond

L. Subramaniam finds acclaim in home territory

In private he is unassuming, warm and approachable. On stage, confronting the public he is something else self-promoter and name-dropper, selling himself hard like the most aggressive American salesman. In this contradictory personae of Dr L. Subramaniam lies the story of yet another prophet who finds recognition among foreigners.

Four years ago, Subramaniam made a well-publicised appearance in the country of his birth—at a jazz *yatra* concert. It was India's first encounter with this violin maestro who is best known as a "fusion" artist, and he was accompanied by the Italian jazz giant, Stepan Grapelli. But the little man with the flared trousers and the mop of curly hair could not let the audience judge him solely on the merits of his performance. Unabashedly he dropped names of other musical greats he had performed with, of albums he had released. "They call me the Indian Paganini," he tells you, with no qualms about comparing himself to one of the greatest violinists of all time.

Visibility in India need not be on L. Subramaniam's priority list. He is easily the most highly paid Indian musician on the international circuit. Operating from his base in Los Angeles, Subramaniam performs in all the major cities of the world. And he has also had the good fortune to perform with some of the greats in western and Indian classical music. Ravi Shankar, Bismillah Khan, Ali Akbar Khan, Yehudi Menuhin, Zubin Mehta, George Harrison—all have shared the stage with him.

Nonetheless, Subramaniam can afford to ignore the Indian reality as little as he can deny his Indian origin. His claim to fame rests on the unique fusion that he has created between Indian and western music. Though purists of both genres may spurn him, he has done more than any other musician of his generation to popularise classical Indian music in the west.

Right now, it is Indo-Soviet amity that has given him renewed opportunity to impress his countrymen. All through November, Subramaniam flooded the capital with happenings because he was an essential part of the closing celebrations of the Festival of the USSR in India. On 14 November, in an East meets West music concert he presented a special composition with slides or a tribute to Jawaharlal Nehru. Four days later, he performed with the orchestra of the world-famous Kirov Ballet of Leningrad, a brand new piece called *Shanti-Priya*, dedicated to Indira Gandhi.

Subramaniam's quest for recognition in his own country has led him to compose music for Mira Nair's *Salaam Bombay*, for the ITV serial *Pradakshina*, and *Journey Down the Ganga*. He is also the musical adviser for Peter Brooks' *Mahabharat*. The virtuoso's techniques have cut across the barriers of style and discipline in the music world. After the success of his albums with Stepan Grapelli and Yehudi Menuhin in India, CBS has released an exclusive series of recordings of all his concerts. "It is like a dream come true," enthuses Subramaniam, "it is so strange to admire all these people and suddenly to find yourself playing beside them."

Subramaniam was born on 23 July, 1947 to musical parents (his father taught Carnatic music and his mother was an accomplished singer), and he imbibed the music around him, showing promise from an early age. An attack of diphtheria changed his father's ambitions to make the little boy a singer. Instead, a violin was placed in his hands. At his very first encounter with western classical music (when he was six, listening to Heifetz playing Bach) he was convinced of the limitations imposed on the violin by the Carnatic and other Indian styles. "We are musically advanced, but technically very backward," he claims.

Along the way there was a diversion. For over six years L. Subramaniam worked towards a degree in medicine from the Madras Medical College. He does not regret those lost years. But when he applied to the Music Academy in Madras, he was told he'd have to start from scratch and work towards a diploma before applying for a degree

Later, when he forwarded a taped recording to the California Institute of Arts, Subramaniam was immediately accepted as a student. At the world music department there, he also taught Carnatic music, and did the institution proud by graduating with honours in a record nine months. "It was easy for me as I had been brought to think that hours of practice were as important as meal times."

But international success has not robbed him of his base in India. He visits every three months and still retains his Indian citizenship. And now that he has ridden the crest of popularity here, perhaps Subramaniam will experience a more than musical fusion with India.

Shiraz Sidhva/New Delhi

Subramaniam can ill afford to ignore the Indian reality. His claim to fame rests on the unique fusion that he has created between Indian and western music. Though purists of both genres may spurn him, he has done more than any other musician of his generation to popularise classical Indian music in the west



L. Subramaniam: making new waves

All over a statue

Is it Rabindra Bhavan or Pushkin Bhavan? This question is being asked in art and literary circles ever since a 16-foot bronze statue of the Russian poet was installed on a red stone pedestal recently in Delhi's Rabindra Bhavan. The Bhavan houses the three art academies of the country—Lalit Kala Akademi, Sangeet Kala Akademi and Sahitya Kala Akademi—and is regarded as an architectural delight.



Understandably, Pushkin's statue has angered the directors of the three Akademies, including Girish Karnad and Prof. Sankho Chowdhury, and the architect of Rabindra Bhavan, Habib Rehman, who feel that the huge statue has marred the architectural aesthetics of the complex. Besides, the directors have argued that instead of Pushkin, a large statue of Tagore should have been installed as Rabindra Bhavan is named after him.

Punjabi bobbies

Language problems will soon be a thing of the past for Punjabi settlers in London's Southall. For, the London bobby is soon to acquire an added qualification—knowledge of the Punjabi tongue. In order to improve communication and race relations, the London police have decided that all cops on the beat in the city's Punjabi ghetto will have to learn the language. Said the chief inspector of Southall police: "We hope this will lead to a much more professional approach by our officers, especially with domestic violence where they will have to deal with people who may not have a very good grasp of English."

Talk about bridging the communication gap!

Monumental decay

It is listed among the world heritage monuments. But the unique thirteenth century Sun Temple in Konark, Orissa, is getting seriously damaged, leading to differences among conservationists over the preservation methods used. Senior archaeologists of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) claim that there is an inherent defect in the gigantic stone slabs used to build the temple. The stones are prone to rapid erosion as a result of salinity, and the missing slabs in the temple's foundation are allowing sea water to seep into the superstructure.

But a study by a chemistry professor of Cuttack's Ravenshaw College claims that the chemicals used for cleaning the Sun Temple are responsible for destroying the monument, as they are accelerating the process of erosion and decay. The ASI, the study says, has been spraying some organic polymers and using epoxy resins to fix the damaged portions which is having an adverse effect.

While the differences persist, the temple continues to erode and corrode with pieces of masonry coming off every now and then.

Bird scare

Nature's flying species and the mechanical flying machines made by man are obviously not made for each other. Bird hits have become a major menace for modern-day jets. Indian Airlines suffered a loss of Rs 2 crores in one month alone in September as a result of 26 bird hits, nine of which caused serious engine damage. And it is the larger birds which are a bigger hazard—vultures, kites and hawks—and account for 88 per cent of the hits. As a desperate measure, the civil aviation ministry is now toying with the idea of adopting the Japanese practice of painting large eyes in the front of aircraft. The big eyes have been found to scare away the big birds flying around landing strips at airports.

Worth a daughter

What persuasion and coercion can't do, money can—this is the conclusion family planning officials of the Maharashtra government have arrived at. For years now, politicians have vowed



to improve the status of women but in vain. While the female child is still unwanted and female foeticide is on the rise, the state government has hit upon a novel way of persuading prospective parents that, perhaps, they stood to gain a lot by having one or two daughters.

The Pandit Jawaharlal Balkalyan Award has been instituted and will offer Rs 10,000 to any couple who have no sons and go in for sterilisation after having one or two daughters.

THIS INDIA

• CHHATRAPUR : A man who died two years ago has been unanimously elected to a cooperative committee in the Navgaon development block. Although many people knew that this person was dead for two years, his nomination form was submitted, scrutinised and accepted-*The Hitavada* (Asim Kumar Basu, Nagpur)

• WARANGAL. *Sarpanches* of 45 villages have been unable to take charge even six months after the *gram panchayat* elections because the ex-*sarpanches* have refused to hand over charge. The district *panchayat* had issued instructions to the divisional *panchayat* officer to launch prosecutions against those *sarpanches* who have refused to relinquish their charge–*Indian Express* (Avula Ramesh Chander, Hyderabad)

• NAGPUR: Pregnant women of the Mang Marodi community, prior to their delivery, court arrest and invariably land up in jail. It has been found that as the delivery date approaches, these women begin to steal household articles from posh localities. They are caught redhanded and are put behind bars. The reason for this behaviour is simple: since the only source of livelihood for these women is peddling liquor, they prefer imprisonment to ensure that they get nutritious food as well as deliver their babies at the government's expense–*Indian Express* (D.N. Rajan, Thane)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

Illustrations Debashis Deb



MICO. The spark that moves millions.

Millions of vehicle owners all over the country get off to a flying start. Everyday. With MICO.

MICO spark plugs incorporate the latest international technology from Bosch, West Germany – pioneers and leaders in spark plug technology.

An excellent example of this is the MICO Super – India's first bi-metal electrode spark plug.

MICO spark plugs are available in every part of the country.

So when you fit a spark plug, stick to proven quality. Buy MICO. And ride on confidently!

MICO

LICENCE BOSCH

MICO makes a matching spark plug for *every* Indian vehicle.

Sista's 543/88

BEGINNING 4 DECEMBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) This is a favourable week for you. You will enjoy the support of friends and relatives. Employers and colleagues will help you However, there are chances of unpleasant disputes and arguments A word of advice. do not speak your mind. This is not a favourable period for romance and marriage
Good dates: 6, 8 and 10
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction : North



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) An excellent week for those in love However, do not be extravagant to please your beloved. Try not to neglect yourduties You will have to strive hard to win the praise of employers Do not leave your job in a hurry Financially, this is a bright week, for you might gain some property. Take care of your health
Good dates: 6, 7 and 8
Lucky numbers: 1, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) A very prosperous week for those in business Push all your pending deals and make new contacts Young people will have a very busy social life. Those in service might be surprised by a sudden promotion. Romance and matrimonial plans can be pursued Creative artists will have a very successful week You are advised to take care of your health.
Good dates: 4, 6 and 8
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: West



CANCER (21 June—20 July) This is an excellent week for romance. A word of caution, however, for those contemplating marriage do not make a hasty decision. Those of you who are in service will do well to consult your colleagues and superiors. A friend of the opposite sex will help you in an important matter. Do not get carried away by your recent success.
Good dates: 4, 5 and 6
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: East



LEO (21 July—20 August) The stars are in your favour this week So grab every opportunity that comes your way Persons of the opposite sex will go out of their way to help you in your ventures You may be tempted into extravagance by your good fo tune A letter will bring you the excellent piece of news you have been waiting for
Good dates: 5, 7 and 9
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North-west



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) This week is not favourable for you But do not be disheartened for the end of the week will bring you a pleasant surprise. You could seek the help of an elderly member of the family to solve your problem But, watch your temper which could get you into trouble You are advised to exercise caution.
Good dates: 5, 6 and 7
Lucky numbers: 1, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: East



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) This will be a peaceful week. However, you may not be able to sit back and relax, for a journey is in the offing. For those in business, this is an excellent time to enter into new contracts and buy new stocks. Watch your health A word of caution; do not squander your resources. A good time for romance and marriage.
Good dates: 4, 7 and 10
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: South



SCORPIO— (21 October—20 November) A favourable week with progress on all fronts. Those in government service are likely to be rewarded with a promotion Businessmen and those in independent professions may undertake risky ventures to achieve their goals. Those looking forward to a transfer will have their desires fulfilled. Do not be extravagant.
Good dates: 5, 8 and 9
Lucky numbers: 4, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: West



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) A splendid week lies ahead of you Do not hesitate to grab every opportunity that comes your way. Have confidence in others This is the time to make drastic changes in your career This is not a good time for romance and marriage A letter might bring good news
Good dates: 6, 7 and 10
Lucky numbers: 1, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North-east



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) Not a very good week. Minor problems will keep bothering you from time to time. A friend may try to deceive you, so be on your guard. Do not be disheartened by a sudden reversal of fortune. It will be only a temporary setback. This is the time to establish contacts with people.
Good dates: 8, 9 and 10
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) This is not a good week for you You will be troubled by deception and trickery by people you have trusted so long. Those in love will have a trying time. In fact, a romance could come to a sudden end causing great distress. Promotions are likely for those in service. A little tact and diplomacy in your dealings with relatives could help you
Good dates: 4, 6 and 9
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 7
Favourable direction: South-west



PISCES (21 February—20 March) It will be worthwhile for you to conserve your energy and resources this week. Do not enter into new business contracts. Try to curb extravagant tendencies. For those not yet in love, be on the lookout; you might find a suitable partner. The financial problems that you are having will soon be solved. Be patient and your hard times will end.
Good dates: 5, 6 and 10
Lucky numbers: 2, 8 and 9
Favourable direction: East

Star Partners: Gemini—Leo

This is not the most ideal of relationships. The Gemini man will not be able to put up with the Leo woman's frequent outbursts of temper. The continued pressure on the two to make a success of their lives together will actually serve to destroy them.



Introducing

Crystal Comfortwear

Super-soft Undergarments: Vests, Briefs and Trunks

Crystal.
Processed
on a sophisticated
mercerising machine
to give you super-soft
comfort that really lasts.
Available in white
and a range of colours.

Crystal®

Secret Style for Men

A tale of two Sharads

In the end it was Sharad Joshi who backed off. The Shetkari Sanghatana leader had announced battle against the Maharashtra chief minister, Sharad Pawar, for reneging on the promises of support made to the cotton farmers of the state, while he was in the Opposition. Part of the offensive was a much-hyped up *gaon bandh*.

But all it took were two rounds of talks with Pawar for Joshi to withdraw the *bandh*, saying: "Demands formulated by the Sanghatana are in principle acceptable to all concerned and there is every likelihood of a large consensus about their implementation."

Joshi next plans to hold an indefinite *satyagraha* at Reliance's Patalganga plant to protest the government's new textile policy, which, evidently, favours Reliance, Bombay Dyeing, Orkay and other firms of that ilk at the expense of humble cotton growers.

Enter: Sharad Pawar?



Sharad Pawar: good negotiator

Sharad Joshi: backing off

The indignant Assamese

Doordarshan and Reader's Digest have ruffled quite a few feathers in Assam. The charge: distorting the state's image. Instead of portraying Assam as an idyllic land of verdant paddy fields, swaying palm trees and the one-horned rhinoceros, the teleserial produced and directed by Kalpana Lajmi has been "openly misrepresenting" Assamese culture, complain its detractors. Their main grouse seems to be that some of the episodes feature lazy, corrupt and miserly people as central characters. The president of the Assam Sahitya Sabha, Kirtinath Hazarika, has demanded that the telecast of this serial be discontinued. Ironically, the 'distorters' are the Assamese themselves, for the serial is based on short stories by well-known Assamese writers and *Lohit Kinare* is presented by Bhupen Hazarika, the high priest of Assamese culture.



Bhupen Hazarika: hurting Assamese sentiments

Reader's Digest has also been accused of misrepresenting the Assamese. A Rs 2 crore damage suit has been brought against it by three complainants in the Kamrup District Court. They have objected to certain remarks in the *Reader's Digest Guide to Places of the World*, describing the Assamese as "fiercely independent people who resent the Bengali immigrants who later moved into the area. As recently as 1984, the Assamese have massacred the immigrants with traditional bows and arrows." Why such statements, ask the indignant petitioners, when the whole world knows that the Assam agitation was a peaceful and non-violent one.

Wanted: A Governor

When will the North-Eastern Provincial Council in Sri Lanka become operational? Why the delay now that elections are over? Reason: there is no Governor to swear in the members. Apparently, no one wants to take up this risky assignment and thereby incur the wrath of both the Tamil Tigers and the Sinhala JVP extremists.

Sri Lanka President Junius Jayewardene had initially appointed Shelton Ranaraja, a former deputy minister for justice, as the Governor of the North-Eastern Province. He was asked to take charge immediately after the polls. But realising that his life would be at stake if he took the job, Ranaraja turned down the President's offer. In fact, he also quit the ruling United National Party.

The post was then offered to a civil servant, Lionel



President Jayewardene: in a fix

Fernando, but he also declined it. Fernando had served in the Tamil areas as a government agent (equivalent to a district magistrate in the Indian system) and was supposed to have been very popular with the Tamils, so Jayewardene thought he would fit the bill. But Fernando was obviously reluctant to risk his life for the sake of his country.

At the time of passing the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, Jayewardene had declared that he would appoint a Sinhalese as the Governor of the new Tamil province to promote communal amity. Now that no Sinhalese seems to want the job, will he settle for a Tamil Governor? ■

DELHI DIARY

D.E. NIZAMUDDIN

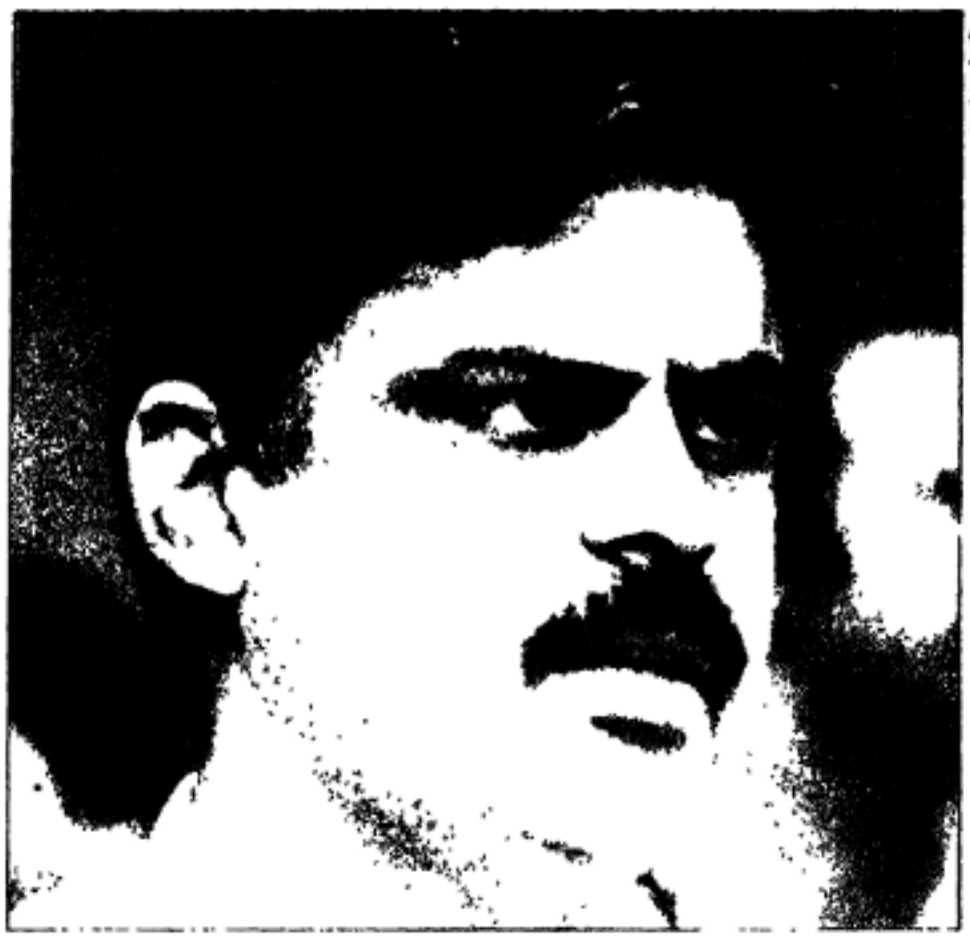
Whose bill was it anyway?

While *The Hindu*'s documents on the Bofors deal were causing a storm in Parliament last week, a handful of Congress(I) MPs were conducting their own little investigation. Their target: Arun Nehru, the jowly Jan Morcha leader. Ever since the marriage of Nehru's daughter to London-based shipping tycoon Ravi Tikkoo's son, Congressmen in the capital have been speculating about how Nehru could have afforded such an expensive bash. The *baarat* was lodged in the plush Hotel Ashok for a full week and on 30 October, the day of the reception, the whole hotel was illuminated.

How could the former executive of a paint manufacturing company have afforded a wedding that makes the famous one hosted by Madhavrao Scindia in Gwalior recently appear austere in comparison? Already, the Congress MPs have been making polite enquiries at Hotel Ashok. How much did the bill come to? Who picked up the tab? However, one of the snoopers is pessimistic about the outcome of all this sniffing around. "Arun Nehru is far too clever to have paid himself. He is bound to have got the bill made out in somebody else's name -probably Tikkoo's," he says.



Arun Nehru: expensive bash



Tariq Anwar: a flair for political repartee

Exchanging notes

Tariq Anwar, Bihar's Pradesh Congress(I) chief, has a flair for political repartee. A couple of days after Anwar had alleged that "a close relative" of V.P. Singh (read his son) has money stashed away in a Swiss bank account code named 'Peacock', he was accosted by a journalist (a well-known Singh crony and one of his political advisers) at Delhi airport. The journalist asked Anwar whether he had any proof that the money in the bank account was deposited by V.P. Singh. Anwar replied that he had all the proof that was necessary.

This led the hack to threaten. "Do you know that V.P. Singh is about to write a letter to you saying that you are welcome to all the money in the 'Peacock' account if you can furnish evidence that it exists?" Replied Anwar equally: "Then, I will write to V.P. Singh saying that Rajiv Gandhi will give him all the money in 'Lotus' if he can do the same."

Joshi's tryst with Devi Lal

Why is Prabash Joshi making such frequent trips to Haryana Bhavan, the state's guest-house in New Delhi? The visits of the editor of *Jansatta*, the *Indian Express*' sister publication in Hindi, follow the same pattern. He marches up to the reception and asks "Is Devi Lal in?" When told that the Haryana chief minister is not, he trundles out looking terribly disappointed.

Cynics in the capital say that Joshi's visits stem from a very personal purpose: he wants Devi Lal to arrange to have him nominated to the Rajya Sabha by the Opposi

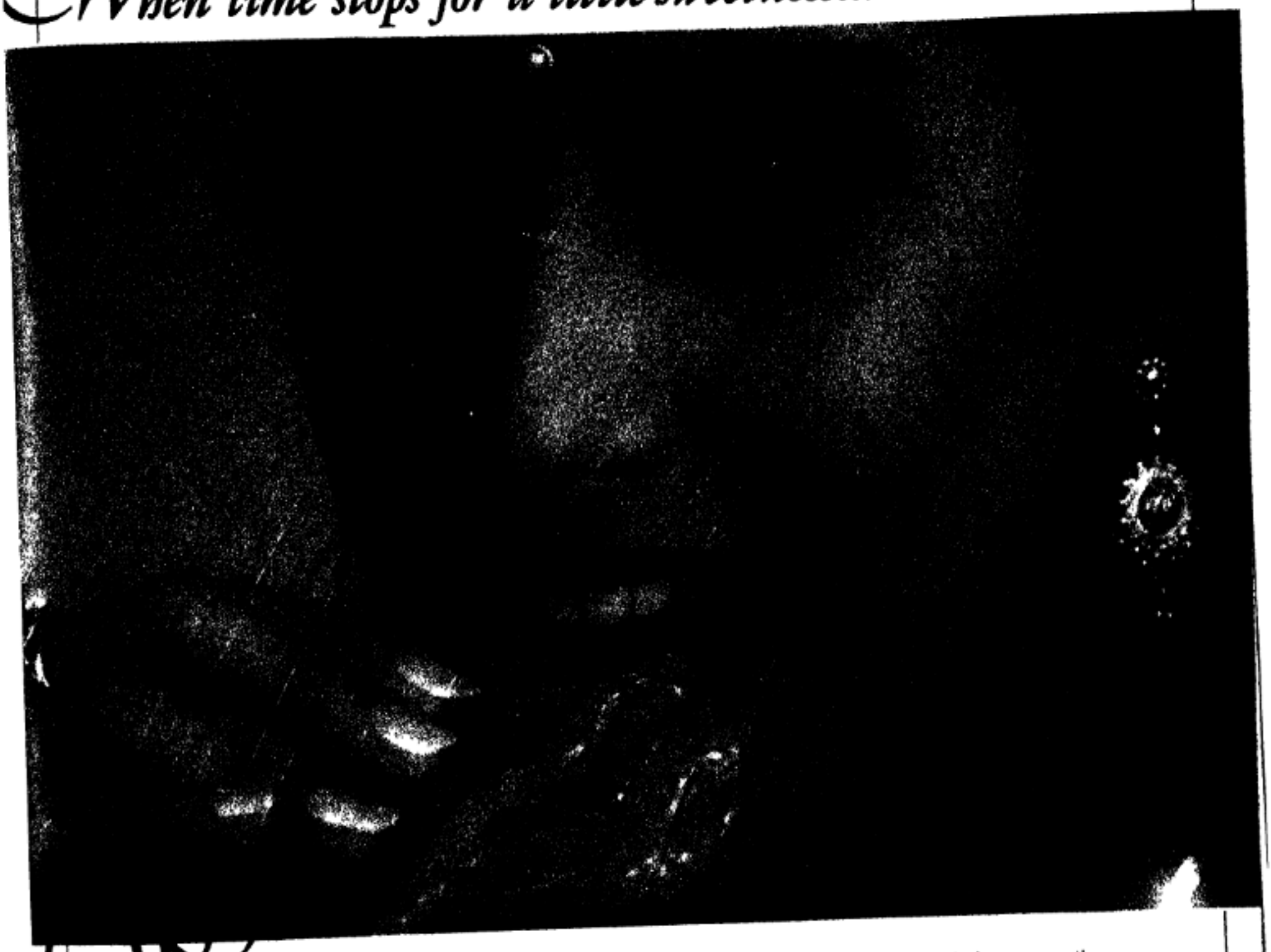


Devi Lal: helping a friend

tion. Whatever the truth, Joshi has become very close to the Jat peasant leader of late. Recently, the Haryana information and publicity department distributed photographs to various newspapers, of Devi Lal and Joshi, which were taken at an Opposition rally. The cynics believe that this is the first step taken by Devi Lal to launch the *Jansatta* editor as a public figure.

bajaj group

When time stops for a little sweetness...



We are there to share those moments with you.

Bajaj Hindusthan brings you the finest sugar crystals manufactured from sun-kissed sugarcane.

With an expertise perfected over 50 years from one of India's foremost sugar manufacturing units, has enabled Bajaj Hindusthan to crush 12 lakh tonnes of sugarcane annually by working in close harmony with 60,000 farmers.

Keeping you in close touch with the best things in life everyday in everyway!

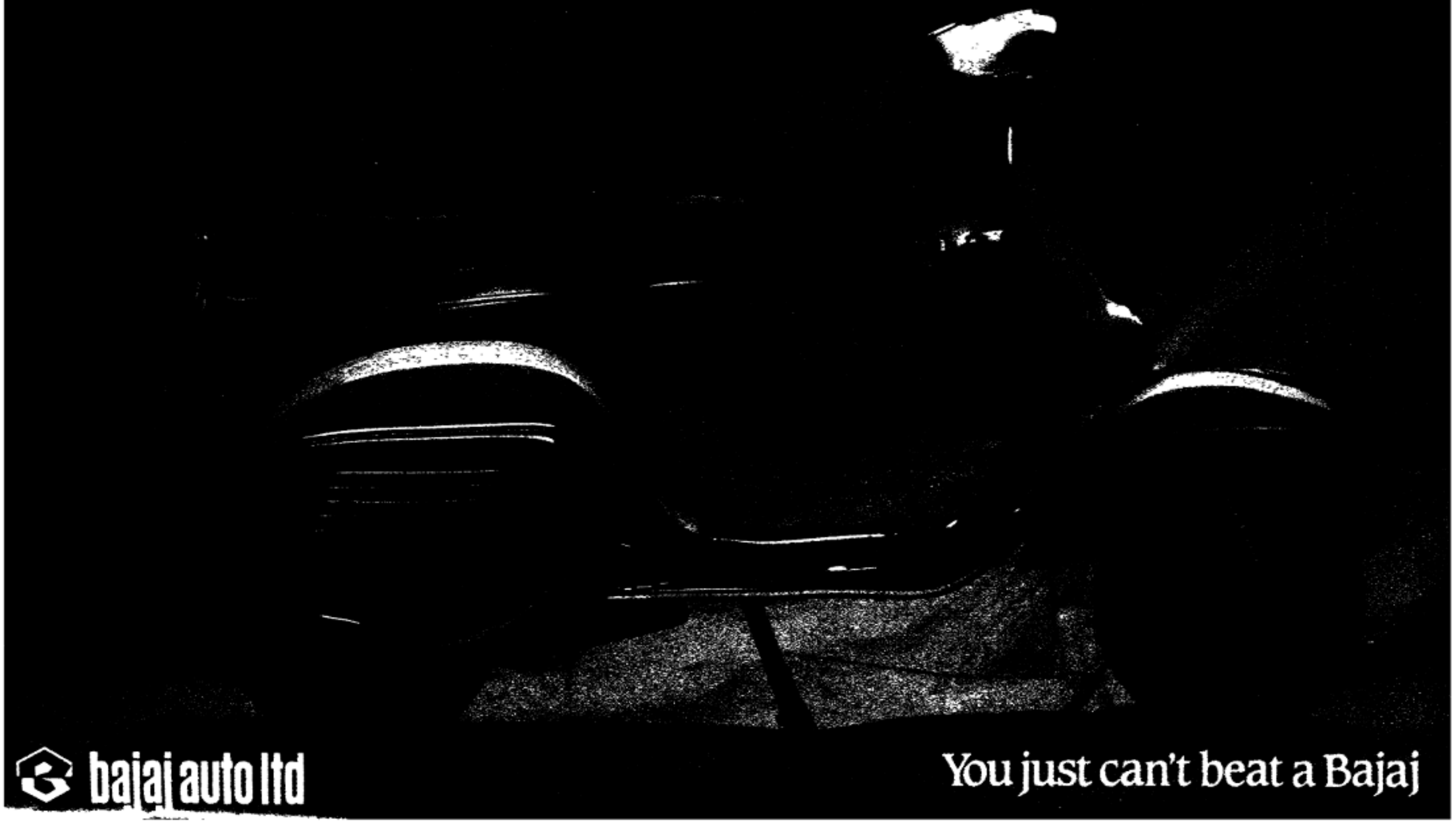
bajaj hindusthan ltd.
(SUGAR DIVISION)

Sweetening an entire generation.

Heros BH-34

Savings Account

(Saves on price, fuel, maintenance bills, spare part costs, service charges...)

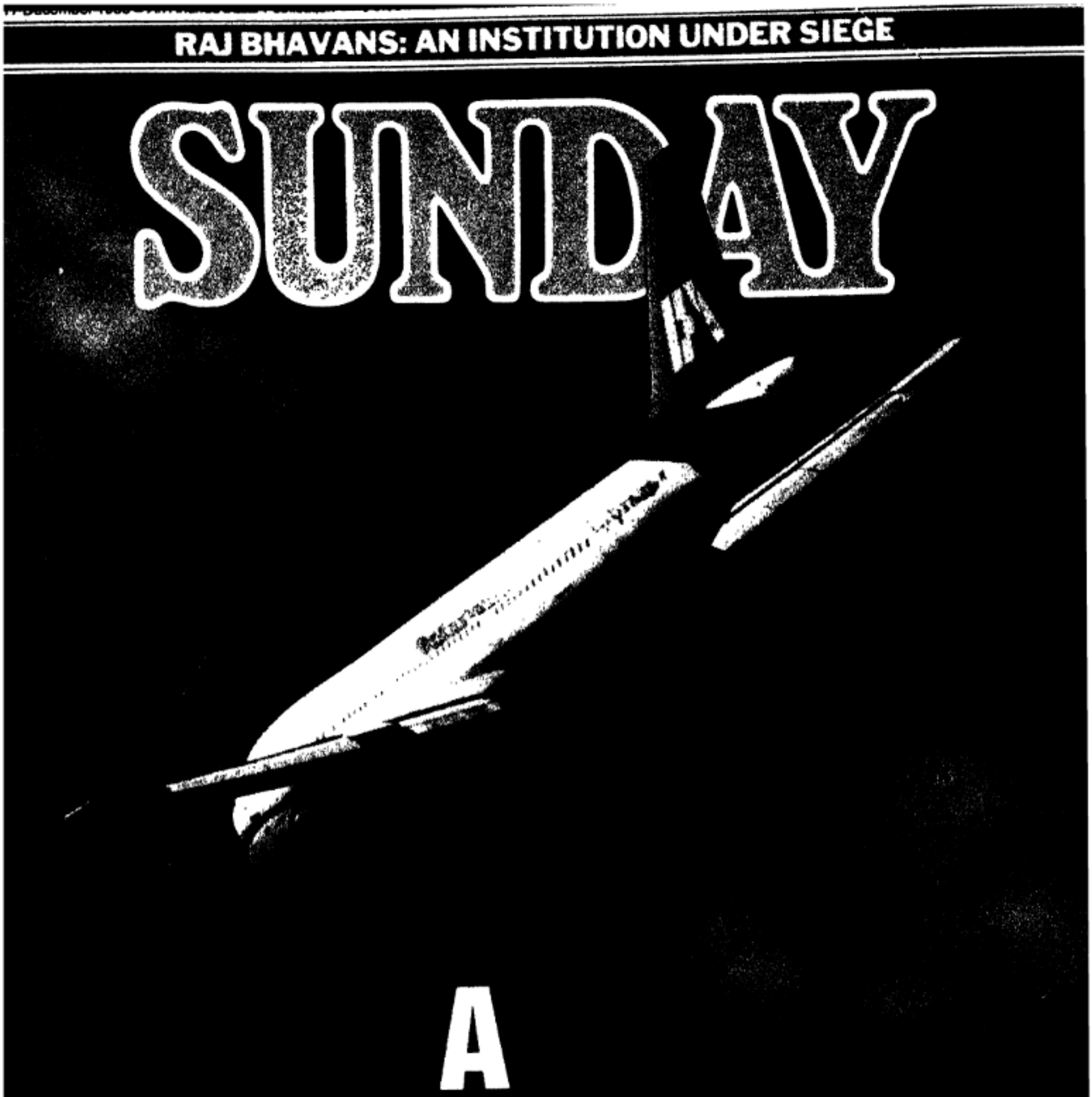


bajaj auto ltd

You just can't beat a Bajaj

RAJ BHAVANS: AN INSTITUTION UNDER SIEGE

SUNDAY



A NATIONAL DISGRACE

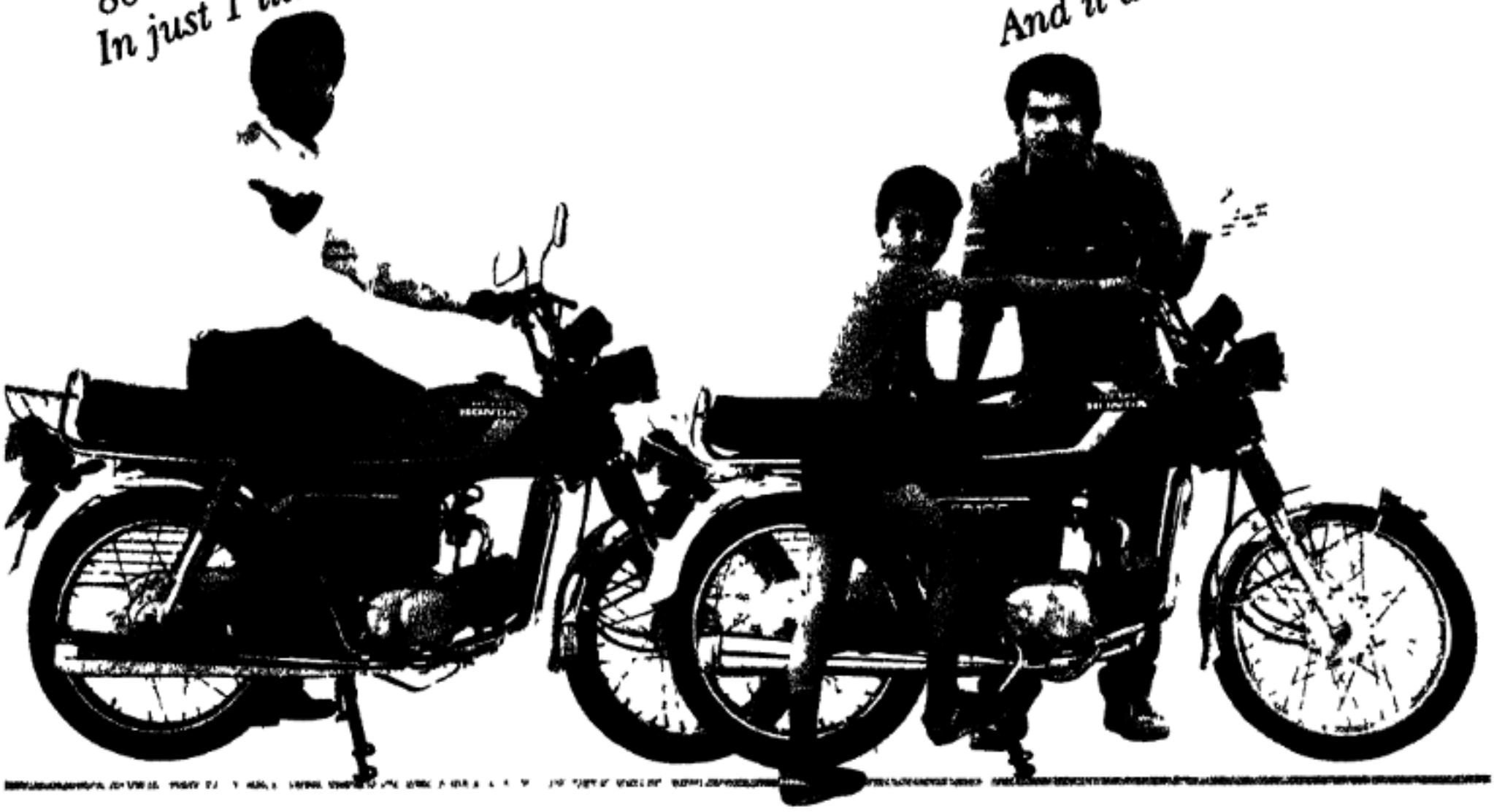
Cancelled flights, delays, crashes, indifferent service. Can Indian Airlines get any worse?

You can't stop a man on a Hero Honda.

From talking.

"An amazing 80 kilometres. In just 1 litre".

"It's a real easy rider, strong and comfortable. And it doesn't smoke!"



When we launched the Hero Honda CD 100 in 1985, we knew it was a good thing. A fact confirmed by the owners.

Some are moved by the economy (80 km/litre*). Some by the easy maintenance. Others by the name of Honda. And all exult in the riding pleasure of India's only 4-stroke 100 cc bike. Honda engineering—Hero's choice.

In all, 200,000 happy owners, each with his own reason for feeling good. To all of you, we can say one thing. You've got a good thing going.

All said and done...

You've got a Good thing Going!

HERO HONDA

** At 40 kmph/130 kg*

HTA.6170

CONTENTS

VOLUME 16 □ ISSUE 2 □ RS 6 00

SUNDAY

AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

11—17 DECEMBER 1988

COVER STORY **28**

A NATIONAL DISGRACE

Thousands of passengers are inconvenienced every week because of cancelled flights, interminable delays, frequent crashes and an indifferent service. Can Indian Airlines get any worse? A report.

SPECIAL REPORT **12**

GOVERNORS UNDER SIEGE

In Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, the Governors are under attack from the respective chief ministers. And it is not the first time that the two offices have been at loggerheads.

CONVERSATION **24**

'I CAN HELP THE CONGRESS TO WIN'

Kanshi Ram, the Bahujan Samaj Party leader, claims that his party will play a key role in the forthcoming elections.



Rajesh Kumar

NEWSBEAT **40**

MARXISTS AND THE MEDIA

Does the ruling CPI(M) in West Bengal consider the media as an adversary? While its leaders make no bones about their dislike of a leading Calcutta-based daily, its cadres have unleashed a violent campaign against a Siliguri-based Bengali daily. A report.



Page 28



Sandeep Bhatia

Page 38

COMMENT

Letters 6
Byline M.J. Akbar 8
Sight and Sound 11
On the line Kuldip Nayar 22
Business Diary 62

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Random Notes 86
Delhi Diary 90

Cover [illegible]: N. Prasad
Cover artwork: Sanjib Bhattacharya

RELIGION **38**

SPLIT IN THE DOME

The Babri Masjid Coordination Committee which has spearheaded the liberation movement in Ayodhya, has split into two factions.

INDEPTH **19**

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

The Prime Minister's office has prepared a programme to take democracy to the villages. But will the plan ever take off?

PROFILE **66**

Controversial legal luminary Ram Jethmalani has hogged the limelight in recent times as the foremost Rajiv-baiter.

ART **48**

DIFFERENT STROKES

Baroda-based Bhupen Khakhar is more than just a painter. Professionally a chartered accountant, he observes far more

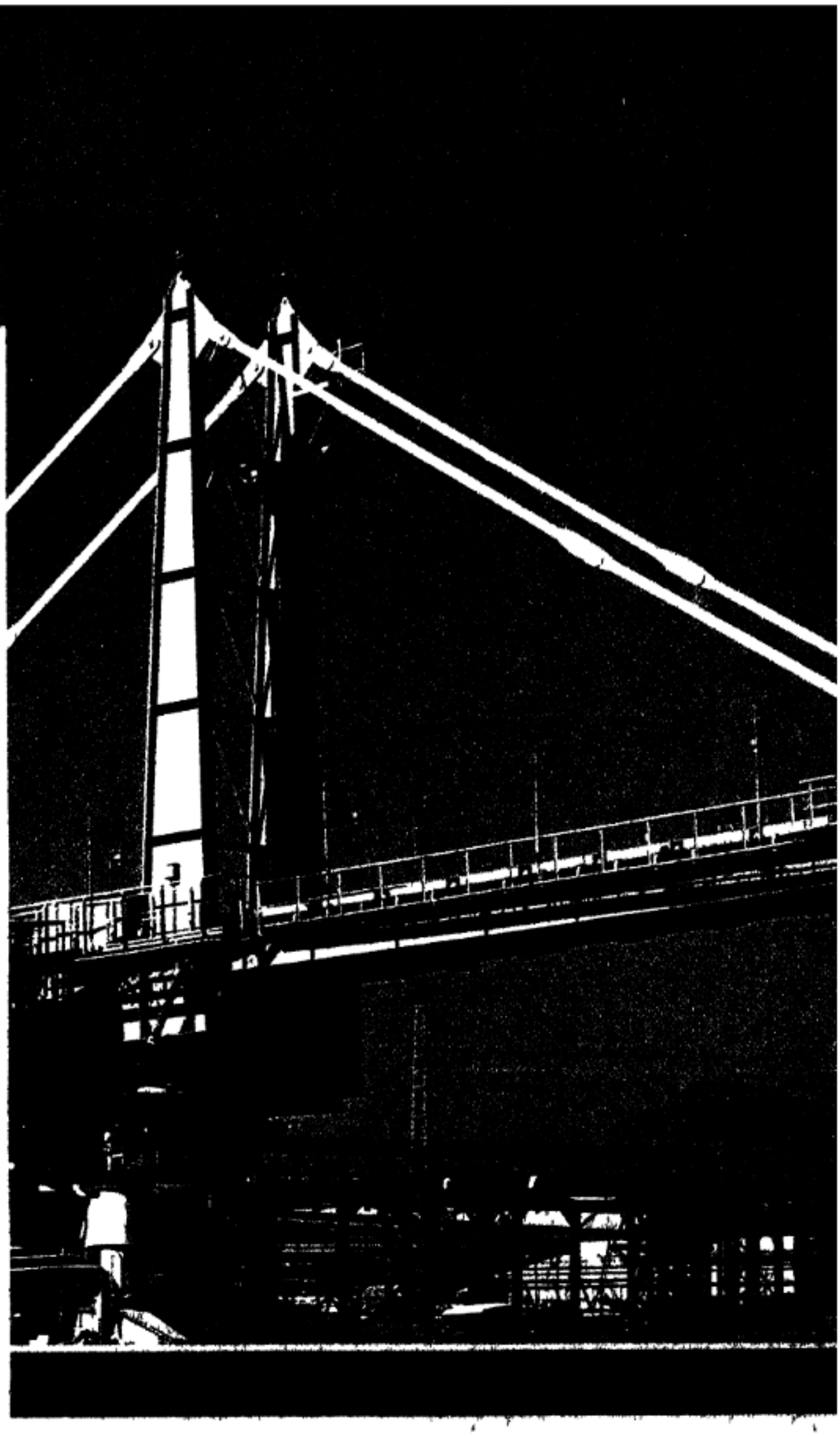


than obvious realities and brings to art a keenly analytical vision.

NEWS **52**

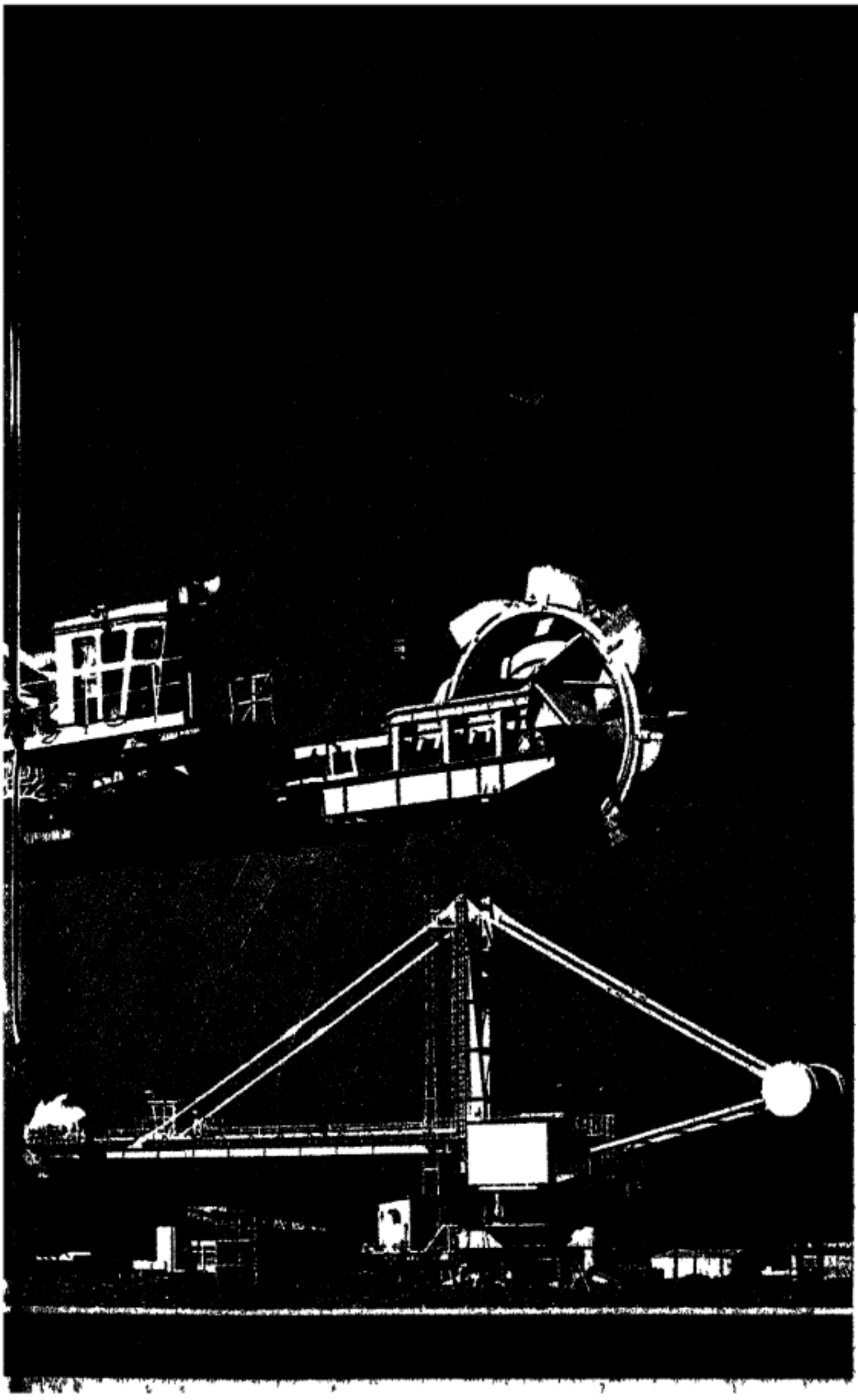
BUSINESS **58**

Sundayweek 82
Odds and Trends 84
Khaas Baat 87
Spotlight 88



Consistency

The ability to keep manufacturing high-performance, rugged products. Giant bucket wheel excavators, reclaimers, stackers, spreaders, conveyor systems, transport crawlers, mobile transfer conveyors, paddle feeders, mobile crushers and crushing plants. With our turnkey projects too, (and Neyveli is an example) our consistency is so valued by our existing clients, that virtually all their repeat orders come to us Consistency in quality and performance and the backing of Krupp, West Germany. A few small reasons for our reputed capabilities.



BUCKAU WOLF
More than engineers People with a sense of values

KRUPP
Buckau Wolf with Krupp technology



The conspiracy

Yours was the first magazine to state that Attinder Pal Singh was involved in Indira Gandhi's assassination (*The third man*, 20 - 26 November). Many unknown facts about the case have been brought to light. Sikh extremists, angered by Operation Bluestar, masterminded the conspiracy to do away with the late Prime Minister. If a place of worship is turned into an armoury, then authorities have no option but to exterminate the extremists for the sake of the country. Mrs Gandhi's decision to flush out Sikh terrorists from the Golden Temple was a decision of the entire nation. A thorough investigation is needed to bring out more details.

B.N. Bose, Jamshedpur (Bihar)

■ Your cover story was interesting. Many unknown facts about the Indira Gandhi assassination case were revealed. The article states that Kehar Singh faces a death sentence for masterminding the conspiracy. However, the report does not mention anywhere how exactly he was involved in the case.

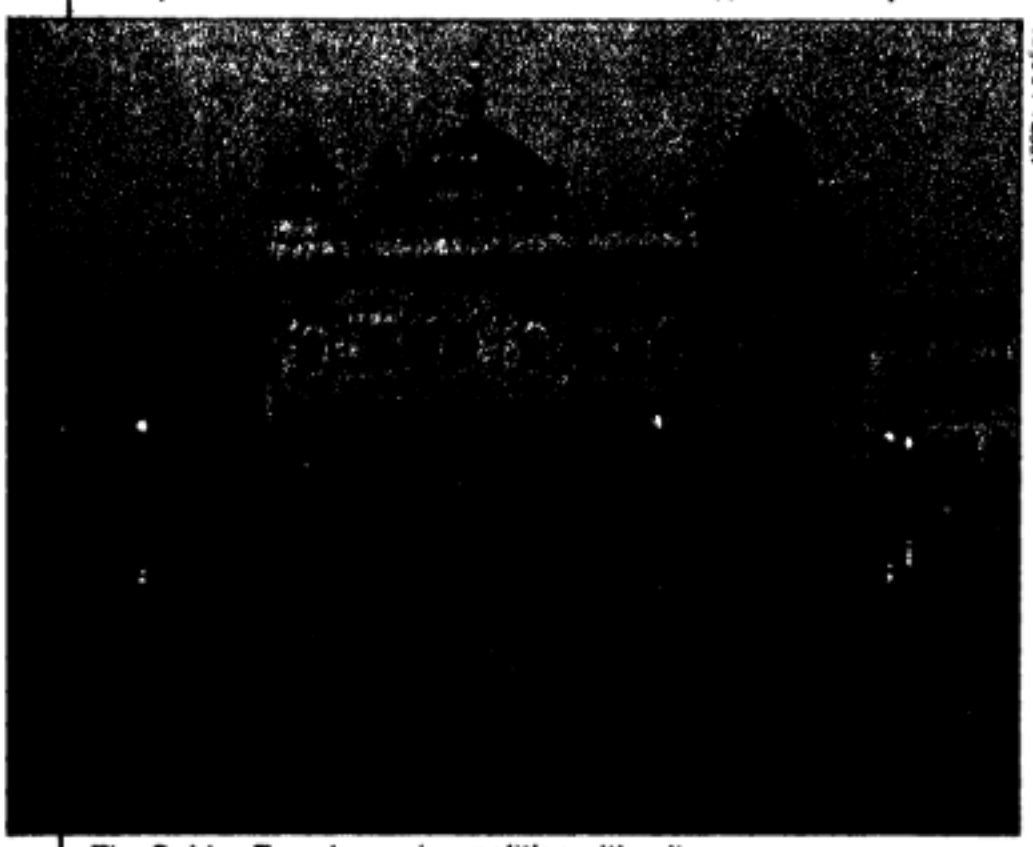
Sneha Suresh, Salem (Tamil Nadu)

Not so clean

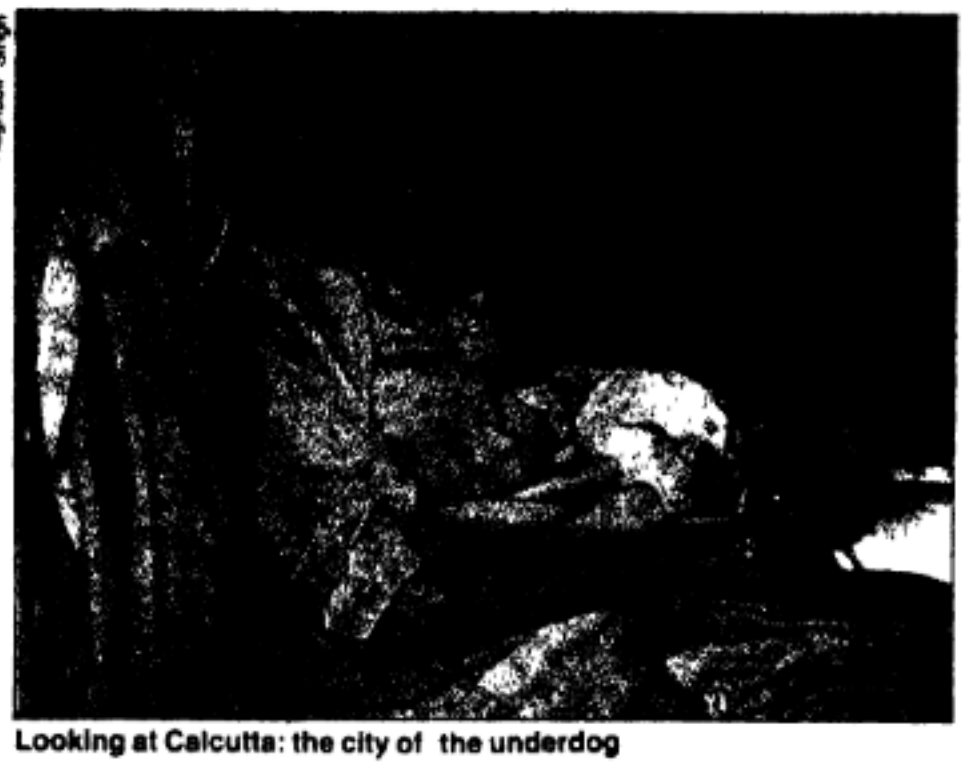
Apropos the special report (*A reputation under siege*, 20 - 26 November), it is really ironical that the Left Front government which had until recently boasted of an unblemished reputation in the state and called the government at the Centre a paradigm of corruption, has itself been implicated in three major scandals. If Jyoti Basu was charged with nepotism in the Bengal Lamp case, the latest one is that of despotism. Why did the state government totally disregard the objections raised by the transport and finance ministries and hand over money to the British shareholders of the Calcutta Tram Company?

Second, why was the government so enthusiastic about protecting the interests of CTC's foreign shareholders? Whatever may have been his role in the whole controversy, Jyoti Basu would do well to order a judicial probe into the matter.

Partha Dutta, Calcutta (West Bengal)



The Golden Temple: mixing politics with religion



Raghubir Singh

Looking at Calcutta: the city of the underdog

Through the lens

The photofeature was a vivid portrayal of the city (*Calcutta revisited*, 20—26 November). The picture of a rickshaw-puller bending under the weight of his dreary existence raised an important question: isn't it time the charismatic chief minister replaced the hand-pulled rickshaws with cycle rickshaws? Jyoti Basu should take a leaf out of the book of the former chief minister of Tamil Nadu, C.N. Annadurai, who had banned manual rickshaws from the roads of Madras more than ten years ago. Can we look forward to a 21st century when the 'city of joy' will be without its inhuman hand-pulled rickshaws?

N.P. Kalyanam, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

Unconvincing

Congratulations for the Rajiv Gandhi interview (*Plain speaking*, 13—19 November). The Prime Minister's answers on the whole were far from satisfactory. In the Bofors case, he suggests that the kickbacks might have been paid for some genuine work. He should have mentioned this possibility in Parliament instead of categorically stating that no middlemen and kickbacks were involved in the Bofors deal. It is also quite amazing how intelligence



Rajiv Gandhi: cornered

agencies like RAW and CBI have not been able to resolve the Bofors tangle. Rajiv Gandhi,no doubt, has once again tried to prove that the corruption charges against him are false, but failed as he has always done.

M. Surendra Babu, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

■ The 24-page interview was a waste of time and valuable newsprint. Even after making strenuous efforts to go through the interview, one remains as confused as before. No doubt SUNDAY has sold a large number of copies because of the interview but has it enlightened anyone?

V. Sagar, New Delhi

■ The events of 1987 together with the number of allegations levelled against the Prime Minister have given the Opposition ample scope to discredit the government at the Centre. If Rajiv Gandhi wants to create a strong and economically stable country, he must first deal with the current problems and bring about radical changes in his policies. This alone can thwart the efforts of the Opposition to overthrow his government.

Arjun Parthasarathy, Madras (Tamil Nadu)

Nehru and Kashmir

M. J. Akbar states that Nehru did not wish to take any risks as far as Kashmir was concerned (*The Nehrus*, 6—12 November). Nehru had already committed a blunder when he did not heed the request of his military officers and call for a ceasefire. Was the blunder a result of listening to Mountbatten's advice? Will it be too much to state that Pandit Nehru was more interested in personal relations than in political realities concerning the country? When Jammu and Kashmir sought India's help in 1947 when Pakistan attacked the valley, India agreed to send troops only after the accession of the state. Why did Nehru agree to a special status for Kashmir? Shouldn't he have realised that Sheikh Abdullah was not in favour of joining Pakistan only because his aim was to be prime minister of an independent Kashmir?

Sheikh Abdullah was never interested in secularism. He tried to keep the pro-Pakistani elements alive only to hold it as a pressure against India.

B.R. Nanda, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)



Rekha: a class apart

Among the best

SUNDAY deserves to be congratulated for the well-written feature (*The great survivor*, 30 October—4 November). Rekha belongs to the distinguished group of actresses who can carry a film entirely on their own. This rare quality has helped her in outshining her contemporaries like Zeenat Aman, Yogeeta Bali and Hema Malini and even facing the challenge of newcomers like Sonam, Madhuri and Mandakini. Films like *Umrao Jaan, Ghar, Khubsoorat* and *Khoon Bhari Maang* bear testimony to this ability. Rekha can indeed be ranked with Nargis, Suraiya and Madhubala.

Tanmoy Ghosh and Misty Basu, Calcutta (West Bengal)

Wooing the Tamils

The article made interesting reading (*The southern offensive*, 13—20 November). I hope, for the sake of Tamil Nadu, that gawkers don't make voters. Rajiv Gandhi should refrain from making comments like the DMK is "sitting on the laps of Hindi *wallahs*".

At the moment Rajiv Gandhi is busy making empty promises. Just because his position is being threatened in the Hindi belt, the PM is trying to woo the Tamil masses. I sincerely hope that Tamil Nadu does not fall prey to this age-old trick!

Samir Mahajan, New Delhi

Immature

The columnist appears to have overlooked the repercussions of reducing the voting age from 21 to 18 years (*On the line*, 13—19 November). As he has written, the number of voters would increase by 4.48 crores. But will these youngsters, mainly students, be mature enough to take such decisions? If the government accepts the decision at all, then politics and politicians will soon find their way into schools and colleges. The columnist must realise that we have no right to play with the careers of people on whose shoulders the future of our country lies.



Sujit Ghosh

Power of the ballot

Rajib Das, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

■ The proposal to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18 years is a good one. It will give a chance to more Indians to choose their representatives. Reducing the voting age to 18 years will bring about an 11 per cent increase in the number of voters. A similar proposal was forwarded in the past too, but the Election Commission did not think it was important.

Prashant R. Deshmukh, Akola (Maharashtra)

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

The Circulation Manager(U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta 700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

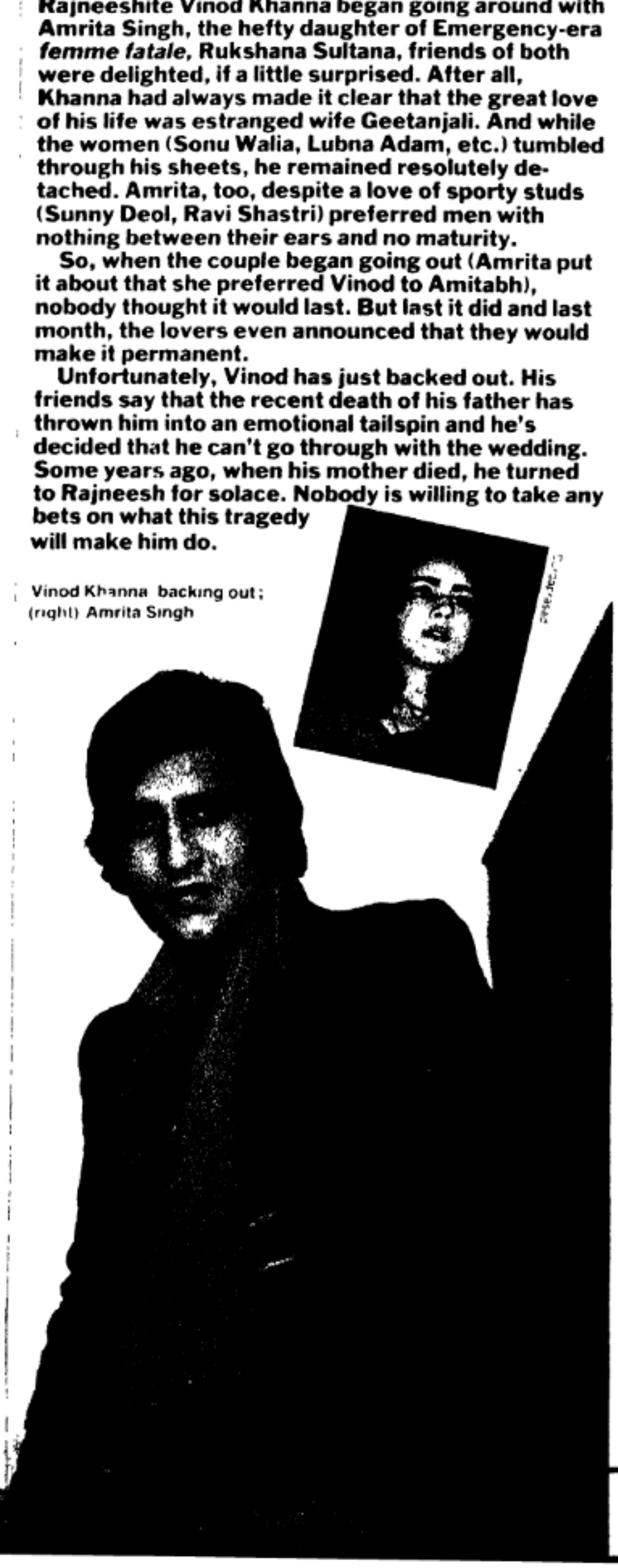
No wedding bells, after all

● It was too good to last. When befuddled former Rajneeshite Vinod Khanna began going around with Amrita Singh, the hefty daughter of Emergency-era *femme fatale*, Rukshana Sultana, friends of both were delighted, if a little surprised. After all, Khanna had always made it clear that the great love of his life was estranged wife Geetanjali. And while the women (Sonu Walia, Lubna Adam, etc.) tumbled through his sheets, he remained resolutely detached. Amrita, too, despite a love of sporty studs (Sunny Deol, Ravi Shastri) preferred men with nothing between their ears and no maturity.

So, when the couple began going out (Amrita put it about that she preferred Vinod to Amitabh), nobody thought it would last. But last it did and last month, the lovers even announced that they would make it permanent.

Unfortunately, Vinod has just backed out. His friends say that the recent death of his father has thrown him into an emotional tailspin and he's decided that he can't go through with the wedding. Some years ago, when his mother died, he turned to Rajneesh for solace. Nobody is willing to take any bets on what this tragedy will make him do.

Vinod Khanna backing out; (right) Amrita Singh





S S. Ray football diplomacy

Game for peace

● It is said about Bengalis that when in doubt, they do one of two things go on strike or play football. Siddhartha Shankar Ray, the high profile Governor of Punjab, obviously can't go on strike to protest the mounting terrorist violence But as for football, .well, that's another matter entirely

Ray still remembers how, as chief minister of West Bengal, he broke the back of the Naxalite movement by promoting football fanaticism He went to such lengths to do this that in 1973, he didn't even let the state team play in an international tournament in Malaysia for fear that its absence from Bengal might lead to a recurrence of violence.

Now, Ray's trying the same trick in Punjab. After persistent lobbying, he has got the Centre to agree to host the 1989 National Games there He believes that in the excitement of a major sporting event, the Sikhs will forget about the violence and cheer the games instead

Perhaps. But in Punjab, hockey may work better than football

A noble cause

● *He's not quite the Nawab of Pataudi, but old Imran Khan does okay with the British aristocracy Last month, the Pakistan cricket captain was co-host of the first-ever Rain Forest Ball in London. The other hosts (in their case, hostesses) were the blue-blooded Marchioness of Worcester and actress Tracy Ward*

The ball was held at the trendy Hippodrome disco to benefit Friends of the Earth who will use the money raised (£100,000) to save African rain forests. It was attended by the usual crowd of Hooray Henrys and Sloane Rangers including a smattering of young royals, among them Viscount Linley (parents: Lord Snowdon and Princess Margaret) and Lady Helen Windsor (parents: the Duke and Duchess of Kent).

Meanwhile, back in the subcontinent, there's much speculation about Khan's standing with the new Pakistani regime. After all, he was Zia's favourite and the General even paid for his medical treatment abroad Will this turn Benazir against the Pathan? Maybe But then, Miss Bhutto and the Khan were also contemporaries at Oxford



Chief minister in a jam

● Asked how he liked children, W.C. Fields retorted: "boiled". Farooq Abdullah, the ebullient chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, recently had reason to echo those sentiments. At a recent seminar of Traffic Safety Week, everything droned according to plan till a schoolgirl was asked, a little condescendingly, if she would like to contribute to the discussion.

She did, indeed, and spent the next quarter of an hour tearing into traffic conditions in Kashmir: overcrowded minibuses, eve-teasing, etc. In fact, she said, the situation had improved while Governor Jagmohan ran things, but once



Farooq Abdullah embarrassed

Abdullah came to power, it was back to square one.

The schoolgirl's frankness broke the floodgates and while an embarrassed Abdullah squirmed in his seat, speaker after speaker lambasted the state government's handling of the traffic situation. Finally, the chief minister attempted to play the benevolent despot. Would schoolgirls like him to reserve some seats in buses for them? He was rebuffed: "We want equality not favour."

Entertaining la Gorbacheva

● *Her admirers call her 'Hip' because she's always so smart and well-turned-out. Her enemies call her "Hippo" because of what they see as an overbearing nature. Congress MP Najma Heptullah is the party's reigning glamour girl.*

Najma's latest triumph came during the visit of the Gorbachevs to Delhi, when the only function that Raisa Gorbacheva attended on her own was a tea party organised by Hip.

The excuse was a tête-à-tête between members of the editorial board of Haman Geshtu, a Russian-sponsored propaganda sheet of which Hip is the editor. The real reason, of course, was for la Heptullah to show how well-connected she was.

All went well till Raisa, whose diplomatic skills are on par with Kalpnath Rai's, demanded to know why an English language magazine had a Hindi title. At this, Hip fumbled for an answer and finally said "Oh, well, a Hindi edition is on its way."

No doubt, the next time,



Najma Heptullah: thrown off balance

the Gorbachevs are here, Najma will have a new excuse for a party - to launch the Hindi edition, of course.



Imran Khan a hit with the aristocracy

Taking *glasnost* too far

● When Rajiv Gandhi ushered in an era of *glasnost* in Doordarshan, his minions were quick to point out that their leader had taken a leaf out of Mikhail Gorbachev's book. But at last month's closing ceremony for the Russian festival, both Gandhi and Gorbachev seemed to realise that there was, perhaps, such a thing as taking *glasnost* too far.

Comrade Mikhail, despite his oft-expressed love of all things Indian, was clearly ill at ease because of our homegrown flies. Or, more specifically, a particular fly. As the festivities got under way, Gorbachev spent all his time swatting away a persistent fly that appeared to find his cherubic features irresistible. The battle of the general secretary and the fly was relayed live, coast to coast, by Doordarshan's cameramen who, periodically, zoomed in for close-up reports from the war zone.

The network's commitment to truth and fairness also led its alert camera unit to focus lovingly on Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, a gesture of aesthetic homage that would have been entirely in keeping with Doordarshan's oft-expressed independence—had Rajiv not dozed off during the performance.

All in all, is it any wonder that the Prime Minister thinks that after all this *glasnost* rubbish, it's time for a bit of good old Brezhnevism on television? ◘

New-found eloquence

After four years of being Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi is finally hitting his stride as a speech-maker. His problem is that he's most comfortable in English and when he has to speak in Hindi, he resorts to *nam-vaad-aavegi*-type rhetoric or (groan!) *hame dekhna ham.* But in recent months the English speeches have improved considerably.

At Madras last month, he tore into the National Front, describing it as a grouping "without principle, without programmes and without policies". It is, he said, not so much a National Front as (pause) "a National affront"

Great stuff. At this rate, perhaps it is Rajiv who should have been elected secretary of the Cambridge Union!

Meanwhile, all this new-found eloquence has completely thrown the Opposition. Asked if the National



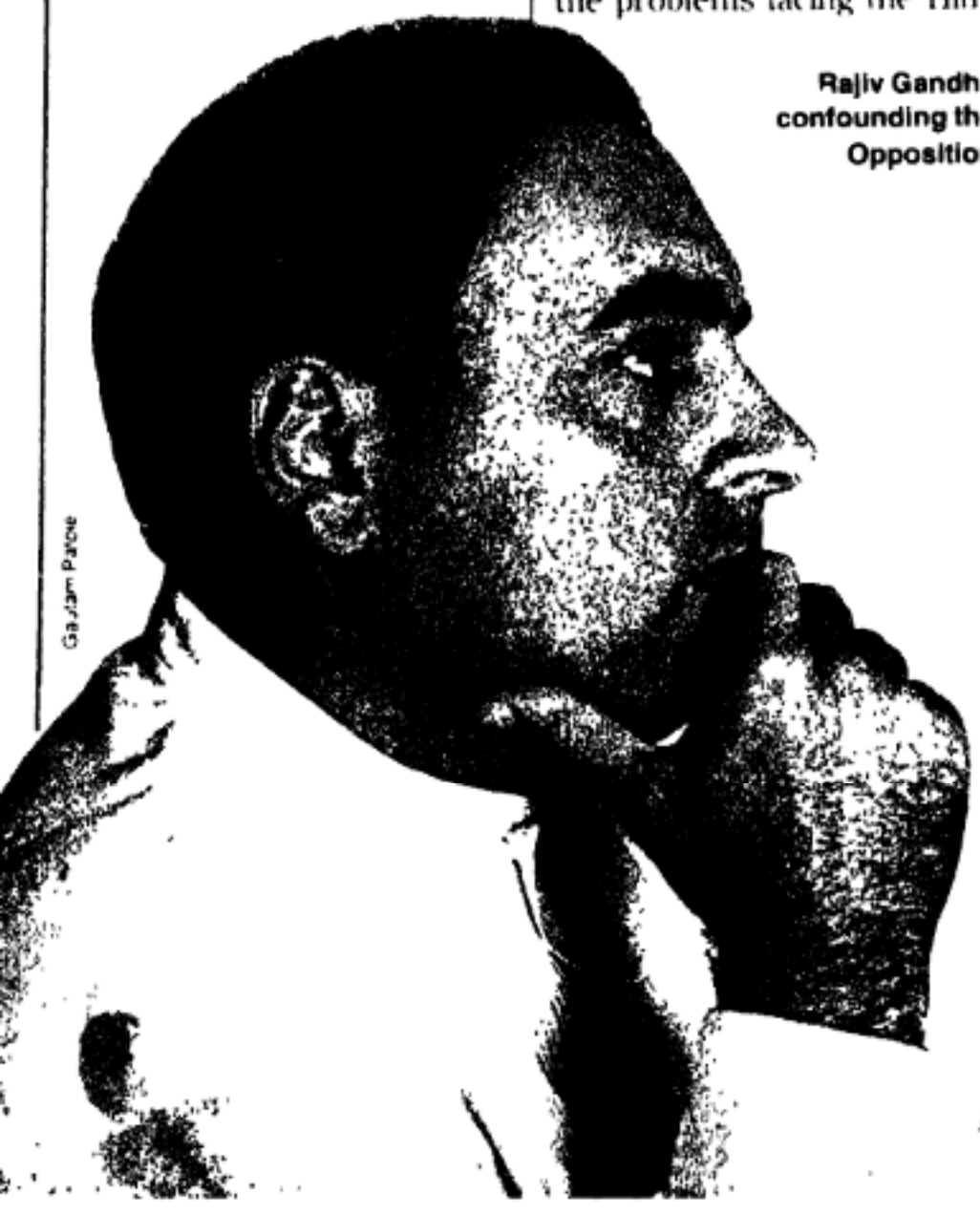
Satish Sharma: fresh accusations

Front was indeed an affront, N.T. Rama Rao fumed: "It is the Prime Minister's fault. He is politicising the issue."

Obviously, NTR believes that the nation's leading Opposition party has nothing to do with politics!

Diversionary tactics

The *Express*' decision to attack them is just one of the problems facing the Hin-



Rajiv Gandhi: confounding the Opposition

dujas. In the aftermath of Bofors, the podgy Sindhis descended on the Prime Minister's office, hung around Race Course Road, and finally got Satish 'Marble Tile' Sharma to convey to Rajiv that the Hinduja millions would take care of everything. (Satish, of course, did this for free.)

The Hindubugs claimed that they would manage Ram Jethmalani so that he wouldn't ask any embarrassing questions. (They did He's been very quiet this year.) They also said that they had "taken care" of N. Ram of *The Hindu*. This was a preposterous claim, but when *The Hindu* printed no new Bofors documents for six months, the brothers said this was due to their efforts.

Then, last month, it all came badly unstuck. *The Hindu* printed lots of new documents It also reproduced Martin Ardbo's diary which showed how the former Bofors president had master minded the cover-up along with G.P Hinduja. Then, Jethmalani held a press conference in which he suggested that Satish and Soma had pocketed the Bofors money.

The regime is now hopping mad with the brothers. It is especially angered by the suggestion that in the wake of *The Hindu* disclosures, the Hindujas put Jethmalani, their kept politician, up to implicating Sonia as a means of diverting attention from them. (Jethmalani also involved the Hindubugs' liaison man, Satish Sharma, but the Captain lacks the brains to realise that he's been made a fool of.)

Nevertheless, the brothers are confident that no action will be taken against them, even though the Swedish prosecutor has authenticated *The Hindu* documents.

What is the basis for this confidence?

Taking on the Hindujas

At last, the gloves are off. After months of pussy-footing, S. Gurumurthy, one of three people in India who understands Bofors, has finally decided to take on the Hindujas. In what must rank as one of the finest pieces of explanatory journalism on the Bofors affair, the lawyer-cum-accountant-cum-investigative reporter took over the front page of the *Indian Express* to demonstrate how all the evidence that has so far been unear-



Ramnath Goenka. astonishing turnaround

thed leads inexorably to one conclusion: the Hindujas have taken the money and will get away with it.

For Ramnath Goenka to allow Gurumurthy to say this in his paper represents an astonishing turnaround. So far, the mercurial proprietor has called everybody else names, but has refused to allow his good buddies (and benefactors?), the Hindujas, to be attacked in the *Express*.

Now, the old boy has finally decided that the Hindubugs can't be allowed to get away with it and has sanctioned pieces critical of them.

Tiles with a splash of romance



SPARTEK SENSATIONS

Attractive new size
305 mm. × 152.5 mm.

INTRODUCING

THE Rain Song SERIES

Soft, gentle rain. Sensuous. Evocative. The romance of rain captured on a tile. The Spartek Rain Song Series. In three subtle shades to add magic to the mood

SPARTEK

[illegible] Road, Madras 600 025

SUNDAY WEEKLY 11 DECEMBER 1988 REGD NO
WB/CC 256 TN/MS (C) 376 MH BY SOUTH-680



Winning nine times cannot be sheer chance.



At Sholapur, Ahmedabad, Karavali, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Mysore, Nagpur and Dhrangadhra. And the Earth to Sky Himalayan Expedition.

Effortlessly, the Narmada 150 Prince won Over nine different terrains

Narmada 150 Prince
Powerful 150cc engine
That delivers sheer power and dependable toughness 42 Kms per litre fuel efficiency under city riding conditions And a safe 1200 mm wide wheelbase

Narmada 150 Prince. Powerful, economical, stable and dependable.

Gujarat Narmada Auto Limited
(A wholly owned subsidiary of GNFC)
Narmadanagar 392 015 Dist Bharuch Gujarat

Mudra A GNAL 4448



18—24 December 1988 □ An Ananda Bazar Publication □ Rs 6 00

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT: BOMBAY'S GANG WARS

SUNDAY



Vijay Mallya



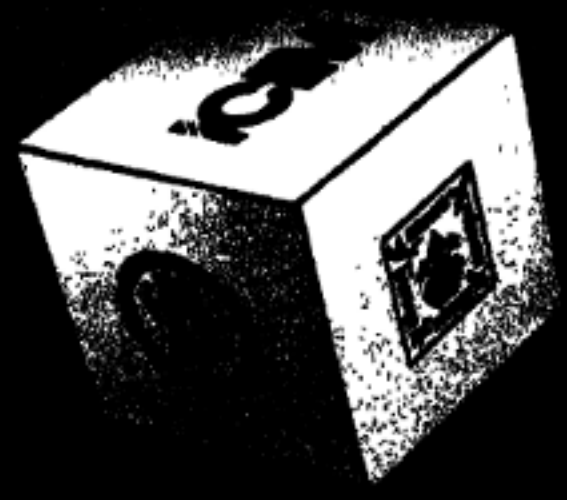


Rama Prasad Goenka



Dhirubhai Ambani

Industrial empires are created and destroyed as an aggressive breed of tycoons launches a take-over war







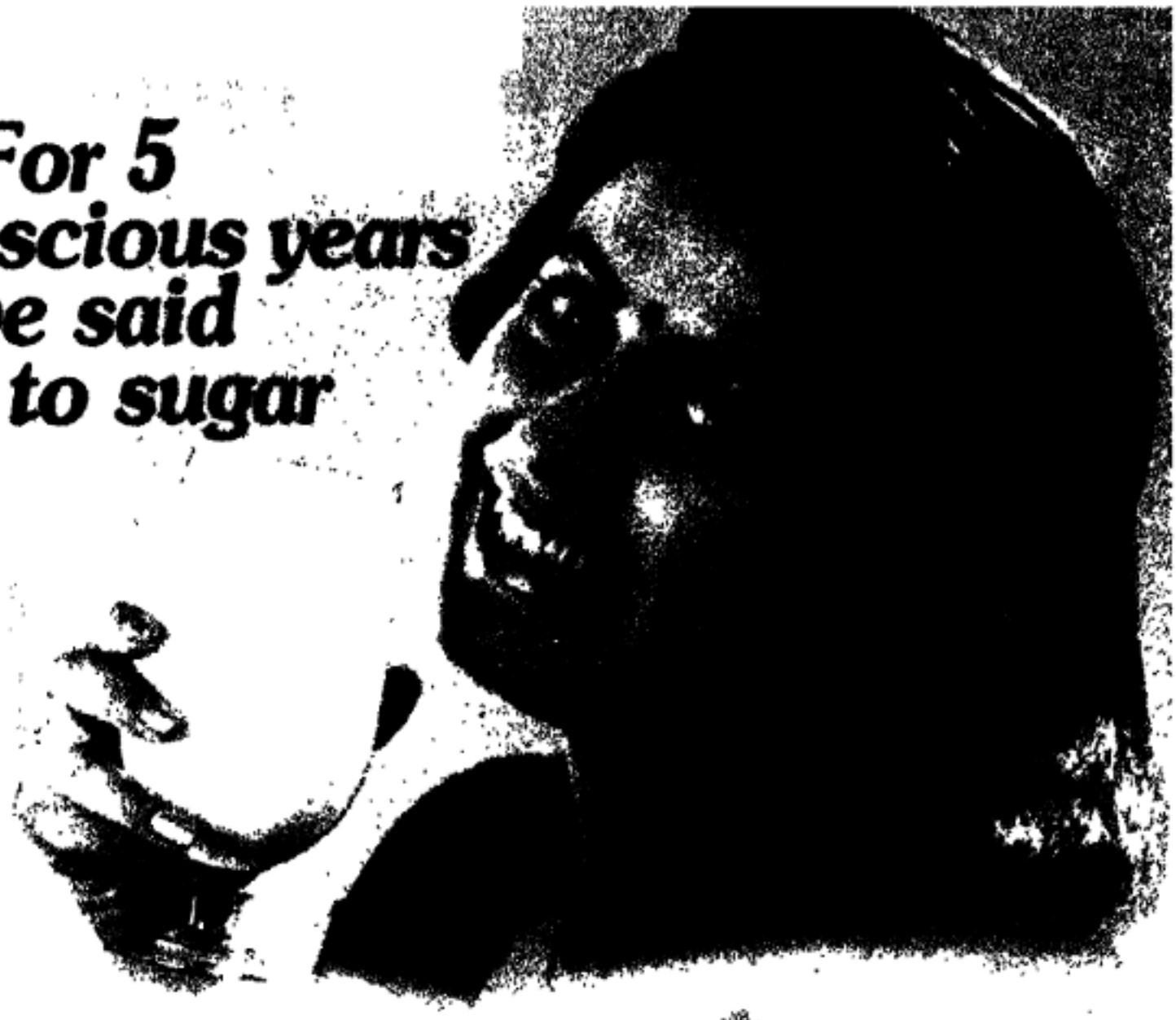
Manu Chhabria



Darbari Seth

THE TAKE-OVER TYCOONS

For 5 diet-conscious years I've said 'NO' to sugar



Now I SAY YES! to Sugar free

It's not saccharin.
It tastes just like sugar!

I have not had my favourite
sweet lassi for years.
Watching my weight, you
know! Now, I can have sweet
lassi, tea, coffee, even
home-made sweets.
Thanks to SUGAR FREE.

No saccharin.
No bitter after-taste!

Unlike other sugar substitutes, SUGAR FREE is formulated from two amino acids. It is therefore metabolized by the body in the same way as any natural protein. No carcinogenic side-effects.

No bitter after-taste like saccharin



Only SUGAR FREE has the natural taste of sugar without

sweeteners. It tastes just like sugar.

- Cut the calories! Two tabs of SUGAR FREE (equal to 2 teaspoons of sugar) contain just 0.8 calories as against 40 calories in sugar. Ideal for weightwatchers, calorie counters and diabetics.

SUGAR FREE is India's first non-saccharin sugar substitute. SUGAR FREE type sweeteners are approved in over 69 countries and are used in thousands of food products including Diet Pepsi and Diet Coke.

Now SUGAR FREE is available to you for the first time with the Cadila stamp of international quality.

Cadila CHEMICALS (P) LTD.

Immedia Aquarius/CC/5/88

CONTENTS

VOLUME 16 ISSUE 3 RS 6.00 **SUNDAY** AN ANANDA BAZAR PUBLICATION

18—24 DECEMBER 1988

COVER STORY **27**

THE TAKE-OVER TYCOONS

Industrial empires are fast changing hands as an aggressive breed of tycoons launch a take-over war. SUNDAY takes a look at the corporate battles

VIDEO **12**

FROM *GLASNOST* TO BREZHNEVISM

After Bhaskar Ghosh's exit from Mandi House, Doordarshan has once again become a propaganda machine of the Congress(I)

POLITICS **16**

A DIVIDED OPPOSITION

The Lok Dal is a divided house and the communists too seem to be disillusioned with V.P. Singh

CONVERSATION **22**

"ALL CHINESE ARE AGGRESSORS"



On the eve of Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China, the Dalai Lama speaks on the future of Tibet.

SPECIAL FEATURE **38**

THE CRIMES, THEY ARE A-CHANGING

It's a bloody free-for-all on the streets of Bombay.

CONTROVERSY **45**

OF SPACE AND STRIFE

The Lalit Kala Akademi studio complex in Garbi is at the centre of a storm.



Page 27



Page 16

COMMENT

Letters 4
Byline M.J. Akbar 8
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 9
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 10
Sight and Sound 11
Bodyline Ravi Shankar 65
Comment Udayan Sharma 85

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Random Notes 89
Delhi Diary 90

Cover artwork: Sandip Bhattacharya

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bijit Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001

Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura 20 paise, North-Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup, Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur, Sonitpur and Dibrugarh districts of Assam 30 paise

NEWS **52**

Surjit Singh Barnala's act of penance, the CPI(M) sets its eyes on Delhi, Ramakrishna Hegde once again finds himself in trouble, and starvation deaths are reported in Assam

FILMS **72**

WHOSE ACT IS IT ANYWAY?

The Central Cine Circuit Association has clamped down on filmstars with an Act which states that no producer should sign on an actor who has more than 12 films on hand. What do the actors, producers and directors feel about the Act?

BOOK EXTRACT **76**

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF THE SERIOUS



In this extract from his book, *The Eloquent Brush*, cartoonist R.K. Laxman takes a look at the world around him.

BUSINESS **60**

NEWSBEAT **82**

WHO'S AFRAID OF JAGANNATH MISHRA?

Everybody it seems, after the former chief minister of Bihar launched the Jan Vikas Manch.

Spotlight 68
Khaas Baat 71
Sundayweek 87
Odds and Trends 88



People's choice

The cover story made interesting reading (*What next?* 27 November - 3 December). The wait has finally ended but the goal is still a long way off. Benazir has shown that determination and hard work can help a person overcome obstacles in one's life. Even though the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) failed to secure an absolute majority, Benazir was always the choice of the masses to head the Pakistani government. Benazir Bhutto can be compared with the late Indira Gandhi and one hopes that the former will prove to be as capable a leader as the latter. Pakistan has laboured under military rule for 41 long years. It is time the country was allowed to breathe freely once again.

Sachchidananda Satpathy, Hirakud (Orissa)

■ Even though there was undue delay in nominating Benazir Bhutto as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, she did emerge the victor and take up where her late father had left off. My best wishes to her and the people of Pakistan.

D.J. Patro, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

■ Pakistan seems to have disowned General Zia and whatever he stood for in the short span of the three months since his death. However, it is quite clear that the army continues to be as strong as before. Benazir might have become the Prime Minister, but she will be at the mercy of the army. Democracy in that country



Benazir Bhutto: mass appeal

will be on probation. Anyway, the country is standing at the crossroads and any new development will be keenly watched by countries all over the world.

V. Sagar, New Delhi

■ I offer my congratulations to the first woman Prime Minister of Pakistan. As a Muslim Premier, Benazir should follow the path of honesty and justice as prescribed by Islamic religion. I wish her success and pray to the Almighty to give her strength and courage to lead her country and make it one of the leading nations of the world.

Tarique Hussain Rizvi, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ Benazir Bhutto's astounding victory in the Pakistan parliamentary elections should be welcomed by all Indians because it is a victory for democracy. The overwhelming support that Benazir received at the hustings shows that the people of Pakistan were by and large fed up of military rule. Her victory will surely open a new chapter in Indo Pak relations.

Khudiram Bhattacharyya, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ The result of the elections had led one to wonder if Benazir would be invited to form the government. One reason for this could be the number of seats that the PPP won - 92 out of 201. Besides, President Ishaq Khan seemed to be undecided about inviting Benazir to become Prime Minister. Assessing the prevailing situation in Pakistan, one can easily conclude that democracy in Pakistan is a far cry.

Rajib Das, Bhubaneswar (Orissa)

■ There are two questions which remain. First, will the fundamentalists in Pakistan tolerate a woman Prime Minister? Second, has Pakistan attained maturity to embrace democracy? All along Pakistan's rulers have encouraged military rule on the assumption that their country was not ready for democracy. Any coalition government in Pakistan will invariably collapse, giving way to dictatorship or military rule. The people of Pakistan will do well to realise the importance of democracy, or else history will push the country two centuries behind. Moreover, Pakistan should stop its hate-India campaign so that both countries can live in peace, which will also enable them to cut down on defence expenditure. And India will be happy to have a democratic neighbour.

U.S Iyer, Bangalore (Karnataka)

Suicide or murder?

I read the article on the death of Devi Lal's granddaughter-in-law with interest (*Death in the family*, 27 November - 3 December). Although there is no conclusive evidence to prove that Supriya's death was a case of homicide, doubts still remain. The haste with which the body was disposed of leaving only a dubious post-mortem report to corroborate the death by accident theory, suggests foul play.

The theory of the gun having accidentally gone off



Supriya Singh: unfortunate end

appears the least credible. How can a gun go off accidentally thrice? Moreover, the idea of conducting the post-mortem at the very place where the death occurred is rather strange. While Om Prakash Chautala, Supriya's father-in-law, says that the body was not touched till her parents arrived, Ramchandra Matoria, father of the deceased, said that on his arriving at Teja Khera, he found the body wrapped in a

quilt. All these questions will perhaps remain unanswered as it has now been taken for granted that the death was caused by accident. Nevertheless a CBI enquiry into the incident should have been ordered.

Kabishekar Purkait, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ The news about the death of Devi Lal's granddaughter-in-law was indeed shocking. What was even more heart-rending was the fact that Supriya was pregnant at the time of her death. I fail to understand how Abhay Singh, the late Supriya's husband, can now get engaged to his own sister-in law who is only 15 years old. The government should come forward and take serious steps to ensure that those guilty of arranging these early marriages are effectively punished.

H. D'Rozario, Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu)

The two Aruns

The article on Arun Singh and Arun Nehru was interesting (*The fall of the two Aruns*, 27 November - 3 December). The fact that the fall of the two Aruns still features as a major story in the media underlines the significance of these two towering personalities in India's political scene. It has been a pleasure knowing the two from close quarters. I think it is wrong to suggest that Arun Singh failed to establish a rapport with the bureaucracy. The secret of his success was that he had the confidence of the bureaucrats. The controversy over whether he had undermined the authority of the bureaucrats *vis-a-vis* the defence personnel is actually a creation of a section of the civilian authority who felt insecure. Arun Singh is a no-nonsense man, and firm and truthful. He is being unnecessarily dragged into the controversy over Operation Brasstacks. Or is it a plot to discredit him?





Arun Nehru (left) and Arun Singh, misunderstandings with the PM

The other Arun is, of course, politically more ambitious. But, then, why not? There is a subtle difference in the meaning of 'power' as defined by the two Aruns. Naturally, Arun Nehru faced greater competition from the career politicians and finally fell prey to the uncertain political scenario within the ruling party. It is, however, wrong to say that Rajiv Gandhi strained his relationship with his cousin by not attending the wedding of Nehru's daughter Radhika.

Whatever be the enduring mysteries, the fact remains that the two Aruns could not have remained as pedagogues of Rajiv Gandhi for long, especially considering that they have no mass following of their own. Yet, even today, the two Aruns can be of great help to Rajiv Gandhi with elections round the corner.

Dipayan Mazumdar, New Delhi

Given out

Mohinder Amarnath is perfectly justified in calling the national selectors a "bunch of jokers" (*Hitting out*, 27 November - 3 December). Keeping in mind his excellent form during the Asia Cup, he should naturally have been given a place in the Indian squad during the Test against New Zealand. If our selectors sidelined 'Jimmy' Amarnath because of his poor performance in the recent past, then what are people like Mohammed Azharuddin and Ravi Shastri doing in the team? Is Azhar still a 'wonder boy' and is Shastri still the 'champion of champions'? Our selectors need to reconsider their decision and let this great cricketer have the chance to make a comeback.

Shashank Shekhar, Meerut (Uttar Pradesh)

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues). Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to

The Circulation Manager(U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta 700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

■ I feel bad for 'Jimmy'. How can anyone in his senses call the selection committee a 'bunch of jokers'? Mohinder Amarnath has been in the game for a long time and should have realised that they are actually a 'bunch of scoundrels' with Raj Singh Dungarpur leading the pack. We would like to watch good cricket rather than a great cricketer like Amarnath having to waste



Mohinder Amarnath, angry

his time as well as ours trying to find a logical explanation for this illogical decision.

Siddharth Dey, New Delhi

Exposing the Raja

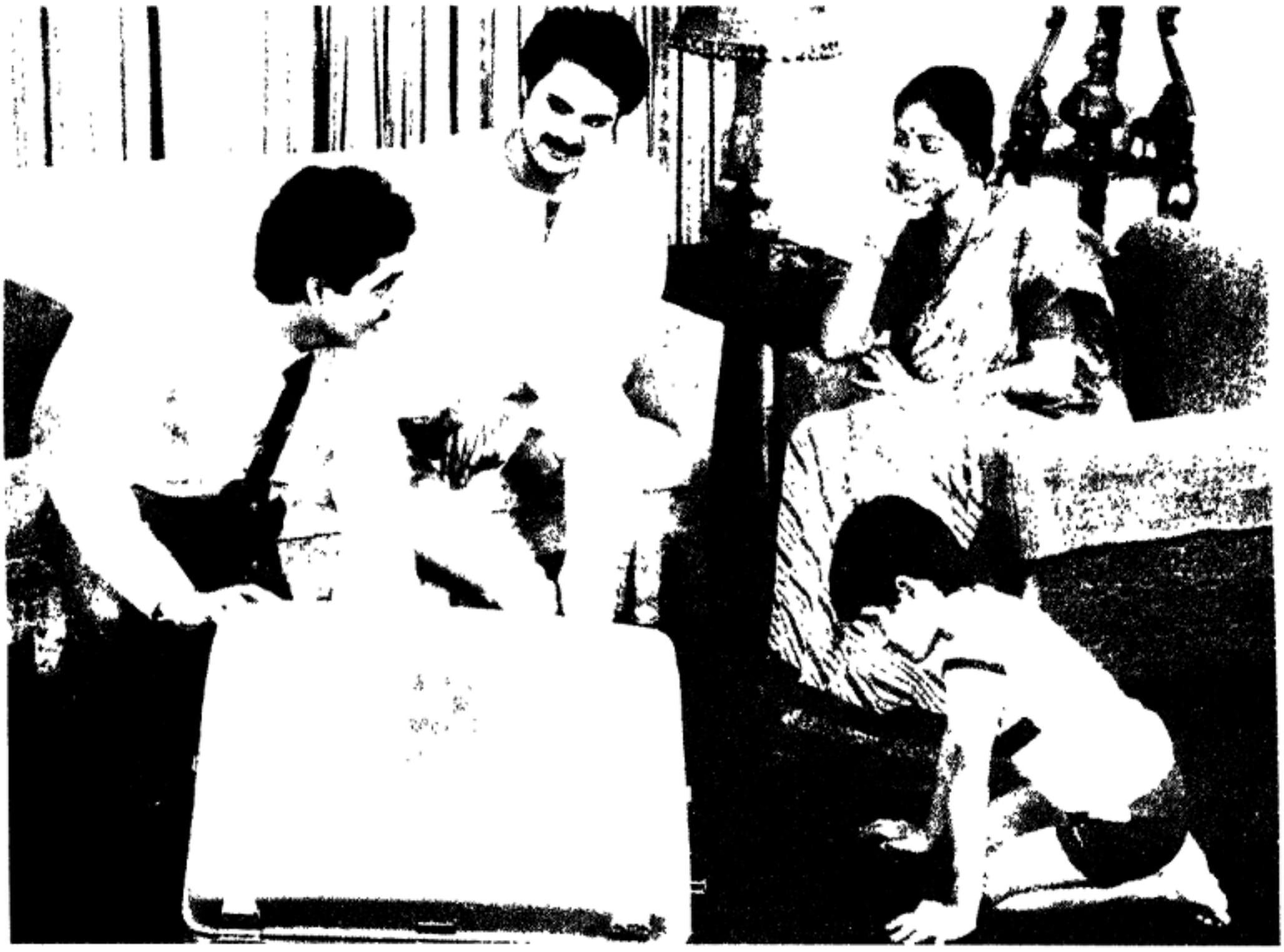
The column made interesting reading (*Byline*, 20 - 26 November). I congratulate M J Akbar for bringing many unknown facts to light. It is unfortunate that politicians can stoop to such levels to malign their adversaries for their own personal gains. It is becoming increasingly clear that Rajiv Gandhi has been falsely implicated in the Bofors and Swiss bank controversies.

Rashmi Tiwari, Calutta (West Bengal)

■ M.J. Akbar has rightly emphasised that V.P. Singh's sole aim is not to expose only corruption but Rajiv Gandhi's corruption. While the Raja has repeatedly asserted that he was not interested in any

"The Eureka Forbes salesman is so good, he is more a friend who introduced modern cleanliness and hygiene in my home"

– Mrs Archana Kampani of Bombay.



One of these days the Eureka Forbes salesman will ring your doorbell and introduce himself with his identity card

This man inspires confidence – which is only natural Because he is a member of the largest most successful sales organisation of its kind in India Backed by dependable after sales service

He will introduce modern home products to cope with today's problems dust pollution, contaminated water and the lack of domestic help

He has two unique products to demonstrate EUROCLEAN all-purpose cleaning system, which is much more than a vacuum cleaner and AQUAGUARD on-line, water filter-cum purifier

EUROCLEAN removes even minute specks of dirt and dust in your home effortlessly Even dust you didn't know existed AQUAGUARD gives you clear, safe drinking water on tap – at the flick of a switch – even if the raw water has high bacterial contamination

The Eureka Forbes salesman will show you – in your own home – how these products can bring the advantages of modern cleanliness and hygiene to your family Making it a cleaner, safer world for you

You need not wait till his rounds bring him to your doorstep For further information do write to us at Eureka Forbes, P O Box 936, G.P.O., Bombay 400 001

Euroclean

The all purpose cleaning system which is much more than a vacuum cleaner.

Aquaguard

On line, water filter cum purifier

EUREKA FORBES LIMITED

Pioneers in modern cleanliness and hygiene

87/EFL/470 C

Insinuations and innuendoes

Those who are in public life have to get used to all kinds of pulls, pressures and press innuendoes. One learns to ignore them. I do. But Kuldip Nayar has crossed all limits of decency and uprightness (*Finding a foreign office boss*, 25 September—1 October).

Mr Nayar is a distinguished and senior columnist but regrettably the sights he has set for himself are not the same as the sights I have set for myself. The personalised tittle-tattle that he dishes out with embarrassing frequency in the name of investigative journalism does little credit to the great calling that he purports to represent and serve. He has hurled a number of totally unfounded allegations against me. I would like him to prove them. It is extraordinary that a man who has had some experience at the lower middle level in the government should indulge in advocacy of particular officials in the foreign office for particular jobs. There are well-established rules and norms for these appointments. I serve an institution, an institution founded by Jawaharlal Nehru. I am not bothered about this or that individual.

He has cast aspersions on the ability of a very senior member of the foreign service and taken a swipe at an IFS officer serving in the Prime Minister's office. What entitles him to do so?

In the last three paragraphs, he has held me responsible for certain actions that the government has taken on vital matters of foreign policy. He says: "Natwar Singh was virtually foreign minister and he rubbed most people the wrong way. Some of his brainwaves, amateurish as they are—like inviting the late General Zia to New Delhi for consultations on Afghanistan and airdropping of food in Jaffna—damaged India's image. The nation will have to pay for the harm he has done."

Every single word of this paragraph is untrue. Whatever else I may be I am not an amateur; I spent 31 years as a professional diplomat Mr Nayar does not have the monopoly of patriotism and it is outrageous on his part to question mine. His own sense of patriotism is warped and peculiar, not always uninfluenced by petty considerations of personal ambition.

No one takes Mr Kuldip Nayar seriously. Each week, unreadable, tired cliches are produced. They are forgotten as soon as they are read but I thought a time had come for someone to tell him where he gets off. An apology would be in order.

K. Natwar Singh, minister of state for external affairs, New Delhi

Kuldip Nayar replies: Every time a journalist decides to reveal what is not generally known, he risks displeasing someone who does not want it to be known But this is his duty to his readers and the profession he belongs to. Mr Natwar Singh is plainly displeased. But I must say that his outburst, the personal attack he has made on me, is a bit surprising. True, a neo-politician considers every criticism motivated and every suggestion a slight. But he had once told me not to ignore him because, according to him, what hurts a politician most is not criticism but lack of notice. So he should at least not be so angry because I have several times "noticed" him in my column.

It is true that the sights I have set for myself are different from those of Mr Singh's. Those who have followed his career, his transition from the IFS to active politics, know what it has taken him to achieve his



K. Natwar Singh: incensed

ambition. I do not want to enter here into a discussion on means and ends; I shall save that for another occasion.

What is most surprising is that "after 31 years as a professional diplomat," he should have forgotten in the couple of years he has spent as minister, even the courtesy and finesse expected of a diplomat. Perhaps this explains why he has rubbed most people in the foreign service the wrong way and was prone to promote policies and take decisions which cannot be described as "diplomatic."

I have not questioned Mr Singh's patriotism but even if he were to wear it on his sleeve, he cannot hide the fact that certain decisions taken during the time when he was virtually foreign minister have, in my opinion, cost the country dear. If, as he seems to imply, Mr Singh had nothing to do with these decisions, I am happy to stand corrected. But to say the least, it is strange that he, as minister, could have had nothing to do with such major decisons. Is only Rajiv Gandhi to blame for these acts? Mr Singh says that no one takes me seriously. At least he does, as his letter testifies. I suppose I should be grateful for this.

position, he has made sure that he remains in the political limelight. In whatever he has done, V.P Singh has only shown his chameleon-like character--be it his silence over the Bofors deal, his initial refusal to contest the Allahabad by-election or his creation of the JanMorcha.

Shreeniwas Mishra, Bombay (Maharashtra)

Cola politics

And now it is Coca-Cola (*Back with a fizz*, 27 November– 3 October). For three years it was Pepsi in the press, in Parliament and party forums. How has this issue gained so much importance? When Coke made an exit 11 years ago, did anyone miss it? I think Coke's departure did a world of good to the Indian soft drinks industry. Aren't we proud of the drinks that we have here? Why is the government so obsessed with breaking the monopoly? If Indian brand-names are now well established, the credit goes to the Indian companies.

And now the Indian government wants to bring in Pepsi and Coke to break their monopoly. The difference between Pepsi and Coke is this. Coke didn't come in the garb of a food processing unit to provide jobs for the misguided farmers of Punjab.

Varkey Abraham, New Delhi

BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

Sycophancy, etcetera

We must announce the return of normalcy in the Congress party. That might sound a very tall claim to just about everyone, and most particularly to those who are convinced that the party is over just because they have walked out, but this columnist has irrefutable evidence that all is normal once again. The shudders of 1986





Sonia Gandhi: being courted

and the earthquakes of 1987 are all clearly a thing of the past, and the Richter scale which measures the confidence level, is showing peace and calm where just some months it was hovering past 8. Evidence? Simple. Sycophancy has returned in full, unadulterated force. The celebration of Sonia Gandhi's birthday on 6 December by certain loyalists in Uttar Pradesh marks the restoration of Congress culture in all its magnificent glory. It is another matter that the lady in question has shown absolutely no desire to have her birthday celebrated in such fashion. It matters even less that 6 December is not her birthday at all. The true sycophant is never deterred by such minor hindrances. And Bhaskar Pandey, ex-MLA of Rudrapur, Deoria, is a sycophant of the topmost echelons, an heir to a tradition which has deep roots in the annals of Indian power. If Bhaskar Pandey believes that 6 December is Sonia Gandhi's birthday, then by God it shall be 6 December. Madam Sonia Gandhi's mother might tell you something else, but has *she* ever had to organise birthday celebrations in Lucknow? What does she know of these things? And in any case, for every courtier the queen must have two birthdays: the real one, and the convenient one—just as the queen of England has. Fawning has its own logic, its own dynamics. It cannot, on principle, be hostage to truth. Any sense of reality destroys the free and unbridled spirit of the sycophant, whose imagination must be released from idiotic irritants like linkage with sense. I submit, in fact, that in these mundane and/or cynical times, the art of the sycophant has been suffering, and Bhaskar Pandey has taken on the task of restoring the glory of this art-form. He has disciples too, and it is perfectly in order that many of them are bad poets. The courts of Lucknow have long teemed with terrible versifiers singing the praises of their masters, the temperament and intelligence quotient of a third-rate bard are perfectly in harmony with the requirements of sycophancy. In fact, little could be more appropriate than the use of Lucknow as the place to celebrate the birthday. The later history of Lucknow is so redolent with decadence that no city in India could have been more symbolic.

Sycophancy has returned in full, unadulterated force. The celebration of Sonia Gandhi's birthday on 6 December by certain loyalists in Uttar Pradesh marks the restoration of Congress culture

However, the sycophant does create one genuine problem: it is impossible to know how to deal with him. Banishment? Anger? Should one be so unkind to those who would be over-kind? Actually one should, but who is? No one in power-- and forget political tags like parties, or systems: this is true of democracy as much as feudalism--can ever quite resist the pleasure of praise. But at least it is not vilification. One has heard more political leaders than one cares to mention being fawned upon by admirers who could turn professional (and who knows? Some of them may even be professionals), and it is difficult to recall the admirer being told to shut up. There is nothing more digestible than praise, no matter if it gives a stomachache of severe proportions in the long run. The standard ploy used by the powerful when they encounter the tribe is to pretend to ignore it all, though of course it is with indulgent indifference that they do so--with a paternal smile which says, ah. These boys will be boys. Or, perhaps, the gruff instruction—after the passage of a suitable amount of time in which the glories have been sung--that enough is enough. And then a hint and a nudge to a private secretary to later reward the bard with whatever passes for gold coins these days. But it is rare that a sycophant never gets any reward. The only man I know who could resist flattery was Morarji Desai. In fact, Morarji Desai had a different problem. He could be trusted to make even his most genuine admirer irritated. Morarji Desai attracted admiration, never affection. He was too self-certain, too superior, too much in the right (by his own estimation, of course) to ever attract another human being into an intimate relationship. Perhaps that is the other side of sycophancy: total isolation. To each his own. And may the better man win. As for the sycophant—he may or may not always win. But he also never loses. ■



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

The spirit of secularism

However strong the winds of fundamentalism may blow in the subcontinent, secularism remains planted firmly.

In Pakistan, by returning the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by Benazir Bhutto as the largest party in the National Assembly, the majority of the people has rejected those who said that they would establish a rule of *Quran* and *Sunnah* in the country and that Islam did not allow a woman to become *Imam* (Prime Minister).

Faith in secularism is also strong in Bangladesh, though General Ershad's government has converted it into an Islamic state. It is evident that many have protested against it and a petition has been filed in the Bangladesh Supreme Court to challenge the constitutional amendment effected for that purpose.

Indeed, I recall how strong was the faith of Mujibur Rahman, the founder of Bangladesh, in secularism. He told me in an interview in Dhaka in 1972, after taking over the reins of his country, that the military rulers in Rawalpindi used religion as an instrument to divide the people in Bangladesh and deprive them of their political, economic and social rights. But they failed, and could not stop the emergence of secular, sovereign Bangladesh.

"All along Pakistan has preached four things: one, Islam is in danger; two, the Hindu is a *kafir*; three, India is the enemy; and, four, Kashmir must be conquered. The Pakistanis have been fed on this propaganda for the last four decades. The hate campaign unleashed in that country is even against the tenets of Islam. Unless there is a change in the mentality of the people of Pakistan they cannot get out of their make-believe world," he had said.

Mujibur Rahman's faith in secularism was unshakeable. And he had predicted that one day the high walls that fear and distrust had raised on the borders would crumble and the peoples of the subcontinent, without giving up their identities, would work together for the common good.

In India neither Hindu nor Muslim fundamentalism has been able to take root. Though 80 per cent of the people are Hindus, there are very few who will ever want "Hindu Raj". In fact, they, whether Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs or Christians, have favoured those political parties which keep religion separate from politics.

There are, of course, people like the RSS chief, Balasaheb Deoras, to run down secularism. In a recent statement he has advocated closer relations between the RSS and the Shiv Sena which, according to him, have spread their hold substantially. But Deoras knows quite well that even together the RSS and Shiv Sena cannot command much influence in the country. The fundamentalist appeal, after all, is an urban phenomenon and that too confined to a small area. Rural India, comprising nearly 80 per cent of the population, continues to be secular.

Unfortunately, it has been wrongly propagated in the subcontinent that secularism is anti-religious. What secularism means is that you can believe in any religion and pursue it but the state has no preference for any particular religion and all its citizens are equal. You may be a Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian or Parsi, but you are not superior or inferior because you belong to a particular religion.

In Pakistan, Islam is the religion that a preponderant majority follows. But Gen. Zia's slogan of *nazame-e-mustafa* was as much ridiculed as his effort to inculcate fundamentalism in the minds of the people. Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer, former Supreme Court judge, who was one of the observers during the elections in Pakistan to see how fair they were, has said on his return that despite the fact that the slogan of Islam was raised by some, the people were secular.

When the poll results were being announced over Pakistan TV, women announcers were bareheaded, as they used to be before Zia ordered that every woman appearing on TV must wear a scarf. It is said that when the people of Pakistan saw the announcers without scarves, they concluded that Benazir's party was winning.

Pakistan, although created on the two-nation theory, would have been a secular country had its founder, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, lived longer. He had reportedly said, after the proposal for the creation of Pakistan was accepted, that Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs would cease to exist, not in the religious sense but otherwise, and there would be only Pakistanis. Since the slogan of Islam helped Gen. Zia to divert the people's attention from the military junta, he exploited it. He even tried to falsify Jinnah by saying that Pakistan was created to be a Muslim state.

There is no doubt that Benazir will put Pakistan back on the rails. She did not use religion in her campaign. And, like her father, she not only shunned the *maulvis* and the *mullahs* but also devastated them. In fact, there is a famous report by Justice Mohammed Munir, appointed by the Pakistan government in the Fifties, that Pakistan would have to adopt secularism, to prevent the country from splitting into various schools of Islam.

Indeed, the founders of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were all in favour of a democratic, secular and egalitarian society. Subsequent rulers, both in Pakistan and Bangadesh, have tried to take their countries away from secularism, but most of the people have seen this only as a ploy by their rulers to divide them.

In India, despite communal riots and religious appeals for electoral advantage, secularism remains the country's ethos. The nation realises that if ever it were to lose its secular character, it would lead to dictatorship. Pakistanis are seeing through the game; Bangladeshis will soon do so. ■

However strong the winds of fundamentalism may blow in the subcontinent, secularism remains planted firmly. The founders of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were all in favour of a democratic and secular society

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Heard of korophobia?



The current worldwide obsession with the spread of AIDS seems to me to be vastly exaggerated. No one has yet been able to explain why our ancestors who practised every form of sexual perversion including sex with animals (for proof visit the Sun Temple, Konark) did not get AIDS but somehow African monkeys transmitted them to humans, most of all the Americans. Also, why some Indians, like our D: Pantal, should warn us against copulating with foreigners because they are more likely to be carriers of this dreaded disease than our own country folk. Mind you, he is careful in limiting his warning to "visiting foreigners", not those already resident in India or married to Indians. That would be taking matters too far and to the highest quarters.

AIDS scare is by no means the first of its kind to engulf large sections of the population. From time to time fear of losing one's manhood has spread like the plague across certain parts of Asia. Two years ago *The San Francisco Chronicle* reported "the existence of a psychological epidemic that periodically spreads throughout the Far East, sometimes affecting millions of men, whereby males are convinced that their penises are shrinking into their abdomen, and that if this happens they will die". It went on to add that "whenever this delusion sweeps across Asia, every decade or two, many men wear bamboo contraptions intended to keep their genitalia from disappearing while they sleep". The Chinese have actually coined a word for the penis-shrinking phenomenon. *koro*. And of course there is nothing to it; it is the figment of a sick imagination.

Koro is a useful word because the fear of sexual inadequacy in different forms keeps erupting from time to time. The introduction of the birth control pill in the 1960s produced a brand of phobia. So did the aggressive women's lib movement. The more women demanded equality with men in jobs and in bed, the more men felt a sense of inadequacy to meet their demands. So at one end of the spectrum we have the machismo of over-confident males and at the other, men gnawed by self-doubts. Nothing would dampen the ardour of a person who thinks he is God's gift to womankind, the stud-bull of virility, than to be put down as a victim of 'korophobia'.



Illustration: Dossani Deo

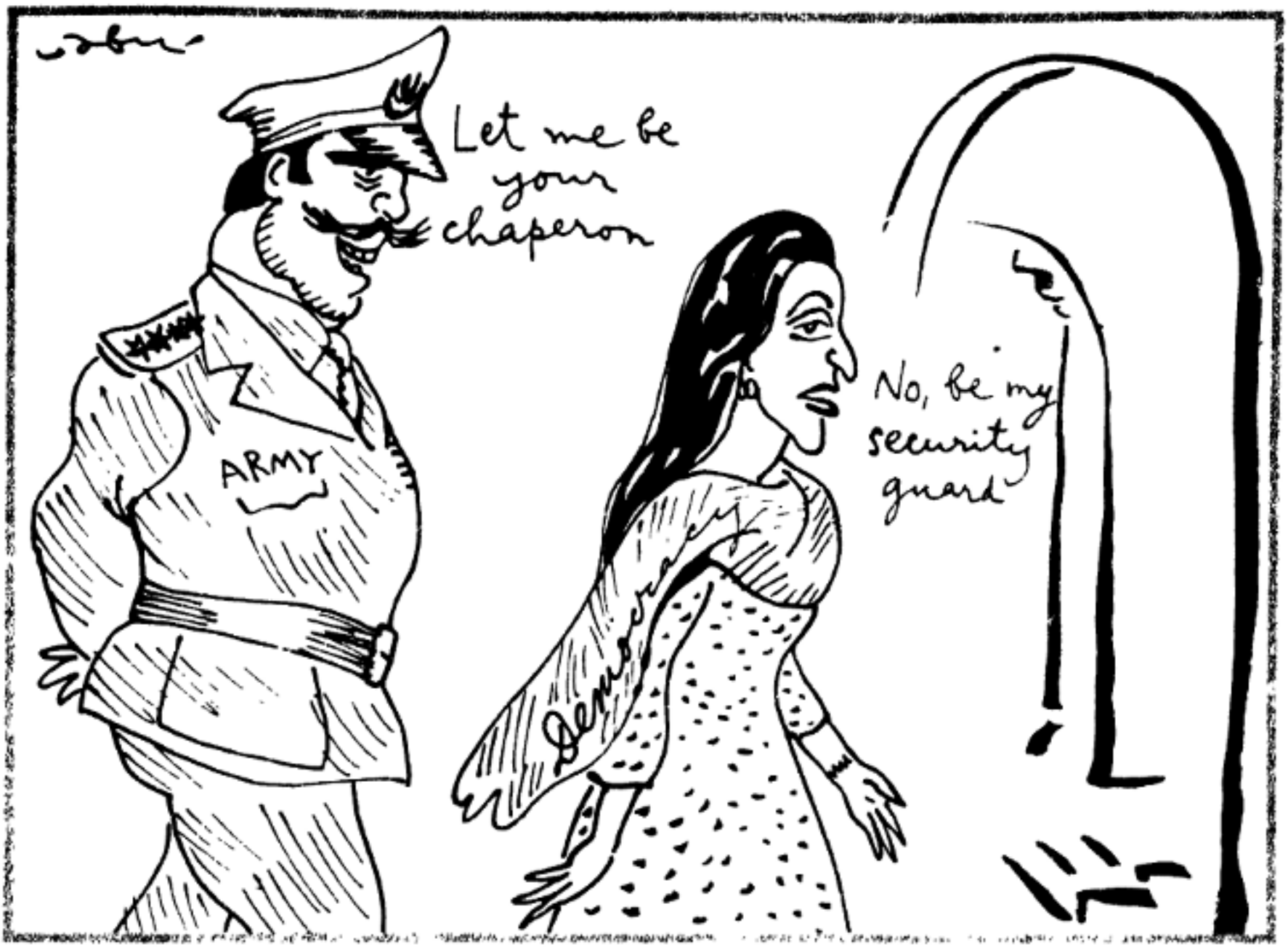
No one has yet been able to explain why our ancestors who practised every form of sexual perversion including sex with animals did not get AIDS but somehow African monkeys transmitted them to humans, most of all the Americans. Also, why some Indians should warn us against copulating with foreigners because they are more likely to be carriers of this dreaded disease than our country folk

WHY ROAD ACCIDENTS

Dr Asoke Bagchi of Calcutta has an ingenious explanation for the high death toll on Indian roads. "I have put forward a philological analysis like this: there is a popular two-wheeler on our roads called Yamaha which is similar to the *stuti* of our Hindu God of death *Yama* (pronounced Yamah). There is another vehicle named Matador which literally means a murderer or a killer. He is not a bull-fighter who is a toreador from the Latin Taurus for bull. So there are two identified killers, Yamaha and Matador on our highways."

NOT IN SEASON

Reeten Ganguly of Tezpur happened to be visiting Calcutta. He went to the New Market to buy Christmas and New Year's cards. He also wanted a birthday greetings card to send to a friend. Having bought his quota of the Yuletide variety he failed to locate a birthday card and asked the dealer to find him one. "I am sorry, sir," replied the dealer, "this is not the birthday season."



"

If I were the Prime Minister, I'd stop talking about my mother's achievements. In fact, the more he mentions her, the more inadequate he looks.

MENAKA GANDHI, *Janata Dal leader*

If Mr Jyoti Basu is serious in his fight against corruption of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, then he should set an example by resigning from the chief ministership on the Bengal Lamp issue.

MURALI MANOHAR JOSHI, *BJP general secretary*

We have to capture power in Delhi and instal a people's democratic government.

JYOTI BASU, *West Bengal chief minister*

I would like to send him (Jyoti Basu) to a lunatic asylum.

A.B.A. GHANI KHAN CHOWDHURY, *West Bengal PCC(I) chief*

The Janata disease which once crippled the Janata Party has now entered the Janata Dal and affected the party with infantile paralysis.

H.N. BAHUGUNA, *Lok Dal leader*

In this Congress culture where those without a face and a base are rewarded, the path I have chosen is hardly the way of asking for office... I will not kowtow to the *netas* sitting in New Delhi.

JAGANNATH MISHRA, *Bihar Congress(I) leader*

The Bofors is for Rajiv Gandhi what Watergate was for Nixon.

L.K. ADVANI, *BJP president*

They (the lawyers) have made the allegations and they have to take to the witness box first before I speak in my defence.

KIRAN BEDI, *IPS officer*

We want to strengthen the man in the street because that is when we can strengthen Pakistan

BENAZIR BHUTTO, *Pakistan Prime Minister*

I was born an Akali and will die an Akali.

SURJIT SINGH BARNALA, *former Punjab chief minister*

Instead of sports in politics, we have politics in sports.

SUNIL GAVASKAR, *cricketer*

Looking for a third front is like searching for a black cat in a dark room

H.N. BAHUGUNA, *Lok Dal leader*

I am not challenging any social norms or laws... But sometimes a moment comes in the life of a person when personal feeling contravenes these laws.

RAJ BABBAR, *actor, at a recent interview about his marriage to Smita Patil*

"

From *glasnost* to Brezhnevism

Doordarshan has come full circle

The exit of Bhaskar Ghosh as director-general (DG) Doordarshan signalled the end of television *glasnost*. The message was loud and clear. It was back to Brezhnevism at Mandi House. No longer could the government be slagged off with impunity, senior ministers shown up in unfavourable light and the Opposition granted prime time slots. The accent was to be on government propaganda, interspersed with massive doses of populist fare. With elections only a year and half away the idea was to keep the television-gawking voters happy.

To achieve this objective was affected



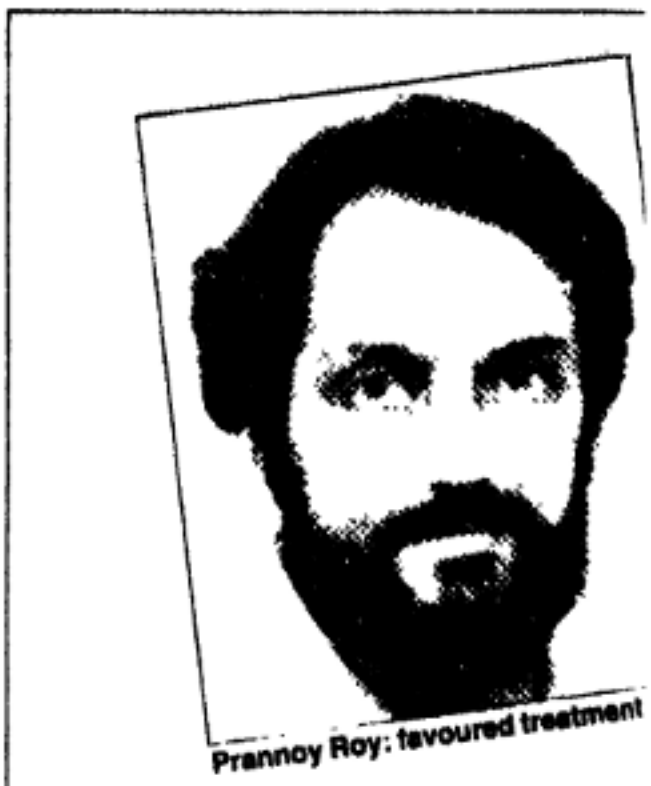
Mandi House: loss of power

a reallocation of powers, and the only loser in the bargain turned out to be Mandi House. Once Shiv Sharma took over from Bhaskar Ghosh as Doordarshan DG, the television authorities lost all control over the current affairs slot. Private producers wishing to sell programmes now had to seek the approval of the information and broadcasting (I & B) secretary, Gopi Arora, rather than the DG Doordarshan. In the entertainment division, the I & B minister H.K.L. Bhagat called the shots. Some say that even his son Deepak Bhagat had got in on the act, lobbying with the ministry to get "pilot rejected" or "film accepted" notations on the files.

With the ministry in full control, it was only a matter of time before those closely associated with Ghosh were taken down a peg or two. The first to suffer was Jaichandi Ram--the Delhi Kendra station director—who was shunted out of her office on Parliament Street and appointed one of the many controllers of programmes in Mandi House. Since Ram had in the past crossed swords with the I & B joint secretary R.C. Sinha, some saw this as a punishment posting. R.S. Rawat was appointed station director in her place Described by one insider as "an absolute political animal", Rawat has had the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) initiate an enquiry against him for misappropriation of funds in the Lucknow Doordarshan Kendra.

Doordarshan producers and staffers complain in that the present scheme of things Mandi House has been reduced to a post office—which receives project proposals only to forward them to the ministry. Apparently H.K.L. Bhagat is taking a personal interest in what goes on television, and is very keen to increase the entertainment component on the network. The decision to televise a feature film every Thursday and an early Sunday morning programme of Hindi film songs, called *Rangoli*, was announced by the minister himself. As was the decision to have an hour-long afternoon transmission from 26 January onwards, for the benefit of housewives. Bhagat, on whom political exigencies weigh heavy, would be quite happy cramming Doordarshan's fixed-point chart (programme list) with film kitsch.

In the current affairs programme section, outside interference comes from two quarters—the Prime Minister's office (PMO) and Shastri Bhavan. The former takes more than cursory interest in how Rajiv is projected on TV, with Mani Shankar Aiyar vetting the contents of the news capsules released on the Prime Minister's tours, both within the country and without. Subjects to be discussed on *Aaj Kal* and *Focus* must



Prannoy Roy: favoured treatment



Mani Shankar Aiyar

Says Mani Shankar Aiyar: "One of our greatest achievements has been to get the television camera off the face of the Prime Minister and focus it on his interlocuters. What is required in the PM's coverage is a judicious mix of speech and encounter

have prior clearance by the powers-that be. Once filmed, the rushes have to be approved by the bosses of Shastri Bhavan before they can be televised.

The process of censorship had set in during Bhaskar Ghosh's tenure itself. But now even non-news programmes are being chopped by Doordarshan. Most surprising is the censoring of B.R. Chopras's magnum opus *Mahabharat* Mandi House bosses would not let a dialogue (voiced by Raj Babbar who plays Bharat in the serial), criticising dynastic rule pass It is also alleged that they have taken undue interest in the casting of Krishna. Apparently, the government wanted to ensure that the actor, (Nitish Bharadwaj, as it turned out) would overshadow N.T. Rama Rao's portrayal of the god. Even harmless comedy serials such as *Mungeri Lal Ke Haseen Sapne* have not been spared. An innocuous shot where Mungeri is shown stashing money away in Switzerland in one of his dreams, was considered objectionable. And the programme controllers succeeded in pressuring producer Prakash Jha into changing it.



Vinod Dua: Mandi House's blue-eyed boy

In the current Doordarshan set-up, there are a few favoured ones. Among them is election specialist Prannoy Roy, and Vinod Dua, who produces *Aaj Kal*



But the screws have really been tightened in the current affairs slot Still to recover from the ill-effects of the controversy generated by the *Focus* programmes on Bofors and the Defamation Bill, the directorate has consigned to limbo several programme proposals which had been cleared earlier. These include programmes on the success of President's Rule in Nagaland, communal riots in Bidar and the like Some programmes which had been cleared for telecast have not been shown. The producer of a *Focus* programme on air safety was told that it could not be aired as it was, "too timely " The authorities' desire to steer clear of all controversy has made them almost paranoid. A case in point. Instead of telecasting the *Focus* programme on AIDs lying with them, the directorate decided to make do with screening some foreign clips on the disease along with a speech by the health minister, Motilal Vohra. And, in what is seen as a pre-emptive move, Doordarshan has promised to pay impatient producers their dues even if their programmes are shelved after being commissioned.

The present Doordarshan bosses maintain that there has been no change in their editorial policy. Controversial discussions have not been aired in the current affairs programmes only because no controversy has broken in recent times. Shiv Sharma cites the *Focus* programmes on the Azad papers, the ban on Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* and electoral reforms as instances of how *glasnost* still exists in Doordarshan. But most people perceive these programmes as having a definite pro-government slant. Current affairs programmes these days, they feel, comprise insipid discussions and self-congratulatory "success stories" like the one on the Indian Army action in Maldives. Says Ashok Raina, a private producer making software for Doordarshan: "The foundation which Indian tele-



A scene from *Mahabharat*: victim of censorship







(From l to r) Bhaskar Ghosh, Gopi Arora and H K.L Bhagat: differing views

vision had made for itself has been dug out and tossed away. The erratic planning which existed when Doordarshan began is back."

In the current Doordarshan set up, there are a few favoured ones. Among them is election specialist Pranoy Roy, who was recently given charge of a 52 part series entitled *The World This Week*. The international round-up was a slot Doordarshan had wanted to fill indigenously and there was criticism as to why it could not hire a professional presenter and mount the programme itself. The other blue-eyed boy of Shastri Bhavan is Vinod Dua who produces *Aaj Kal*.

But the real debate revolves around how the Prime Minister and his party members are to be projected on the small screen. Even earlier, this had been a matter of some dispute. Bhaskar Ghosh, Gopi Arora and Suman Dubey had wanted that Doordarshan go slow on plugging the Prime Minister and anti-government views be given equal prominence. But this group lost out to the political lobby led by H.K.L. Bhagat who thought that Doordarshan should be used as the Congress(I) propaganda machine. Though now even Rajiv Gandhi has gone on record to say that he objects to Doordarshan cameras being focussed on him constantly, they show no signs of moving away.

Bhaskar Ghosh, Gopi Arora and Suman Dubey had wanted Doordarshan to go slow on plugging the Prime Minister. But they lost out to the political lobby, (led by H.K.L. Bhagat), which thought that Doordarshan should be used as the Congress(I) propaganda machine.

All newscasts seem to show these days is the Prime Minister—his encounters with rural India when he is on tour and his routine speeches when in the capital. The pressure applied on the Doordarshan newsroom by the PMO during Rajiv's latest Tamil Nadu tour shows that his minders do not share his aversion to over publicity. But they do want to improve the quality of the coverage. Mani Shankar Aiyar who has frequently aired his views on the poor quality of the news clips on the Prime Minister produced by the directorate says: "One of our greatest achievements has been to get the television camera off the face of the Prime Minister and focus it on his interlocuters. What is required in the Prime Minister's coverage is a judicious mix of speech and encounter. It is the poor production not the time taken that makes it tedious." And perhaps it was this tedium that prompted the writ petition, filed in the Madras High Court by Palani Baba, stating that Doordarshan was being "illegally" utilised by the ruling party to influence the electorate.

Nonetheless, in the months to come Rajiv will remain the most important story for Doordarshan and, along with his ministers, monopolise our television screens. Former DG Bhaskar Ghosh admitted that one of his mistakes was that he "forgot the ministers". Now the various Cabinet ministers are making sure that Doordarshan remembers them incessantly.

Unfortunately for the Congress(I) their publicity blitz on television occurred at a time when the news organisation within Doordarshan was being revamped. The 50-odd correspondents recruited by Doordarshan will be soon completing their training at Pune and taking up their brief. But a past experience is anything to go by, this new breed of television reporters may very well end up doing precious little, as Doordarshan newscasts remain the stuff of ruling party propaganda. And things can only get worse. For Doordarshan has decided: when there is no room for accomodating all the bosses, extend television time.

Ritu Sarin /*New Delhi*

The daredevils

What makes the Babbar Khalsa the most dreaded terrorist outfit in Punjab?

For a change, the Punjab terrorists are at the receiving end and are bearing the brunt of the security forces' determined offensive. In the last one year, the securitymen have all but wiped out the top rung of the leadership of most of the terrorist groups—the likes of Harjinder Singh Jinda, Surjit Singh Penta and Attinder Pal Singh are either dead or behind bars. But there still remains one group which is worrying the Punjab administration considerably: the Babbar Khalsa, which has taken on the task of reuniting the splinter terrorist groups in the state and spearheading the extremist movement in Punjab.

Among all the militant groups operating in Punjab today, the Babbars are the oldest. The group shot into prominence with its demand for a separate state for the Sikhs during the Babbar-Akali movement in the Seventies. The Babbars then were looked upon as religious fanatics who would take up arms only when it came to the question of saving the *panth*. However, such an image was rudely destroyed when the Babbars took up arms during the Sikh-Nirankari clash in 1978 and the group was even held responsible for the assassination of the Nirankari chief, Baba Gurbachan Singh. Since then, the Babbar Khalsa has been charged with having a hand in the most heinous acts of terrorism -the Delhi bomb blasts, the Kanishka crash and only recently, the attack on the Akali Dal leader, Jagdev Singh Talwandi.

Moreover, among the terrorist outfits in Punjab, the Babbar Khalsa undoubtedly has the largest international network and its members are well-trained in the use of sophisticated arms and explosives. Thus, though all the other major terrorist groups have been virtually wiped out, the Babbars have survived the offensive launched by the security forces. The reason according to police sources is the group's excellent intelligence network.

Ironically enough, the Babbar Khalsa; while being pro-Khalistan has been opposed to both the Damdami Taksal and the followers of Bhindranwale Sukhdev Singh Babbar and Avtaar Singh Brahma, the Babbar Khalsa strongmen, fell out with Bhindranwale on ideological grounds.

This year itself, leaders of prominent terrorist groups have either been arrested or killed by the security forces. They include such dreaded names as Harjinder Singh Jinda of the KCF, Surjit Singh Penta of the BTFK (he committed suicide after being arrested during Operation Black Thunder) and more recently, Attinder Pal Singh of the Khalistan Liberation Organisation (KLO), who is presently lodged in Rajpurra Jail



Terrorists surrender: cornered at last

Though most of the terrorist groups have been wiped out, there still remains one group which is worrying the Punjab administration: the Babbar Khalsa

Therefore, besides Gurbachaan Singh Manochal of the BTFK and Sukha Sepoy of the KCF, the prominent terrorists who are still at large are all Babbar Khalsa men.

The recent terrorist strikes have indicated that the Babbar Khalsa has joined forces with the other militant groups in Punjab. The Babbars have always been hostile to the KCF leadership but are now believed to be working together. Thus, while the Babbars previously would only take part in mass killings with sophisticated weapons, now they are launching isolated attacks with crude weaponry

According to intelligence sources, while the Babbars would like to organise themselves on the lines of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and continue a Naxal-like movement, what they have finally achieved is the status of small-time terrorists. This might be because of the desperation among the ranks of other militant groups, the reason why young indoctrinated Babbars have shifted from using sophisticated rockets and explosives to AK-47s and hand grenades. Most of the explosives acquired by the Babbars, the police suspect, were stolen from the mines in Bihar, Orissa and elsewhere. The gelatine sticks used for the May 1985 transistor bomb blasts which rocked six north Indian states were stolen by the Babbars from the Gomia mines in Bihar.

With the Babbars joining hands with other militant groups, the security forces too are gearing up to tackle this unexpected challenge. But the task might not be easy since the Babbars not only maintain a lowprofile, but also because the organisation is believed to be funded and armed from abroad. The terrorist group best-trained in the use of explosives might well prove to be the most elusive.

Ritu Sarin/*New Delhi*

Follow the leaders

The Opposition's efforts at unity is taking on the character of a childish game

There seems to be more leaders than followers of the Janata Dal. Ramakrishna Hegde, Devi Lal, Arif Mohammed Khan, Syed Shahabuddin, Chandra Shekhar and Ajit Singh all working at cross purposes—and the newly formed Janata Dal is proving to be too small a party to accommodate the egos and ambitions of all these leaders. As for V.P. Singh, the president of the Janata Dal, he has been more busy assuaging hurt feelings than working out a strategy to take on Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress(I) in the next general election.

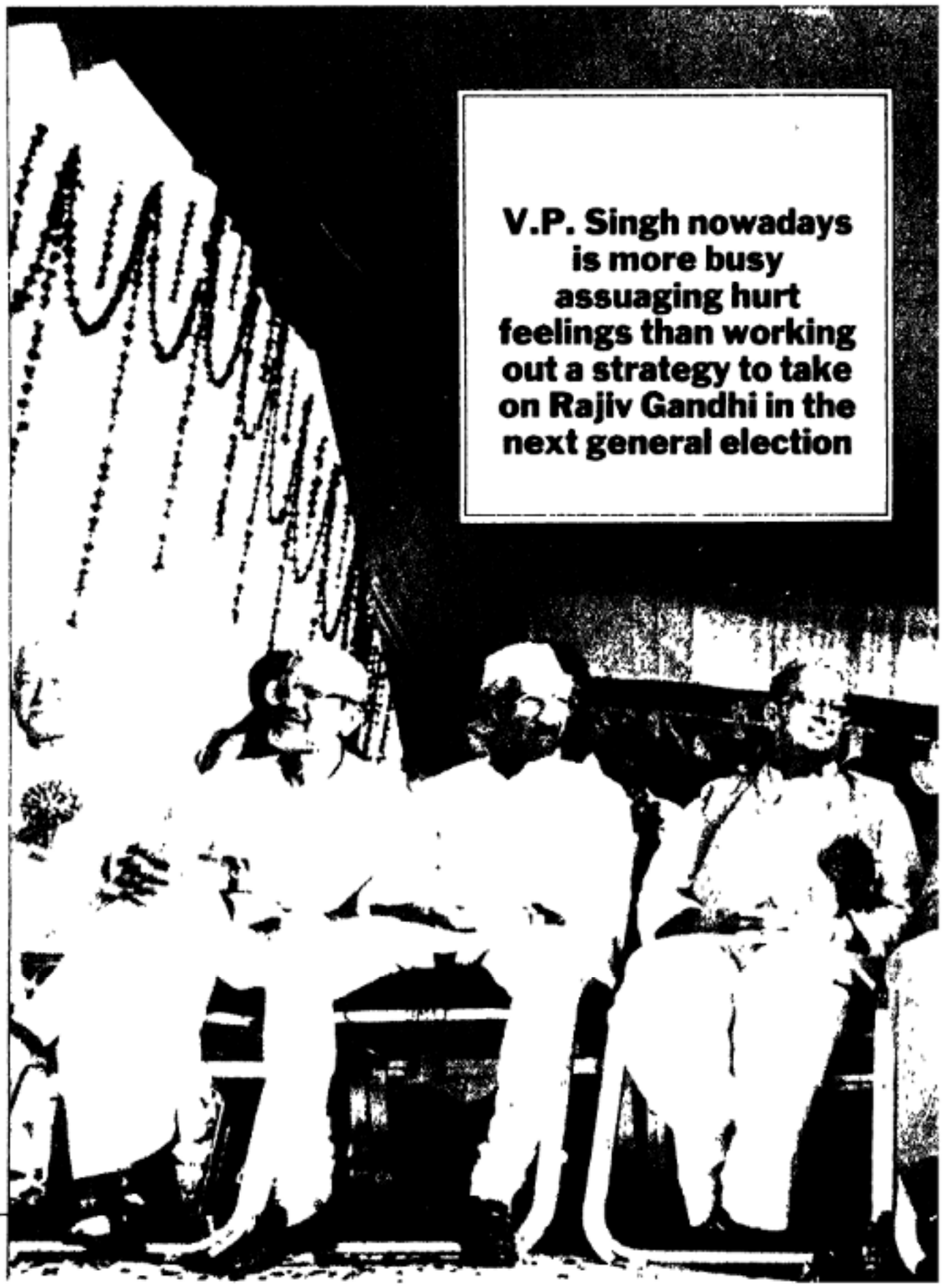
The simmering discontent within the Janata Dal came into the open immediately after V.P. Singh announced the formation of the national executive and the steering committee of the Janata Dal last week. Ajit Singh and his followers made it clear that they were not happy with the constitution of the two committees, which they alleged were packed with Devi Lal's men.

However, the most significant development in the Opposition camp is the secret parleys among the communist parties, the Congress(S), H.N. Bahuguna and Ram Dhan. Reportedly, a decision has been taken to form a National Campaign Committee which will pursue a Left and democratic programme.

Four such meetings were recently held at the residences of Bahuguna and Congress(S) leader K.P. Unnikrishnan. Those who attended the meetings included the top rung of the CPI(M) and CPI leaderships: E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Harkishan Singh Surjeet and M. Farooqi. The decision of the communists to go along with leaders like Unnikrishnan, Bahuguna and Ram Dhan is indeed surprising as the move indicates that the communists are willing to abandon V.P. Singh and to go to the polls on a different platform altogether. Its leaders, however, insist that the proposed National Campaign Committee is committed to a united Opposition.

But why the need for another Opposition formation, whatever its programmes may be? V.P. Singh and the Janata Dal have dissociated themselves with the BJP, the arch enemy of the communists, and hence there is no ostensible reason for the CPI(M) and the CPI to distance themselves from the Janata Dal. Moreover, the decision to ally with what is perceived as the anti-V.P. Singh lobby is also suspect. But the prime moves of the Campaign Committee argue that the idea of forming the front is to act as a pressure group and ensure that the Janata Dal remains committed to the Left and socialist path.

But V.P. Singh is least satisfied with such an explanation. Obviously aware of the fact that any Opposition alliance with the communists would be a threat to the Janata Dal, Singh is busy meeting the Committee leaders individually to try and persuade them not to split the Opposition votes further. Incidentally, the Congress(S), the Bahuguna faction of the Lok Dal and Ram Dhan's Jan Morcha are all partners of yet another



V.P. Singh nowadays is more busy assuaging hurt feelings than working out a strategy to take on Rajiv Gandhi in the next general election

Opposition equation: the National Front.

But both the CPI and the CPI(M) have sought to allay V.P. Singh's fear by denying that there is any move to form a third Opposition front. Harkishan Singh Surjeet of the CPI(M) and M. Farooqi of the CPI have declared that as the National Front and the Janata Dal were vague on many issues, the National Campaign Committee was being formed merely to "popularise a Left and democratic programme". Both the leaders felt that the Janata Dal was too busy with its internal problems to take up issues based on definite programmes and policies. "Our objective is to influence these parties to take up issues which could defeat Rajiv Gandhi," said Harkishan Singh Surjeet. Besides, the Left parties hope to influence the Janata Dal and the National Front to step up their anti-BJP and anti-communal campaign. However,





(Top) V.P. Singh with Ajit Singh; (left) Opposition leaders at a National Front rally: a disunited lot

it is still not clear why the communists joined hands with those who have prefered to remain out of the Janata Dal to achieve this objective. No wonder most Janata leaders feel that the National Campaign Committee could well be the first step towards formation of a third Opposition front.

But V P. Singh is too busy setting his own house to take a serious note of the new challenge. Not that rebellion in the Janata Dal ranks was totally unexpected In fact, the very size of the two bodies indicates that Singh had tried his level best to accommodate all factions within the Dal. While the national executive has as many as 140 members, the steering committee comprises 20 representatives. But such is the nature and composition of the Janata Dal that Singh could not please everyone. And it was the Ajit Singh faction that was the most disillusioned with the two bodies. Immediately after Singh announced the constitution of the two committees, Ajit Singh's followers met their leader to register their protest.

The main grouse of the Ajit Singh faction is that their representation in both the bodies is disproportionately low compared to their actual strength in the party. To substantiate their argument, they forward the following example: in Bihar the Ajit Singh faction claims the support of 27 MLAs as against the Lok Dal(B)'s 22 MLAs. But strangely enough, while two Lok Dal(B) legislators from Bihar have found a berth in the steering committee, the Ajit Singh fac-



V.P. Singh with Arif Mohammad Khan: friends again?



V.P Singh with Ram Dhan: winning over the Jan Morcha

tion has not been able to nominate a single member from the state to the committee. "The story is the same in Uttar Pradesh," complained an Ajit Singh sympathiser. "We have only 13 members from UP in the national executive even though we have as many as 77 legislators in the House. Compare this with what the Lok Dal(B) has achieved. they have 14 members from the state in the national executive even though their representation is the UP Assembly is as low as 28," he added. The Jan Morcha too has scored a victory over the Ajit Singh faction: it has 19 representatives from UP in the national executive. "There is resentment," warned a senior leader of the Ajit Singh camp, "and V. P. Singh will have to take remedial measures if he wants us to continue in the party."

V.P. Singh apart, the Ajit Singh faction is also gunning for the Haryana chief minister, Devi Lal, who according to them influenced Singh to ignore the Lok Dal(A). "Devi Lal has absolute veto powers," complained one of them. This view is shared by many others in the Janata Dal who feel that Devi Lal had the final say in the constitution of the two bodies and only those approved by him from the list submitted by Ajit Singh got into the two committees.

There are other complaints against V.P Singh as well. One is that though the Janata Dal has adopted the constitution of the Janata Party – the reason why the Congress(S) parted ways with the Dal—Singh has formed a steering committee which is not provided for in the Janata Party constitution. Pointing out this incongruity a Janata Party leader remarked, "On the one hand he (V.P. Singh) does not hesitate to constitute the steering committee and on the other he has been insisting that he cannot appoint office-bearers as the Janat constitution does not permit him to do so. It is time he makes up his mind, or amends the constitution."

There is a section within the Lok Dal which feels that V.P. Singh has done the right thing by ignoring Ajit Singh and his supporters. "Where will they go," remarked one leader adding that the noises being made at the moment were merely part of a ploy to put pressure on V P. Singh to give Ajit Singh and his group a better representation in the committees that are going to be formed in the neat future.

But there is at least one good news for V.P Singh. Arif Mohammad Khan, who reportedly felt slighted at not being included in the steering committee, has at last resigned to his present status. The apparent reason: Arif Khan achieved what he wanted – keep Syed Shahabuddin out of both the national executive and the steering committee. Arif, according to those close to him, was even prepared to leave the Janata Dal if Shahabuddin had been accommodated in any of these bodies But V.P. Singh obviously did not want to risk loosing Arif Khan. Shahabuddin reacted by issuing a statement saying that he was "happy at not being part of this farce".

Uniting the Opposition thus is not going to be an easy task for V.P. Singh, his sincerity notwithstanding. Singh, in fact, faces a dual challenge: keeping his own house in order as well as ensuring that the unhappy among the Opposition do not regroup and form a third or fourth front which will achieve little beyond shattering the Opposition's dream of defeating Rajiv Gandhi in the next parliamentary polls.

Seema Mustafa/*New Delhi*

Uniting the Opposition is not going to be an easy task. V.P. Singh, in fact, faces a dual challenge: keeping his own house in order and ensuring that the unhappy elements within the Opposition do not regroup and form a third or fourth front which will achieve little beyond shattering the Opposition's dream

WALL-TO-WALL UNCARPETING FROM JOHNSON



Ignore the exceptional strength of Johnson's designer floor tiles.
And the fact that they're just one-third the weight of mosaic.
Remain unimpressed by their exceptional scratch-resistance.
And turn a deaf ear to their unique anti-echo property.
They also happen to be fire-proof, stain-proof acid-resistant and dust repellant. But don't let that sway you.
Allow yourself, instead, to fall hopelessly in love with their looks.
They're available in three sizes: 8x4, 8x8 or 12x12.
And fifteen tasteful colours: silver grey, feather off-white, apple brown, coffee, green, ivory, amb dholpur pink, almond, mushroom, tan, ebony brown, pale grey and speckle.
A glamorous alternative to mosaic, granite marble or stone.
For homes and offices. Hotels and auditoriums.
Whether you follow your head or your heart you'll agree:
They're the best thing that's happened to floors since the wall-to-wall carpet.

JOHNSON
DESIGNER FLOOR TILES

"A change of art

That's what you'll discover at Air-India now.

Because I've made changes that fulfil your changing needs as an air traveller.

For instance, I've pulled out the stops on most routes

To give you more nonstops than any other airline.

To London. To Frankfurt, the business gateway to Europe. To Rome. To Amsterdam. To Paris To Tokyo And to the Gulf.

For business travellers I've introduced the Snoozers.

Special flights with convenient night departures and early morning arrivals.

So that you arrive rested and ready for business.

And the daily New York Whizzer.

The fastest flight out of India, with just one stop at London.

I've also stretched my upper decks and I'm adding to my fleet.

Which means more business class seats with an emphasis on comfort.

My Maharajah and Executive lounges in most cities have also been refurbished to make relaxing

"Look now, I'm changing!"



a better experience.

On to my favourite area of change Food.

I'm pandering to your many discerning tastes

For Bacchus, I bring the best from the cellars of Frankhof Kellerau.

For the gourmet, a choice of menus.

Light Continental – specially created in consultation with Steigenberger – internationally renowned restaurateurs.

And for the ethnic epicure, wondrous and hearty Indian delights.

Now my inflight entertainment is also nonstop. With film festivals that feature The Great Classics. Oscar Winners Best of Broadway. Best of Hollywood and Indian directors

Audio channels boast a repertoire of pop, Western and Indian classical, ghazals, jazz and a very special programme for kids.

There are lucky seat surprises, and inflight shopping for nonstop shoppers.

Now come aboard Air-India.

You'll love the new picture."

AIR-INDIA

HTA 2322 R



Tapas Das

"India is doing what it can"

On the eve of Rajiv's China visit, the Dalai Lama on the future of Tibet

The Tibet problem crops up during virtually every high-level meeting between the Indians and the Chinese. The issue is likely to surface again when Rajiv Gandhi visits Beijing this month. However, Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama and religious head of the Tibetans, feels that this matter may not be discussed at all. In a rare interview, conducted while he was in Sarnath to attend a meeting of exiled Tibetans, he discusses India's attitudes to the Tibet question and outlines a solution for the problem.

Sunday: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi will soon be visiting China. Do you think his visit will result in a breakthrough on the Tibet problem?

Dalai Lama: I don't think so. The first meeting between an Indian Prime Minister and top Chinese leaders cannot achieve anything concrete. It is just a beginning. That's only natural. And things are not easy. There is the Tibetan problem and the Sino-Indian problem. It will take time.

The Indian government has been supportive of the Tibetan people through resettlement programmes, educational and cultural development. Are you happy with the Indian attitude towards the Tibetan problem on the political front or do you feel India can do more?

Despite India's own difficulties, the help which we have received from the Indian government is really something extraordinary. In the field of rehabilitation and preservation of Tibetan culture and also education for the younger generation, the Government of India, I think, has done the maximum. And we are really grateful for this. Not only this generation, but generations to come will not forget India's help, particularly at a moment in Tibetan history which was perhaps the darkest. It was connected with China. It is so delicate. Under such circumstances, what the Government of India did was marvellous.

In the political field, yes, there are disagreements between our view and the Government of India's. We always say Tibet is a separate country. The Government of India has recognised Tibet as a part of China. But then, you see, realistically speaking, you can't blame the Indian government. India has already taken a position on the issue. It is like a train. You can't change tracks midway.



The latest issue of the Tibetan bulletin, which is brought out by your information and international relations office at Dharamshala, while lauding India for supporting the democratic struggles of the Burmese people, pointedly says that it is time India took a serious view of the Tibetan issue. What more can India do?

(*A long pause.*) I am of the opinion that the Government of India is doing whatever it can do. That is my feeling.

Are you trying to say that this is not the right time to comment on the subject?

Yes, sometimes it is not much use talking. My reason for saying that whatever the Government of India can do, it has done is because since Pandit Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Morarji Desai and Indira Gandhi, all Indian Prime Ministers have been very sympathetic. Some people, you see, sometimes without knowing about this deep feeling, criticise Indian policy (towards Tibet). I am a person who has had the opportunity to know generations of Indian Prime Ministers and also President Rajendra Prasad, whom I regard as Bodhisatva. All Indian leaders, including Indian communists, are very sympathetic to me.

Which communist leaders, in particular, have been sympathetic to you?

I have met some Indian communists. I know Jyoti Basu very well.

Is Jyoti Basu very sympathetic towards the Tibetans?

Yes, very good. There is a big difference between Chinese communists and Indian communists (*laughs*). It seems that the Indian communists have a much broader perspective.

Tension between USA and USSR is easing. The USSR is fast normalising its relations with China. On his recent visit to New Delhi, President Gorbachev categorically said that he would like to see good relations between India and China. It is also being speculated that the Chinese position will be strengthened vis-à-vis India . How will all these changes in international relations affect the Tibet problem?

"Some people criticise Indian policy (towards Tibet). I am a person who has had the opportunity to know generations of Indian Prime Ministers. All Indian leaders are very sympathetic to me"

I think the overall position has become less tense and this will definitely help the Tibetans. One of my ideas is for the eventual creation of a zone of peace in Tibet. In that respect, good relations between India and China and China and the Soviet Union and mutual trust are very important.

Do you think China will readily accept the idea of a zone of peace or a de-militarised buffer zone?

Oh, no, no, no. It is difficult. But I do feel that as time goes on, we should meet, discuss and exchange ideas. Then there is a possibility. This will not weaken the Chinese position but eventually, it will help the Chinese. Both India and China don't want war but, at the same time, a large number of soldiers are stationed in this difficult area on the Sino-Indian border. Now, if you use common sense, as long as a large number of soldiers remain face to face, it will only lead to documents of declaration, but not a possibility of a zone of peace.

Then, you see, there is the problem of a deep gap between the Chinese and the Tibetans. In Chinese eyes, every Tibetan is someone bad, backward...In Tibetan eyes, every Chinese is an aggressor. There is no trust. If you want genuine harmony, the fear has to be reduced. As long as the soldiers are there in such large numbers, talk of harmony is meaningless. If there is healthy harmony between Tibet and China, it makes for regional peace. These two factors, I believe, are crucial for the creation of a zone of peace.

In Strasbourg, you announced a compromise formula. Under this, Tibet will be governed by Tibetans in all areas, except external relations and defence—which will be Chinese responsibilities. A meeting to discuss this is scheduled between your representatives and the Chinese authorities in Geneva in January. Why then did you say at a recent speech in Dharamshala that it will be a long time before anything concrete can be achieved? What obstacles do you foresee?

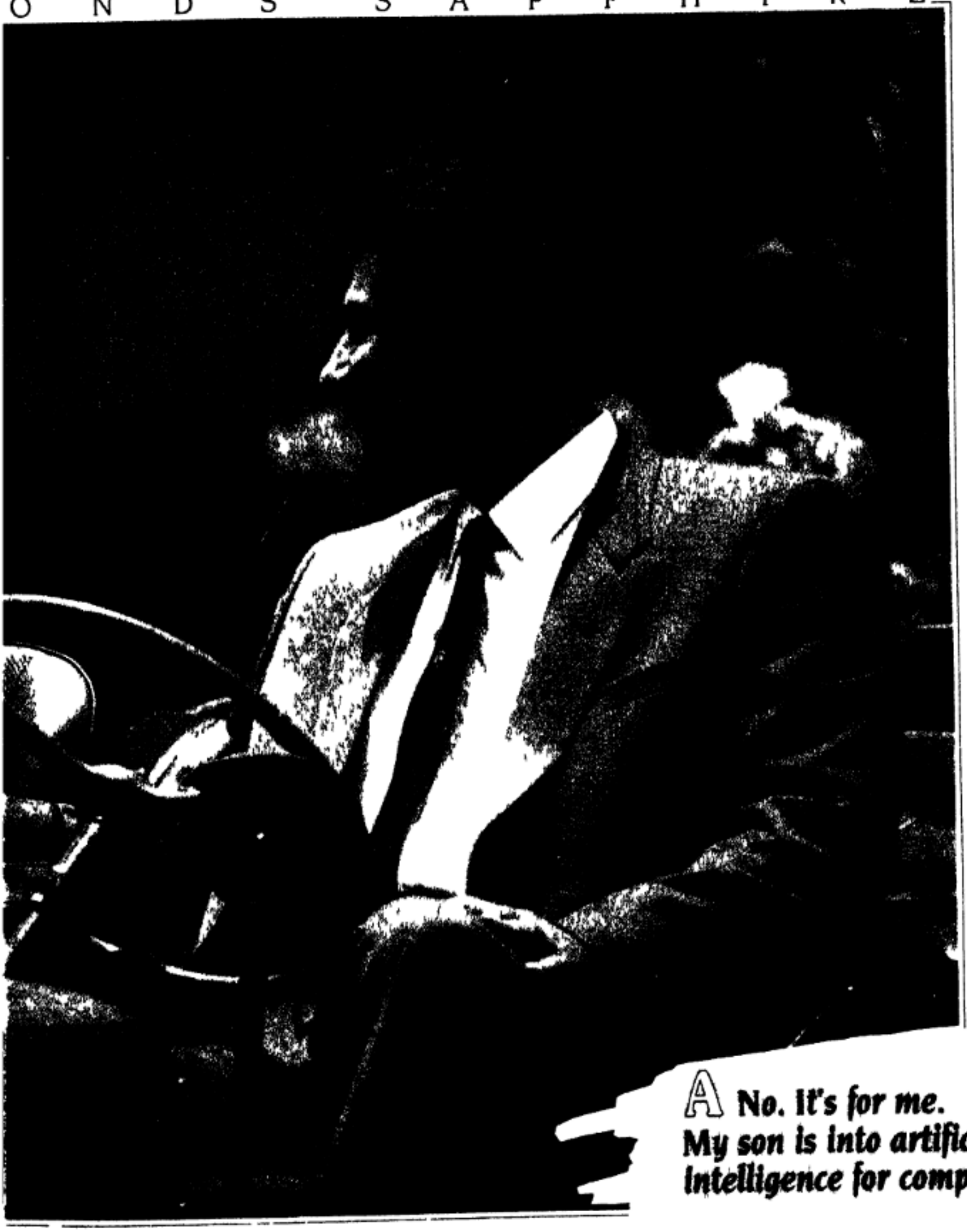
The Chinese are ignorant of Tibetan history, Tibetan culture and, most important, what has happened in Tibet since the so-called 'liberation'. I don't deny that there has been some development since the supposed liberation. New hospitals, new schools, factories. But if you compare the construction sites and the destruction sites, the destruction is something immense. More than 6,000 monasteries have been destroyed...The Chinese like to blame the cultural revolution. But destruction started from 1955. Till 1983, more than one million Tibetans have died. (*Here an aide of the Dalai Lama intervenes to read out statistics on the number of Tibetans who have reportedly died of starvation, committed*

Q *Is this a toy horse for your 3 year old son?*

R A Y M



O N D 'S S A P P H I R E



A No. It's for me.
My son is into artificial
Intelligence for computers.

Raymond's
The final word



suicide, been imprisoned, etc.)

In 1970, Hua Guofeng visited Lhasa. The local authorities did up entire villages. For a foreign visitor, this is understandable; but when their own leader comes, why should local authorities change things?

That is very similar to what happens in our country when Rajiv Gandhi goes visiting villages...

(Laughs uproariously.) At least in India, there is freedom of the press. Whether you have enough courage or not, does not matter. At least, you have the freedom. When Emergency happened in this country (India), everyone shouted, but when we compare the situation during the Emergency in this country with that of Tibet and China, this Emergency was something in passing.

Sometime back, you spoke of a 'deep gap' between the Chinese and the Tibetans. Could you please elaborate?

"Yes, (Jyoti Basu is sympathetic to the Tibetans). There is a big difference between Chinese and Indian communists. The Indians have a much broader perspective"

Since the Chinese 'liberated' Tibet, the Tibetan masses have received immense benefit—that is the Chinese feeling. They feel Tibetan society is backward, dark and crude. But I think when we compare Chinese culture with Tibetan culture, Tibetan culture is far more advanced, certainly no less. And that is due to Indian culture. Tibetan culture has its roots in Buddhism and Buddhism comes from this country. So, culturally speaking, Tibet is like a student of India

Today, in the 20th century, there is a lot of prosperity, but despite this, there are 700 Tibetan Buddhist centres all over the world - all established after 1959. Many of these are in communist countries like Poland and Hungary. Of course, there are more Chinese restaurants, but very few centres of Chinese culture. The Chinese feel they have been 'generous' towards the Tibetans and yet the 'foolish Tibetans' do not show gratitude. These are the obstacles.

The Chinese authorities recently blamed you for the clashes in Lhasa. Do you think the scheduled negotiations in Geneva will receive a setback because of this?

I don't think so. We have direct contact with the Chinese government since late 1978. Sometimes they have a more friendly attitude, sometimes they appear to be scolding us. Sometimes they accuse me of being a trouble-maker. Sometimes they call me 'Dalai reactionary' and sometimes they call me 'Dalai Lama' *(laughs)*.

Did the Indian policy makers get in touch with you in connection with the Prime Minister's visit to Beijing? What was the Indian attitude towards your Strasbourg formula?

From time to time, we meet the Prime Minister, the foreign minister, the foreign secretary. We are old friends now. But what I talk in office must remain in the office. My personal contact with the present Prime Minister is since his childhood. Pandit Nehru used to call me to his house in Teenmurti Bhawan. One day, the Chinese Premier, Chou En Lai, Pandit Nehru, Panchen Lama and I were there having lunch. Rajiv and Sanjay were playing outside with rockets, small rockets *(laughs)*.

Practically, all Indian parties have sympathised with us, officially or unofficially. Once a close Indian friend told me that no matter which party is in power, the central government in India will have deep sympathy for Tibet, including the communists. I think that is an authentic observation.

Interviewed by Patralekha Chatterjee

THE GREAT COMPANY BAZAAR



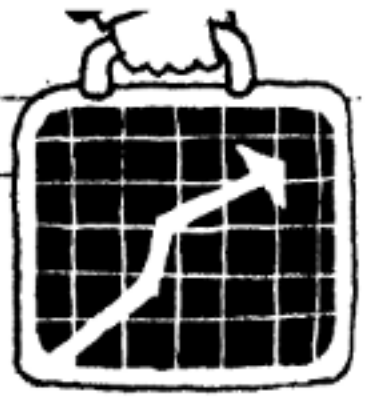
An aggressive breed of tycoons launches a take-over war

All at once, it is the hottest game in town. It's take-over time in Indian industry and, suddenly, everybody wants to play. Two months ago, charismatic textile tycoon Dhirubhai Ambani wangled control of engineering giant Larsen and Toubro (turnover: Rs 559 crores) from under the noses of a host of corporate competitors, including the current amir of acquisitions, Manu Chhabria. Not that Chhabria had much to complain about. The month before that he had ousted his partner R.P. Goenka to take full control of tyre maker Dunlop (turnover: Rs 482 crores). And Goenka in turn had gone off on a take-over spree of his own, funded, perhaps, by some of the money he got for his Dunlop stake. Among his acquisitions, computer company ICIM (turnover: Rs 29 crores) and south India's Harrison Malayalam (turnover: Rs 61 crores).

And there are lots of other players. Last November, the London-based Hinduja brothers beat scooter-king Rahul Bajaj for control of automobile giant Ashok Leyland (turnover: Rs 364 crores). A few months ago, Vijay Mallya took over Western India Engineering. Last week, his friend Rajan Pillai acquired RJR Nabisco's share in biscuit-maker Britannia. The month before that, the deceptively low-profile Dilip Piramal bought over his biggest competitor Universal Luggage (turnover: Rs 50 crores) thus ending, at a stroke, the discounting war in the moulded luggage market.

Even those like Ambani who were thought to eschew the path of acquisition for corporate growth have suddenly changed tracks. Last year, S.K. Birla took over Chloride India (turnover: Rs

Priya Ranjan Rakshit



THE BIG ONES

The biggest take-overs of the last two years

COMPANY	GROUP	EQUITY CAPITAL (Rs Crores)	MARKET CAPITALI-SATION (Rs Crores)	SALES (Rs Crores)
Shaw Wallace	M R Chhabria	6 75	49.00	188 92
Mather & Platt	"	6 40	54 00	42.04
Hind Dorr Oliver	"	2 37	46 00	43.63
Dunlop	"	19 69	162.00	430.26
Gordon Woodroffe	"	2.50	1 00	15.06
Subtotal		37 71	312 00	719 91
Ceat Tyre	R P Goenka	9 32	112 00	320 20
Bayer India	"	16 22	97 00	112 98
Searle India	"	3 47	61 00	36 08
Harrison Malayalam	"	9.10	60 00	68 88
Asian Cables	"	3 02	15 00	36 93
Subtotal		41 13	345 00	575 07
India Foil	B M Khaitan	4 38	30 00	104 94
Metal Box	"	14 68	6 00	136 26
Subtotal		19 06	36 00	241 20
Bombay Tyres	K N Modi	4.50	7 00	Lock out
Ashok Leyland	Hindujas	21 39	132 00	428 97
Special Steel	Tatas	8 27	65 00	125 91
L & T	Ambanis	51.99	753 00	567 66
Chloride India	S K Birla	20.65	153.00	108.93
Grand Total		**204.70**	**1803.00**	**2767.65**

84 crores), making it the Birla group's first major acquisition. And for all of last month, there have been persistent rumours that Imperial Chemical Industries will sell some of its shareholding in Indian Explosives Limited (IEL) to B K Birla and his son Aditya. The Tatas, too, are in the game. After a messy squabble with Nani Palkhivala, Darbari Seth, whose companies include Tata Tea and Tata Chemicals, acquired a substantial presence in the Associated Cement Companies (ACC), suggesting that he was setting the stage for a management take-over. Now, Seth is said to be in the running for Mangalore Chemicals and Fertilisers (MCF).

And the take-overs keep coming. The Chhabrias who have become a Rs 1,200-crore group, simply through acquiring companies, appear to bid for new firms every week. Hardly had they taken over Geneley (turnover Rs 72 crores), when they got into a nasty dispute with the management of Gammon India, and joined the race for MCF. R.P. Goenka set his eyes on new targets and the Hindujas, whose fortune from trading runs into hundreds of millions of dollars, made it clear that they were in the acquisition game. At Reliance's plush Nariman Point headquarters where the official line had always been to look down on those who grew through mergers and acquisitions, there was a subtle but significant shift in policy. The new wisdom had it that while the Ambanis were not compulsive bidders like the Chhabrias or the Goenkas, they would now look very hard at a 'golden opportunity' of the kind that the Larsen and Toubro take over represented.

Obviously, the great company bazaar had opened.

To create an industrial empire, you need to be a visionary like G.D. Birla. To successfully run an existing empire, you need to be a terrific manager like J.R.D. Tata. But to be king of the take over game, you need to be a street-fighter.

Nobody proves this adage better than Swraj Paul, the portly, London-based head of Caparo group, who tried in 1983 to take over two respected Delhi companies: Escorts and DCM. Paul, whose British companies have participated in such take-overs as Barton and Fidelity, was drawn to India by the finance ministry's invitation to non resident Indians (NRIs) to invest in their country of origin. While most of the NRIs who responded were content to simply buy shares or put money on deposit, the canny Paul looked harder at the Indian corporate scene. He soon discovered that many of those who claimed to own industrial empires, actually owned less than ten per cent of these empires. The rest was divided almost equally between public financial institutions and the public.

This discovery led him to the obvious conclusion: if he could buy more equity than the promoters, then, given his track record of delivering results to shareholders, surely he would have a greater right to manage these companies? Accordingly, he began buying shares in Escorts, a go ahead tractor firm, and DCM, a sleepy, sloppy conglomerate.

Confronted with a hostile take-over that seemed set to succeed, the managements of both companies reacted with outrage and refused to register Paul's shares. Faced with this unexpected hurdle, Paul took his battle to the streets. In city after city, he would address meetings and hold press conferences at which he would call Escorts' Hari Nanda names, dismiss those journalists who opposed him as "purchasable commodities", tear into all of Indian industry (sample: "What is so great about J.R.D. Tata? There are more scandals surrounding his group than any other.") and make several legitimate points about dubious Indian corporate practices.

It was the equivalent of a kick in the groin of Indian business and given the large institutional shareholding in both firms, it seemed probable that Paul's offensive would result in victory. Unfortunately for him, Mrs Gandhi died suddenly and Rajiv—who did not share his mother's affection for Paul—refused to let the bids go through. Paul returned to England, several million pounds poorer but his point had been made: given the

structure of ownership in Indian industry, take-overs were easy to mount.

But what Paul did not realise was that there was another street-fighter who had come to the same conclusions much earlier. Moreover, R.P. Goenka had thought of something that Paul had missed, the FERA factor.

Much of Indian industry is dominated by firms in which multinationals have a substantial stake. By the mid-Seventies, many of the foreign parents were having second thoughts about India. There were four reasons for this. Firstly, some multinationals found the return on investment in India to be lower than elsewhere. Secondly, nearly all were upset by such laws as FERA and the rules governing repatriation of funds. Thirdly, many had come to the conclusion that to manage in an Indian environment, you needed a local partner who could bribe and cajole. And finally, some multinationals were themselves in trouble and saw the sale of their Indian subsidiaries as a good way to raise funds.

R.P. Goenka came from a Calcutta Marwari family that had grown through acquisitions. Duncan Brothers in the 1940s, Balmer Lawrie, National Tobacco and Asian Cables in the 1960s. He split with his brothers in 1979 and entered into negotiations with tyre multinational Ceat for the sale of part of the equity in its Indian subsidiary. In 1982, Ceat agreed to sell him 30 per cent. The following year, he talked to American pharmaceutical giant G.D. Searle and bought a strategic stake in its Indian operation. (The multinational retains 40 per cent.) These experiences convinced him that the way to grow was not through setting up new units ('greenfields projects') but by either buying out foreign shareholders in existing firms or by entering into strategic alliances with them, whereby he took a stake in the firm and oversaw its management.



Vijay Mallya: in daddy's footsteps



Vittal Mallya built his entire empire on acquisitions in the food, drink and drug industries. His son Vijay lost out in Shaw Wallace but now that he is an NRI, there seems little doubt that he will emulate his father



Dunlop headquarters in Calcutta: it's Chhabria's show now

Both Goenka and Paul had impressive political clout in the early Eighties. Not only did they have Mrs Gandhi's ear but they also enjoyed access to R.K. Dhawan and Pranab Mukherjee. But Goenka had a problem. To buy out foreign companies, he needed to pay them in hard currency and the Reserve Bank was unable to allow transfers of such large amounts. Paul, who had millions of pounds, chose, strangely, not to use them to buy out foreign firms, and once his two Indian take-overs failed, returned to London. (He says now "It's not worth the time and effort to get involved with the maharajas of the Indian corporate sector.")

Another Indian industrialist found that he shared Goenka's problem. Vijay Mallya, the booze baron of south India, was the son of Vittal Mallya, a low key corporate genius who built up a massive food and drink empire through acquisition. The younger Mallya lacked his father's genius and sobriety, but he too wanted to hit the take-over trail. His problem was the same: lack of access to legitimately acquired hard currency.

It was the solution to this problem that really led to the present acquisition boom. Both Goenka and Mallya thought that the ideal way out was to find a non-resident Indian, with whom they could enter into a partnership. The NRI would pay the multinational, in hard currency, for shares in its Indian subsidiary and then the partners would jointly run the new acquisition.

Both of them thought of the same NRI: a street-wise, self-made consumer electronics millionaire called Manohar (Manu) Chhabria. Though Chhabria had made his fortune selling Sony goods in the Gulf, he hankered to return to India in triumph. So, when Goenka suggested that they jointly purchase Dunlop Rims and Wheels, the international Dunlop subsidiary that held some of the shares to the Indian company, he willingly

agreed. He was pleased to co-operate too, when Vijay Mallya asked him to join a bid for R.G. Shaw, a Sime Darby subsidiary that owned shares in Calcutta liquor giant Shaw Wallace. Goenka was clever enough to openly announce his partnership with Chhabria, while burying the financial details of their association, but Mallya, whose control of Shaw Wallace would have invited a Monopolies Commission investigation, concealed his involvement.

By then, Chhabria had already executed one take-over. He had bought Gordon Woodroffe, a sleepy, 1,113-year-old, Madras based company from Dilip Piramal. Nevertheless, Shaw Wallace and Dunlop would put him in the big league and he went full speed ahead with the acquisitions.

Of the two, Dunlop was the easy one. R.P. Goenka was so well connected that the take-over went through without a hitch. Chhabria became chairman while Sanjiv, Goenka's younger son, took over the management. Shaw Wallace, however, was trickier. The management complained to the government that Mallya was trying to obtain a monopoly position in the liquor industry through the back-door. This was a legitimate objection, and soon, V.P. Singh's finance ministry launched a full-scale pursuit of Mallya and the Chhabrias.

In the face of this onslaught, Mallya caved in and withdrew from the bid. There was talk of selling the R.G. Shaw shares to RJR Nabisco, the US conglomerate that owned Britannia (see *box*) and even of Nabisco executive Rajan Pillai, a close friend of Mallya's, taking his place. Nothing came of these moves, however, and the Chhabrias went ahead with the Shaw Wallace bid on their own.

After over a year of battling the existing management, they made their peace with the finance ministry by writing one of V.P. Singh's notorious letters of 'apology' and purchased more shares on the market. Finally, by 1987, just as V.P. Singh shifted from finance, they managed to seize control of Shaw Wallace. Manu became chairman and his brother Kishore took over as managing director.

It had been a long, dirty battle but Manu Chhabria had proved his mettle as a street-fighter. And he had also demonstrated that in Rajiv Gandhi's India, if you really wanted to take over a company and had the money and opportunity to do so, then nothing could stop you.

Since then, it has been open season for take-overs. According to Ram Piparaiya, of Bombay's Andhi Investments, of the total market capitalisation of Rs 25,000 crores, around Rs 1,800 crores changed hands in 1986 and 1987. This works out to around seven per cent and Piparaiya expects that the figure for 1988 will be ten per cent. If the growth in the number of take-overs continues, then next year's figure will be even higher.

In 1986 and 1987, Rs 1,800 crores changed hands through take-overs, mergers, and acquisitions. This amounts to seven per cent of the total market capitalisation

Many of the take-overs have involved offshore transactions. Inspired by the example of the Chhabrias, the Hindujas got in on the act. When British Leyland announced that it was selling off its Indian subsidiary, a host of corporate heavyweights hot-footed it to London. Leyland rejected Chhabria because of his lack of automobile experience. The favourite, then, was Rahul Bajaj, who

Picking corporate plums

Take-over king Manu Chhabria's appetite is not yet sated

Industrialist Manu Chhabria buys companies the way other people buy groceries at a supermarket. In the last few months, the non-resident tycoon from Dubai has been on a shopping spree once again. In quick succession, he has taken full control of Dunlop, bought Shalimar Paints for 2.5 million pounds sterling and last week, he ended the take-over saga by snapping up the troubled Calcutta corporation-Genelec, which has been on the auction block for the last one year.

But Chhabria scarcely even bothered to take time off to celebrate the Genelec deal. His attention is already on newer conquests. He is settling in for a long, hard war of attrition at Gammon India Ltd, where the management has vowed to oppose him tooth and nail. At the same time, he has mopped up an estimated ten per cent of the shares of the ailing Mangalore Chemicals and Fertilisers (MCF). Says Chhabria blandly: "My buying in MCF is purely as a part of our investment portfolio."

There may well be others on the hit-list. Last week, the stock markets were buzzing with rumours that Chhabria was buying into Union Carbide and Indian Aluminium, as the shares of the two companies leapt on the exchanges. Chhabria himself emphatically denies such moves, though he says he might be interested in buying Indian Aluminium if its foreign parent company is interested in selling. Union Carbide Corporation of the US has denied that there is any question of selling their Indian operations.

At the same time, Chhabria is also breaking out and setting up 'greenfields projects'. He is in collaboration with the Gujarat and Narmada Fertiliser Corporation (GNFC) for two projects—a Rs 200-crore venture to make television glass shells; and a Rs 125-crore project to make television picture tubes. He has also signed a letter of intent with the Gujarat Investment Corporation for a methanol project.

Those who thought that the Chhabria phenomenon was a transient one, had better think again. The two Chhabria brothers—Manu and younger brother, Kishore—are among the top-ranking Indian industrialists and are obviously here to stay. They are two of the most powerful merchant princes of the Calcutta industrial scene with their clutch of companies, which includes Dunlop, Shaw Wallace, Shalimar Paints and Genelec. According to Manu Chhabria's own estimates, his Indian empire—built up since 1985—is now worth well over Rs 1,000 crores. That alone puts him in the same league as the Modis, the Thapars and the Singhanias. But Chhabria insists that he has barely begun to stretch himself and his actions seem to bear him out. In-

had put together a complex financial package with Reserve Bank approval. Finally, however, the Hindujas, with more cash in hand and without the encumbrances of government approval, linked up with Fiat subsidiary Iveco and simply outbid Bajaj.

Non-resident Indians continue to enjoy an enviable advantage in offshore transactions, because of the ease with which they can raise resources. Manu Chhabria thought nothing of paving £14 million for Mather and Platt, or a relatively paltry £9 million for Dorr-Oliver. Similarly, Rajan Pillai was able to put together a leveraged deal at extremely short notice to buy four RJR Nabisco subsidiaries (including Britannia India Limited) with a combined turnover of $300 million.

And now that Vijay Mallya is an NRI, he is expected to launch several offshore take-overs (Alfa Laval is one) far from the prying eyes of the Enforcement Directorate. The Hindujas too, despite having lost the race for Harrison Malayalam, are interested in several other companies. Nat Puri, another NRI, recently took over Holman Climax and is now bidding for International Combustion. Among the other suitors for International Combustion is Mahabir Sen, a former Calcutta resident, now an NRI.

Usually, Indian groups fare less well in offshore transactions. (Arun Bajoria and Parasmal Lodha are also in the running for International Combustion.) The notable exception in recent months has been S.K. Birla, who beat the Hindujas and the Chhabrias for control of Chloride India. The international Chloride management said that they were swayed by the reputation of the Birlas and the group's bid of £18 million was cleverly structured. Birla paid £1.8 million through an NRI partner called Jani and the rest was mopped up by Merill Lynch and Citibank.

Another Marwari businessman who has mastered the art of entering into 'strategic alliances' with foreign firms is the obsessively low-profile B.M. Khaitan. His friendship with Richard Magor has led him to assume the management of Calcutta's Macneill and Magor, though the exact details of the financial arrangements remain a matter of speculation. He also has a substantial stake in India Foils and two years ago, bought into Metal Box. While he resigned from Metal Box's board of direc-



Manu Chhabria is really the mystery man who came from nowhere. Fifteen years ago he was repairing transistors. Today he wears Lanvin suits and runs a Rs 1,200-crore empire

deed, in industrial circles, his name is frequently mentioned in the same breath as other big league players like the Ambanis and the Hindujas.

Of course, the tycoon has had his ups and downs over the last year. At times, it almost looked as if Chhabria had lost his golden touch. Especially when the biggest take-over prize of them all—Larsen and Toubro—eluded him and he retired, rather gracelessly, from the battle against the Ambanis. Before that, he had already been beaten in the race for Allwyn Nissan Limited and outmanoeuvred in the fight for Ashok Leyland. Along the way, he had also made abortive bids for Chloride India, Bengal Lamps and a few smaller companies like the Bangalore-based International Instruments.

But the Chhabrias were bouncing back even then and they demonstrated their muscle in no uncertain terms in Dunlop. Over the course of the last year, their relationship with Rama Prasad Goenka deteriorated gradually and it was clear that one side would have to leave sooner or later. The showdown came in mid-1988. The full story of the final deal which was thrashed out in London is never likely to be told. But there is no doubt who came out the winner. Goenka's son, Sanjiv, the former deputy managing director, resigned from Dunlop and his place was taken by the Chhabrias.

As their new empire takes shape, the Chhabria style is gradually evolving. Manu is basically the corporate predator on the prowl for companies. He prefers to depend heavily on his brother Kishore, who looks after Shaw Wallace, and the existing executives who run each outfit. Manu also has to look after his overseas empire, which is estimated to be worth in the region of $650 million.

In the future, Manu Chhabria may not find the going as easy as it has been. First, he has a formidable set of enemies. But, more important, now that he has shown the way, a host of others are eagerly trying to follow. For instance, Chhabria is not the only person to have accumulated MCF shares. Tata Fertilisers, headed by Darbari Seth, is also thought to be in the race. And there may even be others —there is a rumour that Goenka is also buying shares in the company and so perhaps is SPIC's A.M. Muthiah.

Chhabria himself is taking no chances. No take-over artist will ever be able to catch him unawares—he takes care to hold more than 40 per cent of any company he owns. The race may be hotting up, but the new challengers will have a long way to go before they overtake Manohar R. Chhabria, the king of the take-over game.

Paran Balakrishnan/*New Delhi*

Manu Chhabria: from Lamington Road to Lanvin



tors, after failing to tame the unions, he retains his shares.

Most corporate observers believe that in the years ahead, more and more foreign companies will either divest themselves of Indian shareholdings or take on Indian partners who understand the political-economic environment. Even Coca Cola, which managed alone in India for years, before a change of government led to its departure, has taken care to link up with an Indian house (Godrej) for its attempted return.

The offshore take-over is easily the most publicised of all acquisitions, because usually, the company involved has a famous brand name or is a household word. Nevertheless, several purely domestic take-overs have taken place.

The most famous – and strangely, uncontroversial -has been the take-over of Larsen and Toubro (L&T) by the Ambanis. L&T has long been perceived as a perfect take-over target. Despite its size it has no large individual shareholders. The chairman and managing director, N.M. Desai, has a mere 0.7 per cent. Henning Holck-Larsen, one of the two founders, controls 1.4 per cent, financial institutions own a staggering 49 per cent (52 per cent by another reckoning), and the rest is with the public. Three years ago, the Ambanis were in the process of initiating a take-over but held off following V.P. Singh's attack and Dhirubhai's stroke.

This summer, however, several others had the same idea. The Hindujas let it be known that they were interested. So did Rahul Bajaj. But it was Manu Chhabria who fired from the hip as usual. He ordered his brokers to buy, buy, buy, and, in no time at all, they bought 1.5 per cent making him the largest individual shareholder among L&T's 120,000 shareholders.

N.M. Desai, already in trouble with the Company Law Board over the sale of a company flat, did not relish a Shaw Wallace-type battle with Chhabria. The Ambanis, peeved at being caught out, made their moves, even as public attention was focussed on Chhabria's purchases. Shrewdly, they first cleared the take-over with Delhi. They were told that the financial institutions would not oppose a take-over by them. Next, they began buying the shares till they had a larger stake than Chhabria. Finally, they did a deal with Desai (L&T built Reliance's Patalganga plant), whose retirement was imminent anyway and who had no clearly designated successor. (Characteristically, the Ambanis now claim they were 'white knights'.)



The Ambanis: a change of strategy



Darbari Seth: take-over games



K.Mahindra: mystery bid for M&M?

"We are second-class citizens"

R.P. Goenka on the current take-over mania

SUNDAY: Why have you relied on take-overs so much to grow?

R.P. Goenka: It is my personal view that when you are on the path of progress, it should be through both take-overs and grassroots growth. But, strictly, we haven't been involved in take-overs. Take-overs, by definition, are hostile and the only one, that falls into this category is Premier Automobiles. All the others have been buy-outs-- where the seller has agreed to sell.

To what do you attribute the recent spate of take-overs?

After DCM and Escorts, there really haven't been any hostile take-overs. But buy-outs have increased.

Foreign companies have realised that without the expertise of Indian management, they cannot function well. Local environment can be understood only by the locals. It is a mistake to believe that foreign holdings in companies are being sold because of tax laws and the like.

Do NRIs have an unfair advantage in the take-over game?

(*Sarcastically*) We are second-class citizens.

Are there any drawbacks in running companies that you take over?

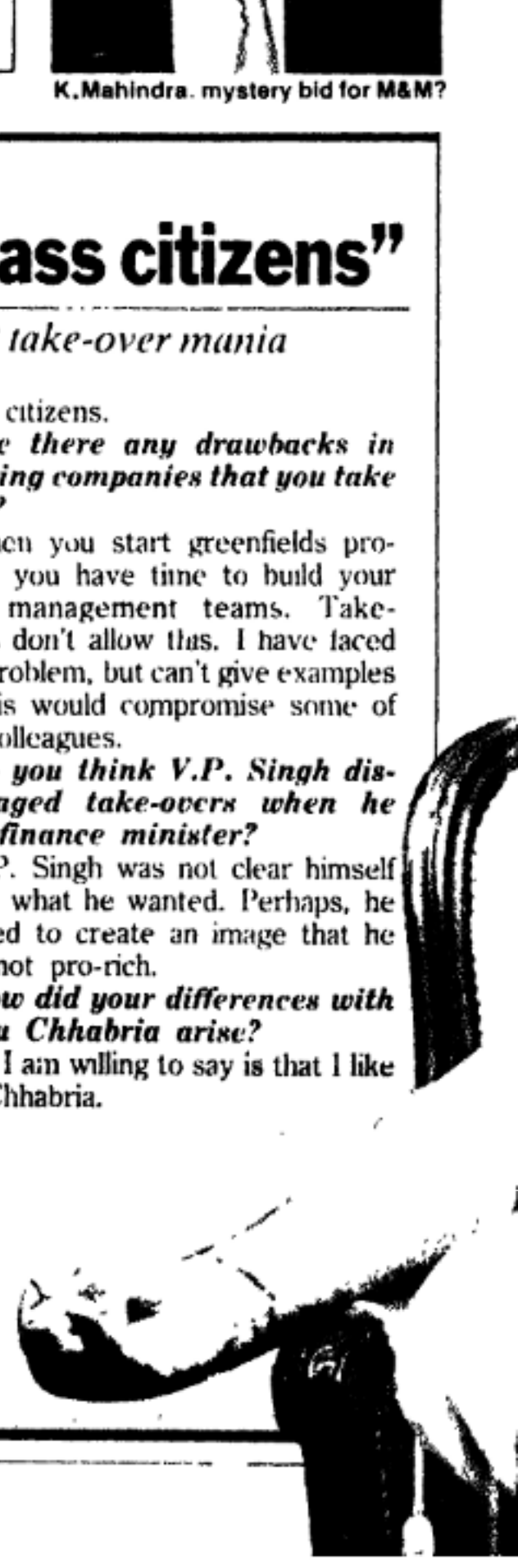
When you start greenfields projects, you have time to build your own management teams. Take-overs don't allow this. I have faced this problem, but can't give examples as this would compromise some of my colleagues.

Do you think V.P. Singh discouraged take-overs when he was finance minister?

V.P. Singh was not clear himself about what he wanted. Perhaps, he wanted to create an image that he was not pro-rich.

How did your differences with Manu Chhabria arise?

All I am willing to say is that I like Mr Chhabria.



It was feared at the time that the Ambani take-over would cause a fuss. After all, L&T was a successful, professionally-managed company and the last thing it needed was to be controlled by a family-run group. The role of the financial institutions (who made it clear that they would not support a Chhabria bid) was crucial because they could have easily repulsed the Ambani take-over. Yet strangely, except for the predictible howls from the *Indian Express*, there was no outcry. Most people seemed to think that the take-over was a good thing.

Perhaps this indicates how much take-overs have become an accepted part of the Indian corporate scene. Says Dilip Piramal, whose empire has now grown to Rs 300 crores: "Take-overs are a good thing. They are a sign of a healthy economy." Piramal certainly practises what he preaches. His own domestic take-overs have included Maurice Electronics, PMV Auto Electricals, Sayajee Mills, Kota Stone and now, Universal Luggage. Agrees Sanjiv Goenka: "Take overs are an easy way of growing rich quickly."

While L&T is the most publicised recent domestic take-over, there have been others. MRF of Madras has taken over Crystal Investments and Finance; the Chhabrias of Finolex (no relation to Manu) have applied to take over ILAC; the Oberois have taken over Pleasant Hotel Ltd; the Mahindras beat the Hindujas, Bajajs and Walchands to take over Allwyn Nissan Ltd, and the Chhabrias grabbed Shalimar Paints.

And, of course, there are the rumours of bigger bids to come. (For instance, Orkay.) One prize, on par with L&T, would be Mahindra and Mahindra. As a mystery buyer began mopping up the shares, there were rumours that a take-over attempt was in the works. Four years ago, when Swraj Paul was rumoured to be interested in the company, the Mahindras had reacted with fear, recognising that a determined bid der with institutional support stood a good chance of succeeding. Last month as the business press rounded up the usual suspects the denials came tumbling in. The Ambanis said they weren't interested. The Chhabrias claimed they had bought no shares and the Hindujas feigned incredulity. But then, the Ambanis denied they had any interest in L&T, almost to the time Mukesh Ambani was elected onto the board, and none of the other bidders has a high credibility on such issues. So the big question at the end of 1988 was: will Mahindra and Mahindra change hands in 1989?

The current boom has its roots in Goenka and Mallya's need for an NRI partner to take over Dunlop and Shaw Wallace. They both approached the same man: Manu Chhabria. And finally Chhabria ended up controlling the companies



R P. Goenka, the take-over pioneer

J Paul Getty, the oil wildcatter who became the world's richest man, used to say that he found it cheaper to drill for oil on Wall Street than in Texas. In other words, it made more sense to take over a company with proven oil reserves than to locate new sources of petroleum. The reasoning behind the current take-over mania is somewhat similar. It is much simpler to buy 20 to 30 per cent of an existing firm and seize control than it is to identify a profitable sector, raise finance, hire managers, set up a new project and wait several years for it to break even.

The problem with this approach is that the country's net wealth does not go up, as it would with a new project. All that happens is that control of one productive asset changes hands. In the old days, such critics of the Goenkas' rapid growth, as the Tatas, Birlas and Ambanis would maintain, in private, that all R P. Goenka had done was put his name to somebody else's work. On the other hand, they would claim, they had actually created wealth.

This is a valid argument, but one that seems to be forgotten in the current acquisition fever. All the 'greenfields' houses now seem to have geared themselves to acquire companies on the grounds that somebody is going to buy them anyway, and it might as well be them. In the long run, this cannot be a healthy trend.

The other problem pertains to repayment. All the offshore take-overs involve hard currency payments. Yet, the revenues generated by the assets so purchased are all in rupees. Considering that nearly all of the overseas bids are financed by banks, industrialists must need to make interest payments in hard currency. Where is this money going to come from?

There is no clear answer to this question. The Chhabrias and the Hindujas say that the loans will be serviced out of their group's foreign revenues. The Goenkas have so completely concealed

Baron of Britannia

Rajan Pillai is the new biscuit king

It has been called the deal of the century and the ripples are being felt in India. On 30 November, RJR Nabisco one of the world's biggest food conglomerates was bought out after a bitter take-over struggle for $25 billion. Within a few days, one of Nabisco's top executives, Indian-born J.M. Rajan Pillai had lined up a smaller deal of his own to buy out a chunk of the Nabisco empire. Amongst Pillai's acquisitions was Nabisco's Indian subsidiary, Britannia India Limited.

Britannia India is only one part of the empire which Pillai has just acquired. The 41-year-old Nabisco executive is now the owner of shares



in the company's operations in three other countries –Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. Together the combined turnover of the four operations is reckoned at anywhere around $300 million. Contacted in London by SUNDAY, Pillai said: "When I joined Nabisco my contract said that if the ownership of Nabisco changed, I would be given first option to buy these operations. I have exercised this option."

Pillai is no stranger to the Indian corporate world. He became the chairman of Britannia in 1983 when Nabisco bought out Huntley and Palmer, the UK company which orignally held the controlling interest in Britannia. Ever since then there has been no doubt about who calls the shots at Britannia and the youthful chairman is thought to be the main mover behind the company's ambitious growth plans

Ever since 1985, Pillai has been the chairman of a $100 million Nabisco subsidiary, Nabisco Commodities, a company which dealt mainly in buying cashewnuts for Nabisco's vastly popular Planter's Nuts. From his base in London Pillai also supervised the operations of Nabisco's Far East and Indian operations.

Pillai has not done badly for a person who started with peanuts—literally. He made his first start in business in 1974 by setting up a small unit in Singapore which processed nuts and snacks. Initially he had a tough time, but in 1976 Nabisco offered to buy a stake in his business and made him a partner in a joint venture.

For the time being, Pillai plans to stay on at Nabisco Commodities in which he has a 20 per cent stake. But this will depend, of course, on what Kravis, Kohlberg and Roberts, the winners of the Nabisco take-over battle, decide to do in the future. There has been speculation that they will sell off a large part of RJR Nabisco's businesses to pay off the debts which have piled up as a result of the deal. But Pillai believes that RJR is financially strong enough and will not need to do this. Whatever happens, there is no doubt that Pillai will be calling the shots in Britannia from now on.

Paran Balakrishnan/*New Delhi*

the real ownership of their stakes in their companies that nobody is sure how they finance their take-overs

But, despite these explanations, one alternative seems obvious the *hawala* market. It is frequently suggested that many of the take-over tycoons extract cash from their companies and then send it abroad through *hawala* transactions.

If this is true, then what it means, in effect, is that shareholdings owned by multinationals who adhered to the Reserve Bank's repatriation laws, have now passed to new overseas entities, whose managers bleed their companies, flout the RBI's laws and send the money abroad illegally. This can hardly be a good thing.

Many of those who support take-overs point to the experience of the West, where even hostile take-overs are a part of life. Unfortunately, this parallel ignores the fact that Indian take-overs, unlike their Western counterparts, generally ignore the interests of the small shareholders. Says A. Shankaran, head of the merchant banking division of Standard and Chartered Bank: "The moment a buyer crosses 30 per cent in his share purchases of a particular company, he should make an open offer to buy the company. He should issue a document explaining why he wants to buy the company, what he'll do with it, why his price is fair, etc. This is corporate democracy." In fact, shareholders sometimes gain paper profits during Indian take-overs because the share price goes up, but rare is the buyer who follows the Western practice of tendering for all the shares

However, some bankers argue that however desirable this practice, Indian capitalism is not ready for it yet. They give the instance of sick industries which are frequently turned around by daring managers who take over ailing units One instance is Arun Bajoria who has taken over five jute mills since 1985 and whose group turnover is now Rs 150 crores. Most of the mills were bought from big houses like the Bangurs and Kotharis who could not run them profitably. Bajoria, on the other hand, has turned them around. Would take-overs

Dilip Piramal: a range of acquisitions





like Bajoria's have been possible if he had been made to buy out all the shareholders?

Nothing illustrates how much the take-over world has changed than the story of the aborted Bombay Dyeing take-over. Way back in 1972, when Manu Chhabria was repairing transistors on Lamington Road and Dhirubhai Ambani had not a factory to his name, the young R.P. Goenka—on behalf of his father—entered into an agreement with Neville Wadia, the gentle Parsi owner of Bombay Dyeing, to take over what was then a widely respected and extremely successfull mill.

After the agreement had been drawn up and the price specified, Nush, Neville Wadia's brash son, got wind of the deal. He rushed to his father and accused him of selling the family inheritance. He urged Neville to welsh on the deal and to keep Bombay Dyeing for him to run. Overcome by emotion, Neville relented. He went back to the Goenkas. Yes, he said, he knew that they had a deal. But could he back out? The Goenkas were upset, but being gentlemen, they agreed. The two sides shook hands, the agreement was forgotten and the deal came unstuck.

Would that ever happen in today's rough-and tumble take-over arena? Unlikely. This is the era of the street-fighter. Nearly every acquisition is accompanied by bitterness. After the Shaw Wallace partnership broke up, Vijay Mallya vowed to get the Chhabrias. When R.P. Goenka and the Chhabrias tried running Dunlop together, relations deteriorated to the extent that each side suspected the other of planting critical stories in the press. When Ambani decided that he would take over L&T, there were rumours that he had arranged to have the Chhabrias raided in an effort to show them who was boss.



B.M. Khaitan: master of the strategic alliance

Even within the extended Tata family, share transactions lead to great bitterness. When Nush Wadia put in an application for ACC's convertible debentures, Nani Palkhivala feared that he would launch a take-over and held him off. Wadia retaliated by starting a personal battle against Palkhivala and enlisting the aid of his father figure, J.R.D. Tata.

Nobody fights as hard as the giants, though. Considering the special relationship that the Hindujas and the Ambanis currently enjoy with the powers-that-be in New Delhi, there is constant speculation that North Block isn't big enough for the two of them, given that they are both in the market for acquisitions. Already the Hindujas dismiss the Ambanis as minor league players who lack their resources. And the Ambanis, in turn, regard the Sindhi millionaires as mere commission agents with no experience of management. There is even talk of a Chhabria-Hinduja alliance (with Nusli Wadia as junior partner) against the might of Dhirubhai Ambani.

And each month, the targets keep growing bigger. Four years ago, the Rs 200-crore Shaw Wallace was considered big time. Now, it is the Rs 550-crore Larsen and Toubro that is the new benchmark. What next? The bush telegraph has it that the Hindujas have already begun talking to British American Tobacco about a strategic alliance that would give them control of ITC.

When the battles end and the dust settles, corporate India might be a very different place.

Olga Tellis and Gita Piramal/*Bombay*, Paran Balakrishnan/*New Delhi* and Mukund Padmanabhan/*Calcutta*

"It was a mistake to have looked at India"

Swraj Paul on his aborted take-over attempts

SUNDAY: Are take-overs a good thing in the Indian context?

S. Paul: Take-overs are a good thing in any context. The management is kept on its toes; otherwise they tend to sleep. Take-overs make managements think of the company and not of themselves.

You made a bid to take over DCM and Escorts in 1983-84. Why did you give in so tamely at the end?

I just tired of what was happening. I don't like shenanigans. I want things to be above board. I found that there were things happening not to my liking. So, I decided to walk out.

In retrospect, do you think it was a mistake to have gone after DCM and Escorts and not foreign-held companies?

In retrospect, I think it was a mistake to have looked at India at all. There are better places to invest.

But you could well have been successful if you tried to acquire foreign-held companies as other industrialists are doing nowadays.

I do not like the idea of acquiring the controlling interests of companies and leaving the shareholders high and dry. I think this is ethically wrong.



Swraj Paul: changed all the rules

With DCM and Escorts, I was not buying a control. What some people are doing is to buy a control at a very high price, assume the management of the company and ignore the shareholders. The shareholders must be allowed the opportunity to sell their shares at the same price.

Would you attempt another take-over in India if the opportunity presents itself?

No. Not at the moment anyway.

SPECIAL FEATURE

BEYOND THE GODFATHER

It's a bloody free-for-all on the streets of Bombay







"The Hindi film industry always gets it wrong. The real underworld is not like Deewar *all that* mara-maar *It's more like* The Godfather, Part II *"*

Haji Mastaan, 1984

It's been only four years since Mastaan made that remark and already, life has imitated art with a vengeance! The Bombay underworld today resembles nothing as much as a Salim Javed night mare, littered with bullet-casings, sacks of money and lots of corpses. Gone are the days of the dons. Mastaan now spends more time on politics than plunder. Yusuf Patel prefers building to butchery. Varadarajan Mudaliar is dead. And Karim Lala sits in unhappy retirement, his gang in jail and his old eminence forgotten.

In fact, the Hindi cinema fails to capture the free-for-all bloodthirsty ar of today's underworld. *Dayavan*, a big budget Vinod Khanna starrer released two months ago, was clearly based on the life of Varadarajan Mudaliar (better known as Vardha) and recreated the *Godfather II* ambience of honour among thieves and gentility among gunmen. A mere two days after its release, it crashed to box-office disaster. And who could be surprised? Because only a couple of weeks after the *Dayavan* premiere, Arvind Dholakia, a leading light of today's underworld, was gunned down at his Caesar's Palace hotel in the middle of Linking Road by two men he obviously knew well. And all around the city, as the gang wars went into overdrive, the bullets flew every which way and hoodlums and hitmen hammered it out on the streets. In the circumstances, who could be blamed for choosing not to see Vinod Khanna do a Vardha-Corleone take-off when the real world was so much more exciting and dangerous?

In one respect, however, Mastaan was right about the *Godfather II* parallels. Remember that scene at the end of *Godfather I* when Al Pacino tells Diane Keaton: "In five years time the Corleone family will be completely legit"? Remember also the opening sequence of *Godfather II*, when Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) entertains a Senator at a family function in Lake Tahoe? And how, just when you think that, yes, the Corleones have finally gone legit, there's a hail of gunfire and a botched assassination attempt? The Corleones, you realise then, will never *really* be legit. At best, they will be hoodlums muscling in on a legitimate activity.

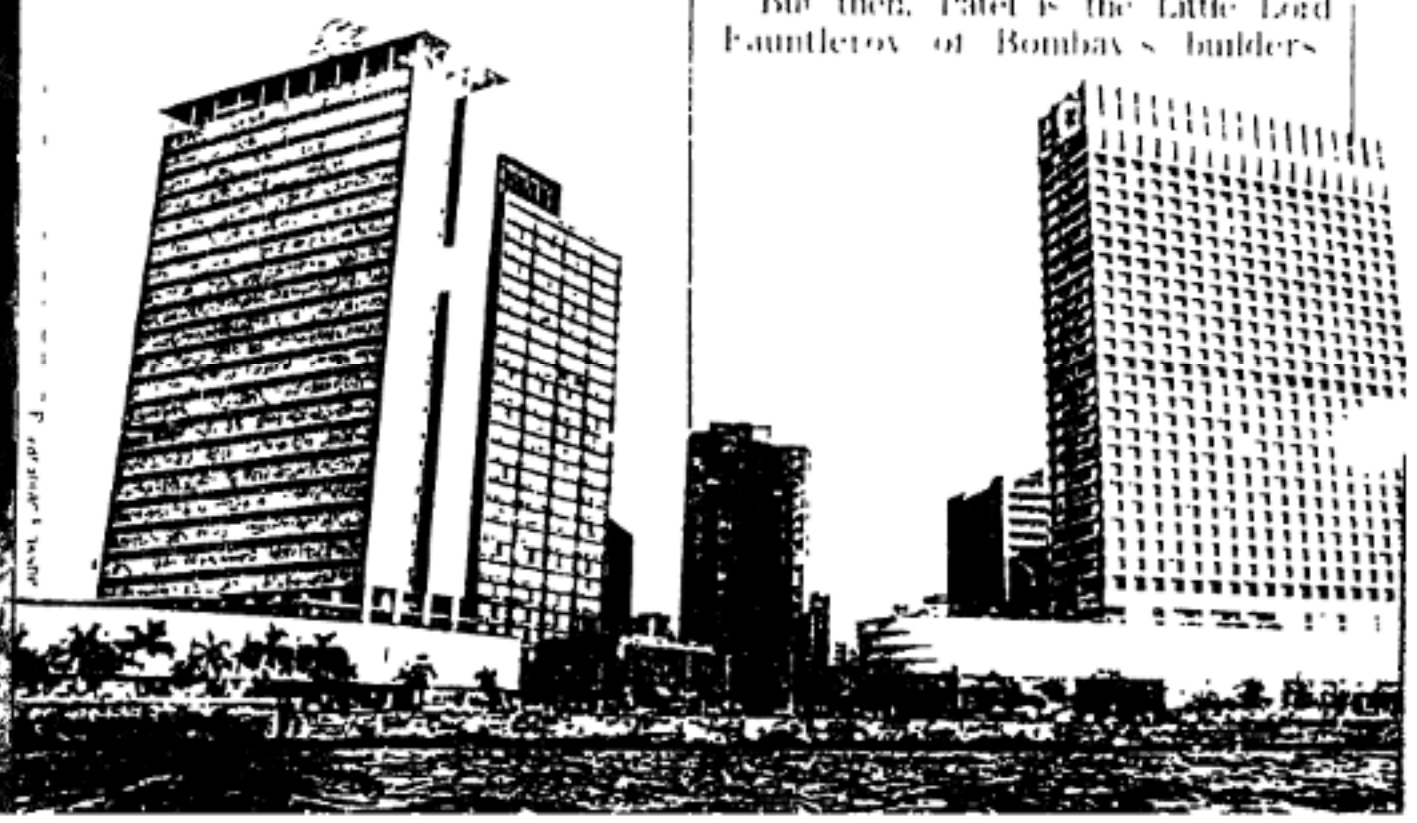
The Bombay underworld today is a lot like that. The Corleones, fed up of prostitution, loan sharking and extortion, moved to Las Vegas, pleased to have found in casino ownership and management, an apparently legit profession that lends itself to criminal techniques. It's much the same in Bombay. Here too, fed up of gold-smuggling and bootlegging, the clever gangsters have moved to a new profession that welcomes their methods. Except that it's not casino management. It's construction.

The best example of this, of course, is Yusuf Patel, the fast talking, hip-shooting Memon yarn merchant who has forsaken the dhows for building contracts. Five years ago, Patel made an unwelcome return to the headlines when he was caught fabricating figures relating to the size of the plots his buildings were constructed on. The enhanced plot size entitled him to more floor space index (FSI) and, thus, to a greater built up area and, naturally, higher profits.

Patel wormed his way out of that mess and managed to persecute the unfortunate Collector of Bombay who caught him. The Collector went off abroad on a UN assignment while Yusuf still keeps the buildings coming and is doing very nicely, thank you. What's more, he managed it all without firing a single shot, something of a heroic achievement for a man in his line of work.

But then, Patel is the Little Lord Fauntleroy of Bombay's builders.





However disgusting his methods may appear to the rest, by the standards of his contemporaries, he is virtually the least unsavoury. To realise how relatively angelic he is, one need only look at the Dholakia brothers.

There were four Dholakia brothers: Pravin, Lalit, Arvind and Mahesh. If you asked them what they did, they replied 'construction'. If you then asked why, in that case, they needed a gang of Shetty toughs from Girgaum to assist them in their creative endeavours—then, you were usually forcibly ejected from their presence.

The Dholakias' best known enterprise is the Caesar's Palace hotel on Linking Road, between the Bombay suburbs of Khar and Bandra. Named after the hotel in Las Vegas (shades of *Godfather II*), it is the sort of establishment that does not require you to wear a lounge suit when you come to dinner; a revolver is much more useful. Its principal activity is prostitution and its accounts serve as a front for laundering the illegal profits of various underhand transactions.

At the Caesar's Palace, the disco, launched with great fanfare in 1980, was called Cleo's (get it?). But despite its popularity with the ladies of the night, Cleo's lacked the pyrotechnic high-flash of Fisherman's Wharf, the Dholakias' other disco at Worli Sea Face. (It recently changed hands in a *benami* transaction for a crore of rupees and is now called Guru Kripa.)

Their forays into the hospitality industry, however, were a mere sideshow compared to the construction business. Like all other builder-criminals, the Dholakias calculated their profit margins on the basis of FSI fiddles. This didn't always work. A housing complex called Yamuna Nagar near the Lokhandwala Estate in the north Bombay suburbs never got an occupation certificate—so blatant were the FSI violations. This meant that the flats could not be occupied by those who had paid for them. No matter. The Dholakias saw no reason to return their money. Those who did ask for refunds found themselves at the receiving end of hefty doses of terror.

The Dholakias flourished for decades despite periodic brushes with the COFEPOSA and NSA laws. But two years ago, when the gang wars broke out in Bombay, the brothers found their lives in danger as other criminals tried to muscle in on their territory.

On 30 March, 1987, Mahesh Dholakia, the most prominent of the brothers, was shot in broad daylight as he was entering the compound of his home in Bombay's upmarket Napean Sea Road locality. The men behind the murder sent out a warning: one down, three to go.

The Dholakias were both shaken and angry. Lalit asked Dawood Ibrahim, the Bombay don now in exile in Dubai, to organise a ceasefire, while Arvind announced that he would avenge his brother's murder. This boastful threat resulted in an attempt on Arvind's life. Terrified, he hired five bodyguards for himself and demanded police protection.

Why should Bombay's police force, short of men and hard-pressed for resources, bother to provide an armed escort for a gangster, who can afford five bodyguards of his own?

There's no real answer to this question, but for whatever reason, the police gave him a sten gun-wielding guard.

The new gangsters have chosen murder as the way to solve all their disputes. They have ignored the network of hitmen developed by the likes of Karim Lala and have gone into recruiting hoodlums and thugs, who deal with everything from extortion to assassination

Two months ago, the city's police commissioner, V.K. Saraf, withdrew the escort arguing, quite properly, that protecting hoodlums was not high on his list of priorities. Arvind Dholakia appealed to the state government. Saraf was told that Dholakia was to be protected.

Dholakia's links with politicians have long been the subject of gossip. In September 1988, Saraf suspended Caesar's Palace's hotel licence. Dholakia went straight to Sharad Pawar's government. The licence was immediately restored.

There was a precedent to all this. In 1983, Rajiv Gandhi, then an AICC general secretary and the crown prince, visited Bombay. To expose him to the masses, the Bombay Regional Congress Committee (BRCC) organised a walkabout through Dharavi, Asia's largest slum. Underworld figures promptly tried



Sebastian D'Souza



to capitalise on this *padayatra*. Vardha's men infiltrated themselves into the organisation and assorted hoodlums joined the procession. But it was the Dholakias who issued the biggest ads welcoming Rajiv and the brothers put it about that they had financed part of the *yatra*.

All of this made the Dholakias extremely powerful men in Bombay and many believe that Arvind did not want the police guard for protection, after all, he already had five bodyguards and could easily have hired a sixth. Instead, they argue, that he wanted the police escort to serve notice to his fellow-criminals that he was in bed with the political establishment: which other gangster would be protected by the police? And that if they dared attack him, then they were not just taking on the Dholakias but the government of Maharashtra as well.

In the end, of course, this was not enough to save Arvind Dholakia's life. On 27 November, he was standing in the porch of Caesar's Palace when he was approached by two men he seemed to know. They chatted in the porch for a while and he patted them on their backs. Then, he escorted them to his cabin. Suddenly, shots were heard from inside. Dholakia's bodyguards rushed into the cabin. He was lying on the ground in a pool of his own blood. The two men were nowhere to be seen.

Who killed Arvind Dholakia? Probably the same people who killed Mahesh Dholakia. Of course, the hitmen varied, but basically both murders were motivated by the same vendetta. And planned by the same clique.

To understand who these people are, one needs to appreciate how much the Bombay underworld has changed since Mastaan's day. Nobody pretends that murder and mayhem were far from the minds of yesterday's gangsters, but every dispute did not end in a hail of bullets.

Take one example. In the Sixties, Mastaan entered into a partnership with Yusuf Patel on a gold-silver smuggling caper. (The gold was smuggled in. The silver was smuggled out.) Patel cheated him and made Mastaan lose face with his principals in Dubai. There was no solution but vengeance. However, Mastaan, who has never carried a gun, did not at once shoot Patel down. Instead, he informed all the other Bombay dons that he was going to terminate Yusuf. Next, he approached Karim Lala, the Pathan head of Bombay's very own Murder Inc. Lala provided a hitman who was assigned the job of killing Yusuf. The gunman found Patel at a wedding feast and opened fire. Several bullets hit Yusuf, who collapsed and was taken for dead. But somebody up there liked Patel and despite the grievous nature of his injuries, he lived.

Mourners at Satish Raje's funeral: an unending series of murders

At this, Mastaan decided that it was Allah's will that Yusuf should live, took his reverse with good fortune and sent out a conciliatory message. The two men made up, the assassination attempt was forgotten and they became partners again--an association that survives to this day.

This strange story with its bizarre mixture of ritual murder and God-fearing reconciliation sums up the old Bombay underworld. It really was, to use Mastaan's parallel, like something out of *Godfather II*. Unfortunately, today's underworld seems to draw its inspiration from a more recent Al Pacino movie—the bloody, dung-smeared *Scarface*.

In the early Eighties, the underworld of Mastaan, Patel and Lala began to break down. First, Vardha, a former Mastaan henchman, emerged as the don of Dharavi and he eschewed many of the old concepts of honour and gentility, such as they were. But even Vardha never strayed too far. In the final analysis, he did what Mastaan told him to.

The gangs that destroyed the system were the Amirzada-Alamzeb mob and the Ibrahims. Both groupings were formed by former bodyguards and hitmen employed by the old dons. For reasons that are still the subject of

Haji Mastaan: an anachronism in today's underworld



Kalyan Chakraborty

ABSOLUTE DENTAL FACT

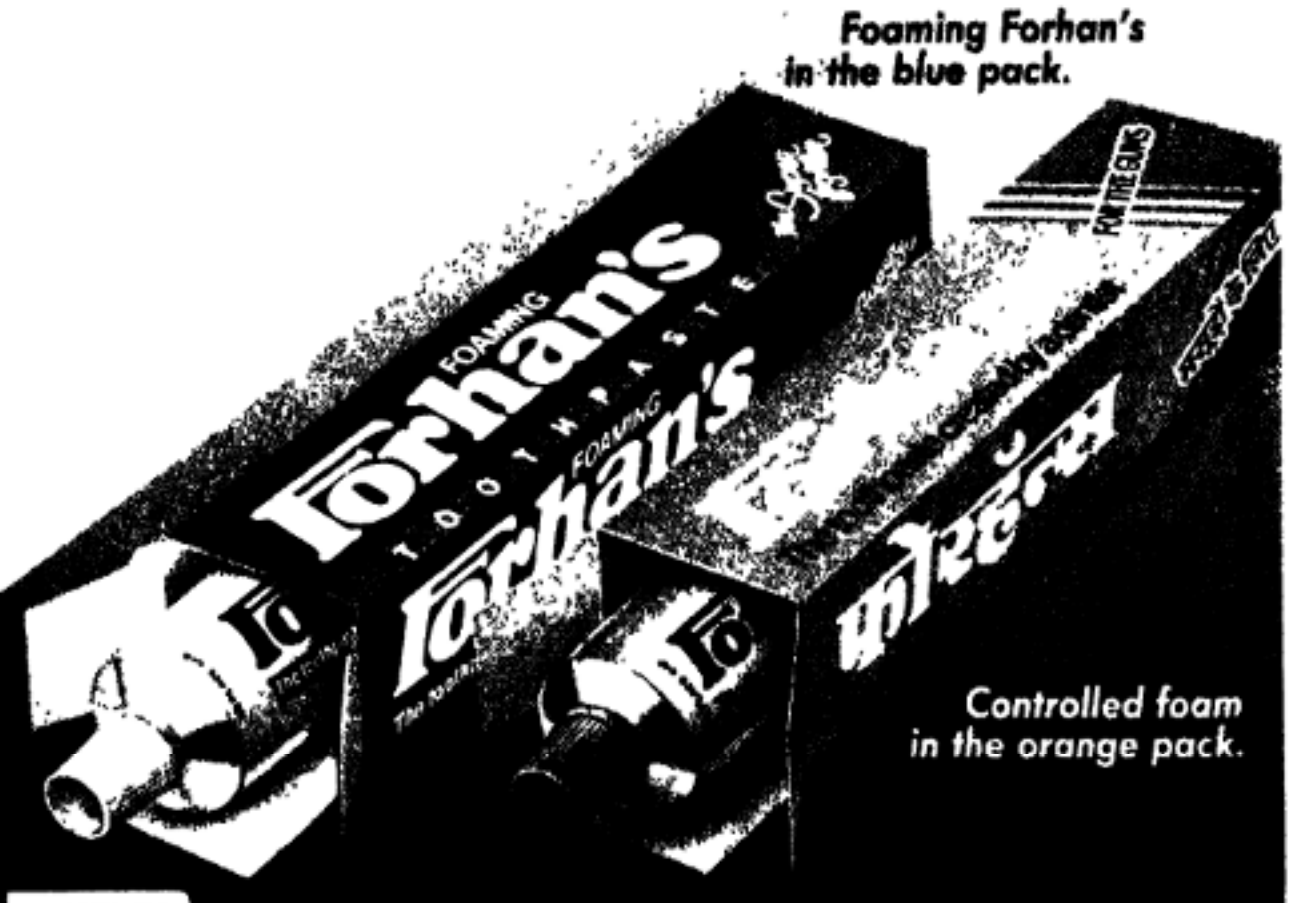
Bad breath has more to do with
the health of your gums than your teeth.





ABSOLUTE FACT

Only Forhan's* has an
exclusive astringent that tightens
gums and keeps them healthy
to prevent bad breath.



*Contains
no animal
bone-based
agent.

Forhan's
care
32 INTACT

The toothpaste created by a dentist.

GM 27/88 R

dispute, they launched a bloody feud. This came to public attention when Amirzada-Alamzeb gunned down Shabir Ibrahim at the Servocare petrol pump in Prabhadevi. The Ibrahims retaliated and soon, a free-for-all was launched. Shoot-outs took place at traffic lights, funeral parties were bombed and at least two witnesses were gunned down in the courts.

All of this dismayed the dons enough for them to summon a meeting at Haji Mastaan's crumbling bungalow off Warden Road. Both gangs were lectured on honour and good behaviour. Besides, they were told, this was all counter-productive. Even if one gang scored a triumphant hit one day, by the following week, the triumph would be negated by a retaliatory hit from their rivals. And finally, Mastaan declared all this public shooting was drawing too much attention to the underworld. The dons had built up a network of kept politicians and tame police officers after great effort and enormous expenditure. Now, if there was a public outcry about the gang wars, then even sympathetic police officers and politicians would have to act against the underworld. So, because of their irresponsibility and hot-headedness, *everybody* was in danger.

The young men listened to their elders in respectful silence. Yes, they conceded, the killing was pointless. They had been foolish. There would be no more blood-letting. Fine, said Mastaan, put your hands on the *Koran* and swear to make up and be friends again. They did as they were told.

Within a week, they were back to murdering each other in broad daylight.

It is important to appreciate this background to understand the Dholakia murders. As Mastaan had predicted, the Amirzada-Alamzeb vs the Ibrahims battle only resulted in nearly everybody being killed off. Finally, only Dawood Ibrahim, brother of the Shabir Ibrahim whose murder at the Servocare pump had started it all, was left. Faced with innumerable arrest warrants, Dawood did the sensible thing and, like so many latter-day industrialists, became a non-resident Indian (NRI). He chose to live in Dubai, where he paid no tax, was free from the prying eyes of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and could easily oversee his operations in India.

All his old Bombay activities continued as before except that now, he used professional managers. And unlike the dons of old, he gave instructions that anybody who dared cross him was to be murdered at once. Death, said Dawood, was the only permanent solution. And even if the hitman was caught, it would be virtually impossible for the Bombay police to make out a case linking the don himself to the conspiracy.

But with Dawood out of the country, many local gangsters believed that his clout had diminished. They reckoned that they could now move into his territory relatively easily; after all, how well could the don look after his interests from faraway Dubai?

At first, Dawood regarded such encroachments on his authority as only to be expected. But soon he realised that what had began as a trickle could soon become a flood. If he was to maintain his position, then anybody who challenged his authority, in any way, had to be taught a lesson. And Dawood Ibrahim knew how to teach only one lesson: death.

The Dholakias either did not appreciate Dawood's compulsions or else, believed that they could get away with it. They began to belittle the NRI don's authority. And in no time at all, they paid for it with their lives.

There's now no doubt that Dawood Ibrahim ordered the hit on Mahesh Dholakia. The disagreement was over territory. The Ibrahims' extortion operations were overseen by the swarthy, Byculla-based Rama Naik. However, the Shettys tried to get in on the act and Naik believed that they were doing so at the behest of the Dholakias. When Babu Resham, one of Dawood's most important henchmen, was murdered, Naik took it for granted that the Dholakias were responsible, and told Dawood so.

Over the trunk lines from Dubai, Dawood ordered a hit of Mahesh Dholakia, who was regarded as the brains behind the family's various enterprises. Naik entrusted the job to Arun Gawli who carried it out swiftly and with frightening ease. (The police, though, found out he was responsible and arrested him.)

An angry Arvind demanded blood for blood. His brother, he told anyone willing to listen, would be avenged. Naik got the message. The following month, he organised a hit on Arvind Dholakia. Unfortunately for Naik, his quarry escaped and then got police protection.

Naik, better than anyone else, understood the significance of the police escort. Dawood was richer and had many more men than the Dholakias, but he lacked political muscle. He had tried to get the cases against him withdrawn so that he could return to India, but he simply did not have the contacts required to swing this. Now, Naik decided, it was best to go easy on Dholakia as long as he enjoyed political patronage.

Those of Naik's associates who believed that he had overestimated the Dholakias' clout with the police ended up revising this opinion when, on 21 July, 1988, Naik himself was shot dead by police inspectors. It was, said the police blandly, an encounter. Naik had opened fire on the police party, which had retaliated and, in the process, he had been killed. Needless to say, nobody in Dawood's gang believed this version.

Pleased with this coup, Arvind Dholakia decided that the time had come to finish off all of Dawood's key henchmen. After all, he reasoned, he would never be safe until he destroyed Dawood's gang. It was exactly this sort of reasoning that had cost Amirzada and Alamzeb their lives, but Dholakia seemed not to notice.

The Dholakia's best-known enterprise is the hotel Caesar's Palace on Linking Road in suburban Bombay. It is the sort of establishment that does not require you to wear a lounge suit for dinner; a revolver is much more useful



Arvind Dholakia: meeting Caesar's fate



Courtesy, Indian Post

Dawood Ibrahim, the don in exile

Arvind Dholakia's next move came on 21 November, 1988. It was directed against Satish Raje, another of Dawood's lieutenants.

Raje was an underworld success story. Nine years ago in 1979, he had been remanded to a home for juvenile delinquents. The experience left him clear about his criminal inclination and he soon moved into the drug trade, starting out by trafficking in Mandrax and then working his way up. But he remained a police informant on the side, taking care to protect his friends and shop his enemies.

All of this was extremely profitable and Raje made the jump from being an under-age thug to becoming a man of the world. He purchased a string of racehorses, became a member of the health club at Bandra's Sea Rock Sheraton hotel and bought himself an air-conditioned, white Honda. Throughout, he continued to work for Dawood.

In the aftermath of Naik's death, Dholakia targeted Raje for elimination. This time though, he was not going to let the police do his dirty work for him. He was going to find his own hitman and murder him as publicly as Dawood had terminated Mahesh.

On 21 November, Raje and four friends were in his Honda when they stopped at a red light at Byculla junction, near J.J. Hospital. A taxi drove up alongside the Honda and its occupants rolled down their windows. Before Raje realised what was happening, they had opened fire. The Honda's windows and windscreen were shattered and a hail of bullets hit Raje. He was injured in his stomach, on his shoulders and on his head. The terrified driver took the car straight to the J.J. Hospital, where Raje was declared dead on arrival.

Arvind Dholakia had avenged his brother's death twice over.

Did Dholakia think he would get away with it? Didn't he realise that Dawood Ibrahim's very survival was at stake? Surely he realised that Dawood would not let this insult go unanswered, then it would be the equivalent of letting the world know that he was no longer in a position to protect even his key men?

We will never know the answers to these questions because the Dubai-based don moved with terrifying rapidity. A retaliatory hit was ordered at once. But recognising that Dholakia's protective shield of bodyguards would prevent any naked assault, Dawood was careful to select assassins who Dholakia knew personally and who he felt confident enough to invite into his cabin. And, as usual, he chose men who had no clear links with him. When the police picked up the killers a few days after the murder, they said that Dawood had nothing to do with the hit. The assassins claimed that Mahesh had owed them money; that Arvind had failed to honour his brother's commitment; and so, they had bumped him off. It was a neat, seamless story and one that the police cheerfully released to the papers.

"If history has taught us anything," the don says in *Godfather II*, "it is that you can kill anybody." It is a chilling message. Ironically, it is one of the few lines that apply to today's gang wars

"If history has taught us anything," Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) tells Tom Hagen (Robert Duvall) in *Godfather II*, "it is that you can kill anybody." It is a chilling message, mesmerising in its menace. And ironically, it is one of the few lines from Haji Mastaan's favourite film that apply to today's gang wars.

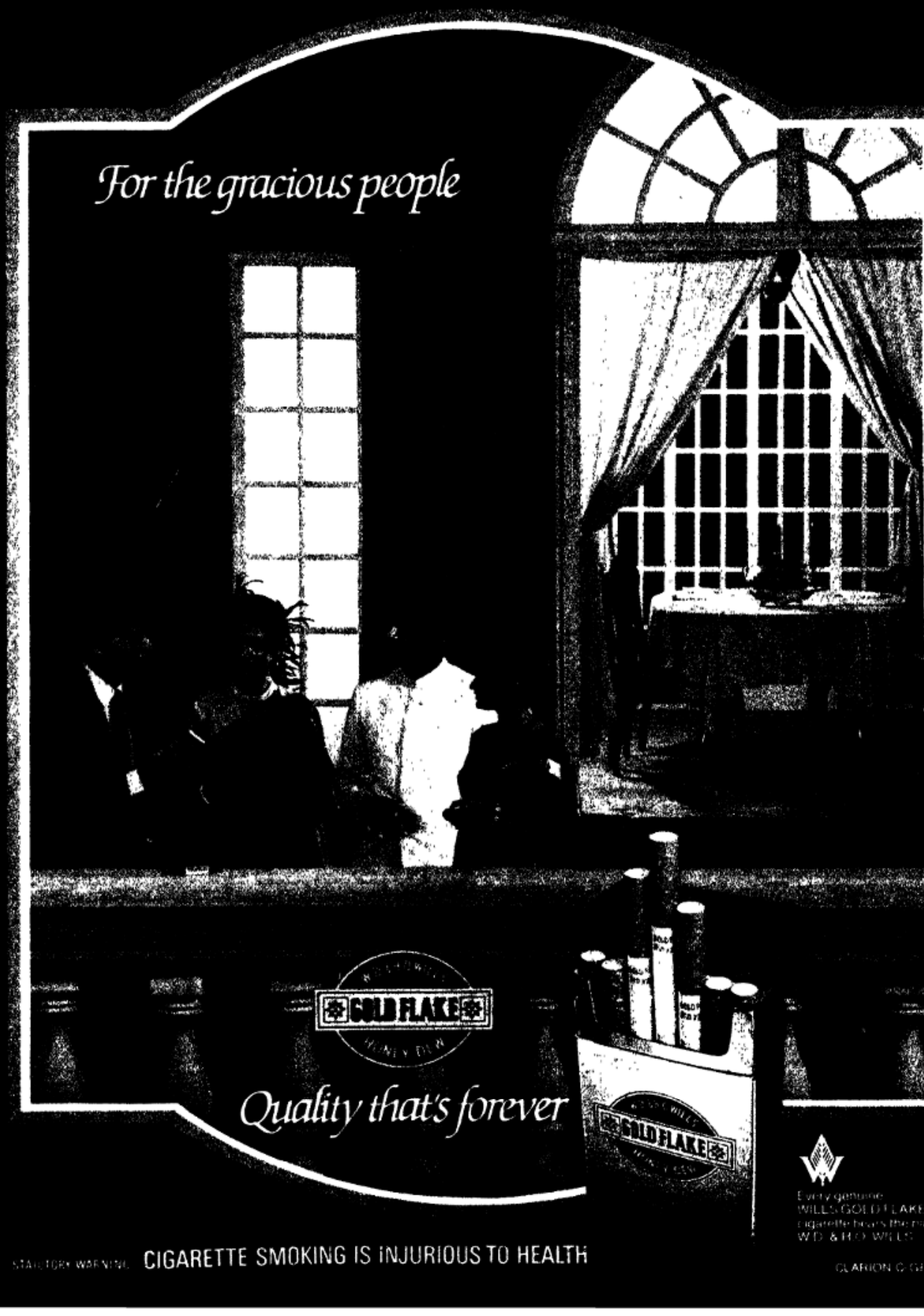
The new gangsters have chosen murder as the way to solve all their disputes. They have ignored the network of hitmen developed by the likes of Karim Lala and have gone straight for the recruitment of hoodlums and thugs who function as jacks of all trade from extortion to assassination. In the old days, Haji Mastaan would say that one reason why he had no trouble finding talent for his gang was that the communal prejudice in Indian society made it so difficult for young Muslim boys to find legitimate jobs. Perhaps, to an extent, that's still true. Mastaan and Patel's construction enterprises are staffed by the same kind of people who ran the smuggling operations.

But in the Sixties when Mastaan, Lala and Patel formed their gangs, Bombay did not have the massive slums that it has now. Today, the thousands of unemployed, rootless young men (many of them, originally from the south) know that they won't get jobs however hard they try. On the other hand, by breaking a few bones and slitting the odd throat, they are assured of a comfortable—if not princely—living. It is this pool of labour that the gangs depend on. Says V.K. Saraf, Bombay's police commissioner: "There is a lot of unemployment in the slums and it doesn't take much time to pick out bright and enterprising people to constantly fill the vacancies in the gangs." And these people will stop at nothing and kill anybody in an effort to stay ahead.

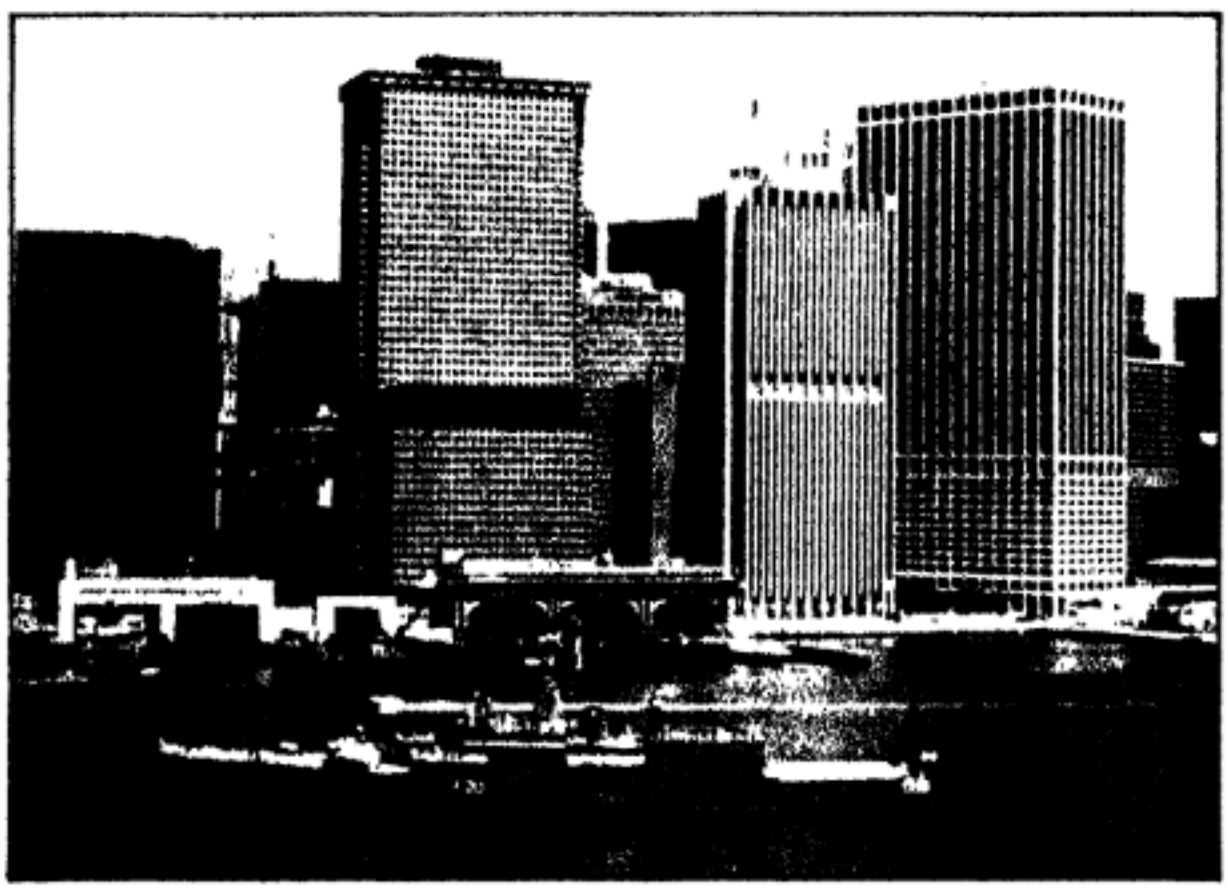
Mastaan has abandoned the effort to keep the old clans going. He knows that nobody will listen to him. He is not so much an irrelevance as an anachronism. Finally, he has been defeated, not by another don, but by the same forces of urbanisation that bring 500 families to Bombay each day and turn large chunks of the city into gigantic slums.

Until that changes—if at all, it does—Bombay will remain a bloody battleground for trigger-happy thugs.

Vijay Sahni with Olga Tellis/*Bombay*


For the gracious people
GOLD FLAKE
Quality that's forever
GOLD FLAKE
Every genuine
WILLS GOLD FLAKE
cigarette bears the name
W.D. & H.O. WILLS
STATUTORY WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH
CLARION C-GF-1

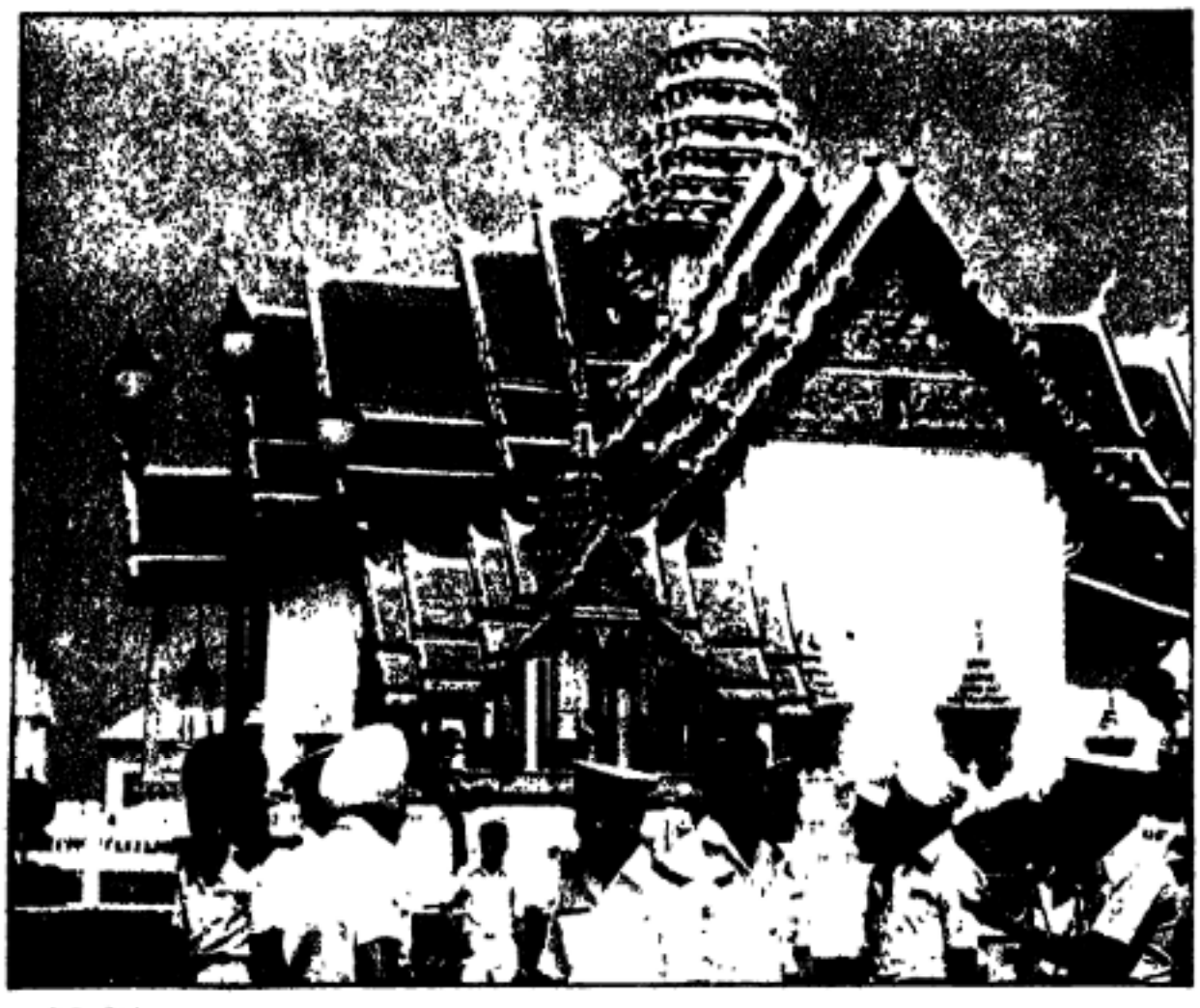
EMBARK ON A VOYAGE OF

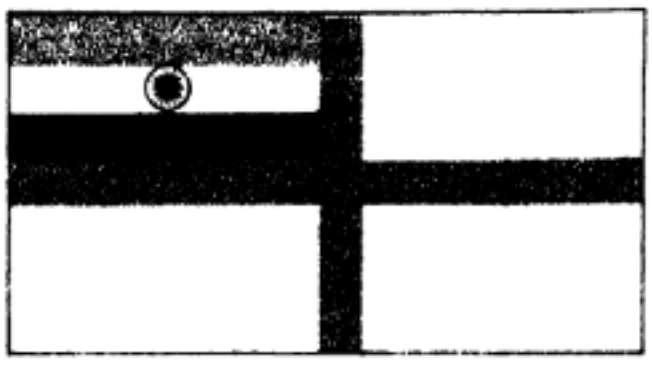




If you're young, ambitious and result-oriented you can ride the wave of success with the Indian Navy.
Engineer new fangled electronic guidance systems.
Command a multifaceted 21st century ship.
Design towering warships & hostile submarines.
Soar to dizzy heights in a supersonic Sea Harrier.
Get trained at the Navy's expense along with attractive perks.

TRAVEL WEST – TRAVEL EAST





JOIN THE INDIAN NAVY AND SEE THE WORLD

CHIRANJN

IF YOU ASPIRE TO BE FIRST
THERE IS NO SECOND CHOICE

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT – DIRECTOR MANPOWER & RECRUITMENT, ROOM NO. 208, 'C' WING, NAVAL HEADQUARTERS, SENA BHAWAN, NEW DELHI-110001



CONTROVERSY

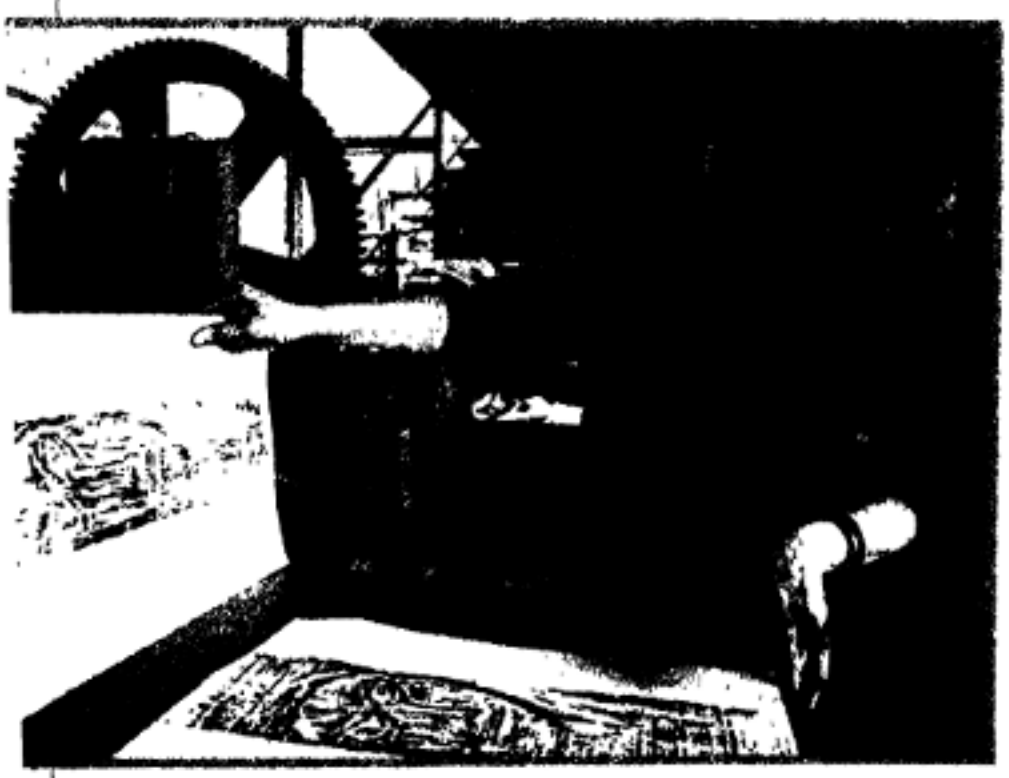
Of space and strife

Controversy abounds in the Lalit Kala Akademi studio complex in Garhi

From the outside it looks like any other disused monument, a neglected survivor of bygone times. But the Baradari in Garhi, Delhi, once a favourite recreation spot of the Mughal nobility, now houses the artists' studios of the Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA). Set up in 1975-76, with senior artists led by the venerable Sankho Chaudhuri and financed by the LKA, the complex (built on Delhi Development Authority land) houses eight studios. And in its quiet environs work the best of India's creative genius--Krishan Khanna, G.R. Santosh, Paramjit Singh, Arpana Caur, Narendra Dikshit and Chaudhuri himself. The list reads like a roll of honour.

But tranquillity in Garhi is only surface-deep. It is, in actual fact, as much a hotbed of intrigue as any self-respecting medieval court. And it all stems from as mundane a problem as lack of space. Of the eight studios in the complex as many as four are occupied by heavies such as Dikshit, Khanna, Santosh and Chaudhuri. For the lesser-known artists there are only four community studios: one each for the disciplines of pottery, sculpture, painting and graphics. Into each are crammed as many as 15 to 20 artists and the number waiting to get in is even larger.

The rush to gain admission into Garhi is understandable. Artists have to pay only Rs 200 every month for the use of individual studios and Rs 50 for working in a community studio, sums that are euphemistically called licence fees. This in prime South



In the graphics studio, Garhi: Bulbul Sharma at work



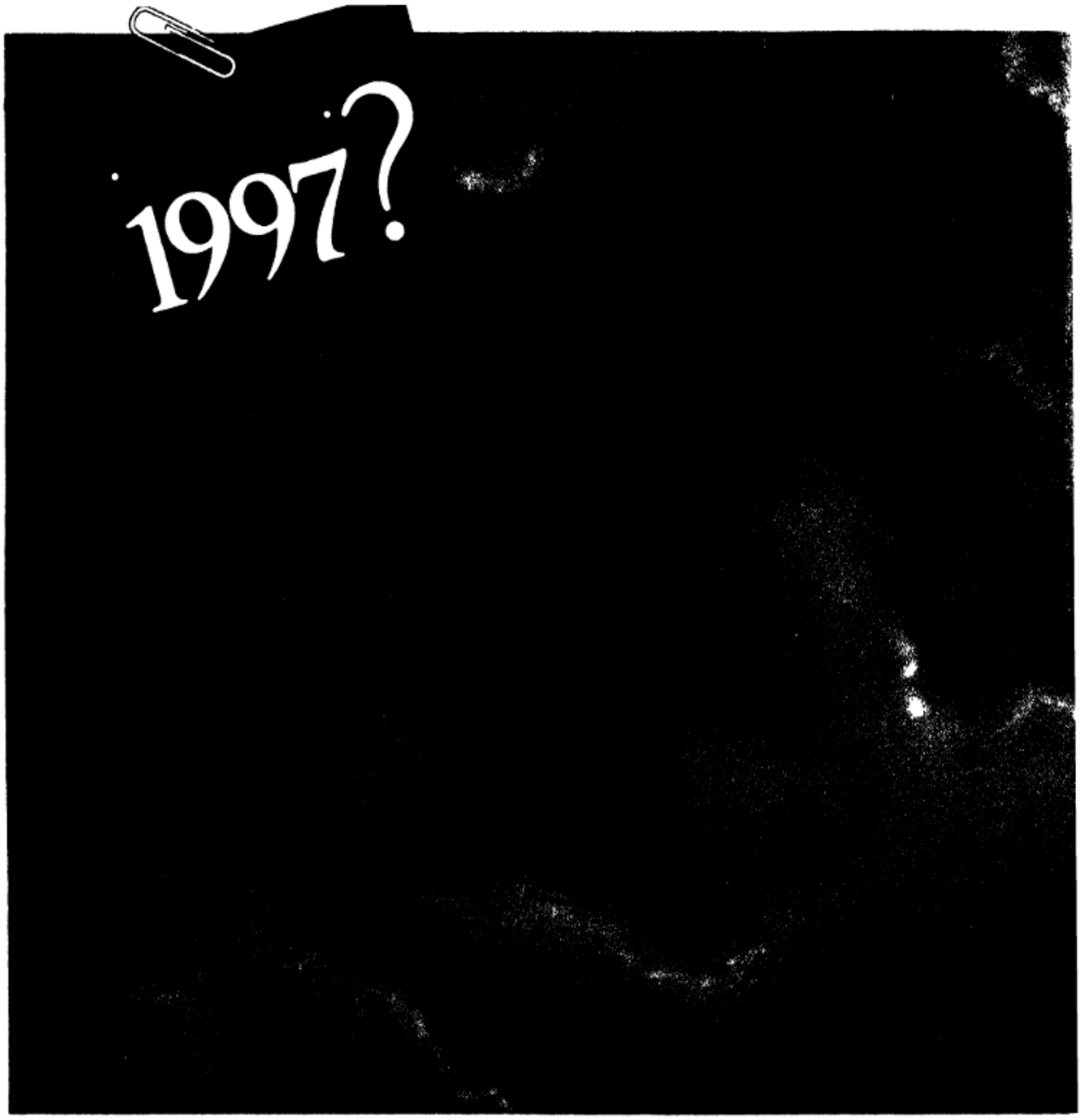
(Right) The studio for sculpture: interesting forms



The tranquillity of Garhi is only surface-deep. In actual fact the studio complex is a hotbed of intrigue

Narendra Dikshit: outraged

Photographs. Rakesh Sahai



INTRODUCING 1997. AND INDIA'S

That question mark is hope. Hope for clean air to be still around in 1997. So none of us would need a gas mask to breathe through.

Today, clean air is vanishing fast in our cities. And every badly maintained fuel driven vehicle spewing toxic matter is hastening its sad exit. And our lack of concern does not lighten our burden of guilt.

It's certainly true that we can't do without our vehicles. But it's certainly not true that we can't take better care of our vehicles. Or, control their toxic emission level.

To help you and clean air, MICO is organising Emission Checks in the following cities. For your vehicle. Free. Look

everest/S88/203

NEW FACE ?

up your local newspaper for dates and venues. And drive in.
To help bring back clean air.

FREE EMISSION CHECKS at Ahmedabad, Bhubaneshwar, Calcutta, Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Delhi, Ernakulam, Indore, Jaipur, Kanpur, Lucknow, Madurai, Nagpur, Patna. Pune and Secunderabad.

Bring Back Clean Air

MICO

LICENCE BOSCH

Delhi land, a stone's throw away from the fashionable colony of Greater Kailash. Also, the LKA provides materials like clay, wax, printing ink, paper, etc., to the artists at cost price. With such fringe benefits Garhi is an attractive proposition. Hence those who are turned away turn up a few days later, having pulled influential strings in the interim, to gain admission.

In the pottery studio, for instance, there are 22 people working in a space meant for only ten. Says V. Sharma, the studio attendant, "It is possible to adjust upto about 14-15 people. But after that things become very difficult." The introduction of the shift system has helped matters only slightly. What makes things bearable, says Neerja Verma, a potter, is that not everybody enrolled is serious about their art. For most it is only a hobby, which they breeze in occasionally to pursue.

The space problem in the studio complex is aggravated by the fact that nobody is willing to vacate

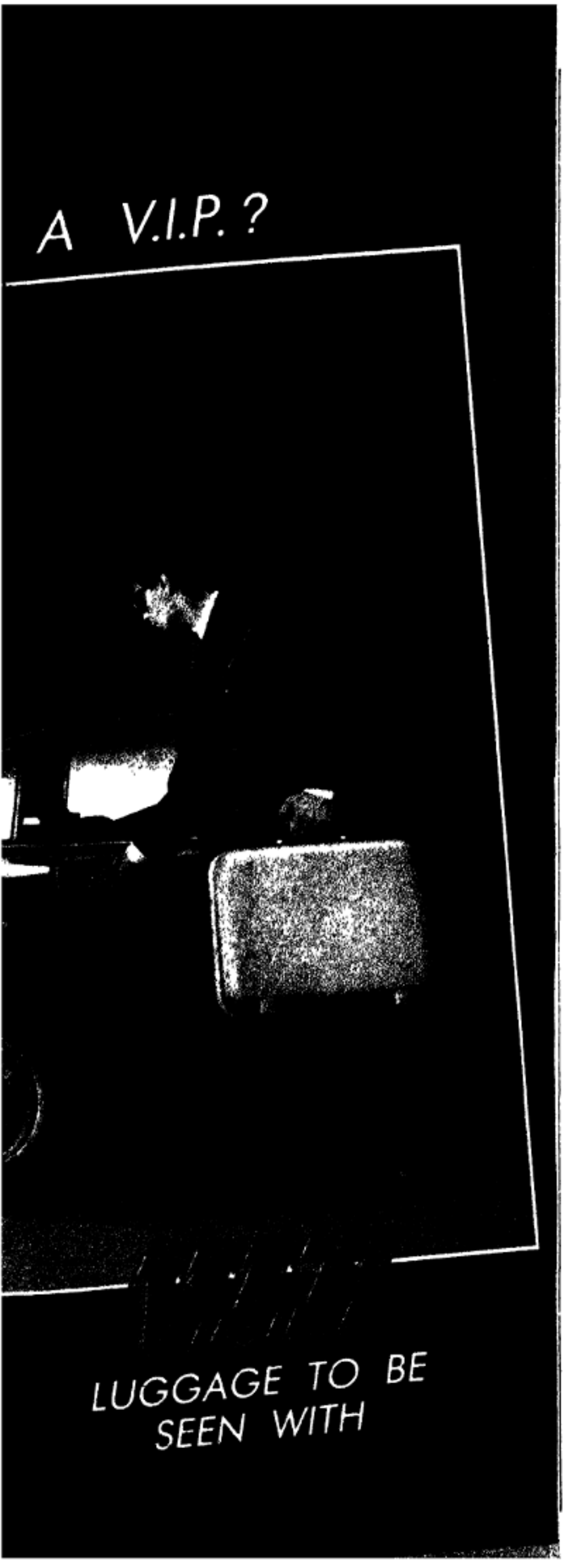
Nowhere is space as much of a constraint as in the painting studio. Most of the artists—Gogi Saroj Pal, Umesh Verma, Arpana Caur—work on large canvases, which makes the problem only worse. Caur wryly comments: "The more proximity there is between artists, the more they get on one another's nerves." Hence the least fractious are the graphics artists, the graphics studio being the least crowded. Says Bulbul Sharma: "We always cooperate closely with one another. If somebody is making a final print, there is an unwritten rule that you let him use the press exclusively."

Bonhomie in graphics notwithstanding, the space problem is serious—aggravated by the fact that those occupying the individual studios refuse to vacate. Chaudhuri, for instance, refuses to move out of his niche, asking those who seek to evict him to "get a chit from the Prime Minister's office"! A couple of young girls who went to the senior artist to complain about the lack of space were told: "We strived hard and built this place. If you want a place to work out of, go and build one." Stories such as these are related by Chaudhuri himself, who says by way of self-justification that Garhi was "not built by the LKA, but given over to it", and as one of the prime movers behind the initiative, he is entitled to stay on as long as he chooses.

It was attitudes such as these which necessitated the setting up of a committee under Pradosh Dasgupta, to hit upon ways and means to evict artists who had overstayed their welcome. But nothing came of that and as Dikshit, a former director of the complex (himself ensconced in a nifty little studio) ruefully admits: "Everyone who moves into Garhi moves in for life."

The lack of space has led to groupism in Garhi. There are two factions, one headed by Dikshit and the other by Chaudhuri. The latter formed the Karu group, a private society of artists, around five years ago. Disenchanted by his dwindling role in Garhi, Chaudhuri had decided to build a separate studio complex for himself within Garhi itself. It was to be built on the vacant land within the LKA studio complex. Artists working in Garhi were asked to join, and they did so in good faith. Not many knew of Chaudhuri's intentions. All discussion about acquisition of land was





carried on in closed door meetings, which only the 11 founder members were allowed to attend, among them Gogi Saroj Pal, and Mrs Chaudhuri. But the truth was out when Karu put in a bid with the DDA for the land,asking that they be allowed to build studios for their own personal use. Several Garhi members were disenchanted enough to walk out of Karu, but that did not deter Chaudhuri from his purpose.

Afraid that the vacant land, where the second phase of the Garhi complex was originally supposed to come up, was slipping out of their grasp, the studio authorities communicated to DDA their desire to take over the land. A request for the land was also put in by the LKA authorities, but they only wanted to acquire it for the expansion of the Garhi complex.

The real conflict of interest was between Karu and Garhi. In 1988, the additional chief architect of DDA, Mr Auluck, wrote to the LKA chairman, Sankho Chaudhuri (sending a copy of the letter to Narendra Dikshit, then director Garhi) asking whom the land should be given to. Chaudhuri wrote back, in his capacity as LKA chairman, using LKA stationary, and advised that the land be given to Karu. A decision questionable enough in normal circumstances-- but particularly scandalous as Chaudhuri was also secretary of the Karu group.

The first to raise a stink was Dikshit. Initially Chaudhuri denied having written any such letter, but owned up later when a xerox copy of the letter was produced in an executive board meeting of the LKA. Chaudhuri was forced to leave the meeting half-way through. Several no-confidence motions were raised against him, but he managed to pull through with the help of the government nominees on the board. (Chaudhuri, some say, has a special equation with those in power, his mother in-law having been Mrs Gandhi's nanny.)

Chaudhuri, when confronted with these allegations had only the following to say. When Karu had originally bid for the land, he had not been an office-bearer. So even if he had written saying that the land be given to Karu, it could not be construed as an instance of favouritism. All further queries are met with stub born silence.

Sankho Chaudhuri asks those who seek to evict him to "get a chit from the Prime Minister's office"

After all that high drama, the land was finally acquired by Garhi, a considerable victory for Dikshit, who spearheaded the effort. He accomplished this by heading a delegation to the Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi, H.K.L. Kapur, also chairman of DDA, and asking that the land be given to Garhi. Kapur was convinced of their case and agreed to see that Garhi got its due. But before he could take any action he was removed from office. So Dikshit used, what he coyly calls, his "resources" and the good offices of friends (highly placed in the DDA hierarchy) to swing the deal.

It was perhaps this distasteful controversy that prompted the setting up of the Haksar Committee, by the department of culture, ministry of human resources development. Dikshit was removed from his post as director Garhi in August 1988, preparatory to the restructuring of the complex.





(Top to bottom) Paramjit Singh: with his distinctive landscapes
Working at sculpting, a study in concentration
In the pottery studio. Neerja Verma working at the wheel

Until then, the director had been responsible for the day-to-day administration of the complex, for which he was paid a salary of Rs 2,000 a month. Overall control over Garhi was entrusted to the LKA, and was the nominal responsibility of the Akademi secretary. This structure will now be revamped according to the recommendations of the committee and Garhi will, in all probability, be put directly under the department of culture.

No restructuring will, however, be able to lessen the strife among artists. Professional jealousy abounds, especially among painters. Inevitably, some sell more than the others and at better prices. That creates friction; each accusing the other of shameless self-promotion and worse. Things really hot up when critics or buyers visit the studio, with everyone going in for brazen oneupmanship. People even fight shy of using Garhi as a postal address because letters have a way of mysteriously disappearing. It is strictly each artist for himself and oblivion take the hindmost.

Arpana Caur, one of the more successful younger artists, with the Triennial Award and several successful exhibitions to her credit, is one victim of peer envy. Sometimes she confesses that the malicious comments get too much and she "explodes". Hence stories that circulate to the effect that she once, in a fit of rage, threw a *chappal* at another artist.

Things were not always this bad. During the early days of its existence the complex brimmed over with creative activity and fellow-feeling. There were panel discussions, poetry symposiums and workshop-cum-camps in practically every discipline and everybody participated enthusiastically. But the laid-back ethos of the place was the first casualty to its newly acquired fame. As more and more people discovered Garhi, its residents were thrust into the limelight and animosities began to surface. And with it came the power struggle. If nothing else, the Garhi experiment has proved one thing: scratch an artist and you'll find just another human being, warts and all.

Seema Goswami/*New Delhi*



Professional jealousy abounds in Garhi, with each artist accusing the other of shameless self-promotion

A voice in the dark

Sheela Barse fights for the rights of the underprivileged

• *Rajkumari Rao was an adolescent girl in Barasat when a magistrate ordered her detention in the Presidency Jail under Section 13 of the Lunacy Act. That was in January 1979. She is still languishing there*

• *Putul Banerjee was a child when she was placed in judicial custody in October 1983. The same psychiatrist who saw Rajkumari recommended in July this year that Putul be released But nothing has happened so far.*

• *Seventeen-year old Ammoonbibi has also been incarcerated in Presidency Jail since June 1987 on the grounds of being abnormal. But psychiatrist Dr Ranjan Sen could not define what exactly was so "abnormal"*

There are countless other young women in West Bengal who are in similar straits. It is the only state in India where mentally disturbed, mentally ill and mentally handicapped persons are kept in prison for years And nearly half the female prisoners fall in the category of non criminal lunatics (NCLs)



But though unseen, they are no longer unheard They have found a voice, a very audible, crusading voice that belongs to Sheela Barse, journalist and activist For years the Bombay-based Barse has been doing outstanding work in the field of children and women prisoners. And now she has taken up the cudgels on behalf of these unfortunate women in Calcutta

According to Barse, the term NCL is highly derogatory It has been used to violate the human rights and constitutional rights of Indian citizens For most persons designated as NCLs are kept in prison in utter disregard of all relevant laws, even though Article 22 of the Constitution states that no person can be deprived of liberty except in accordance with the law

Propelled by conviction, Barse even made a trip to Calcutta in August. She saw acting chief justice M N. Roy asking him to take *suo moto* notice of the particulars she had gathered about Rajkumari Rao, Putul Banerjee and Ammoonbibi But the judge heeded her request by asking her to file a writ petition That, as Barse pointed out, would have been futile since she could hardly keep on commuting between Bombay and Calcutta to pursue the matter.

According to Barse, the injustice is compounded by the fact that no proper medical records are maintained by prison psychiatrists And senior officials like the IG, prisons, are also not aware of the differences between mentally ill, mentally disturbed and mentally handicapped persons

This is not the first time that Barse has pitted herself against the system. In 1985 she filed a petition on behalf of 1100 children, all under 16, all languishing in prisons without apparent prospects of freedom or rehabilitation But in the three years that have since passed, the case has been adjourned 24 times at the request of the state government lawyers "Speaking without malice," Sheela Barse has now demanded an "honest to goodness final hearing date" for her petition

As is only to be expected, Barse's statements and her activism have only aroused adverse reactions from members of the judiciary. Justices Ranganath Misra and Venkatachaliah indignantly declared that the "majesty and dignity" of the court were being belittled by her. They deplored the "unconcealed cynical scorn she was permitted to exhibit towards the process of the court," and warned her that "scornful impatience can also wreck a mission"

This missionary's ardour, however, is not to be dampened so easily She eagerly trots out data and figures to arouse responsive enthusiasm for her cause. West Bengal, she tells you, has only three mental hospital with no facilities for women

In the absense of any proper facilities, mentally ill or disturbed women are declared criminals and dumped in overcrowded prisons The years pass without these unfortunate women being given any proper treatment. Even if they recover from a temporarily unbalanced state of mind, there is no official recognition of such a development because consistent medical records are not kept.

So far, the inertia of the legal and judical system seems to be an immovable juggernaut In West Bengal the judges have managed to ignore her petition and maintain their "majesty and dignity". The only comfort is that Sheela Barse is not the kind who gives up easily. But for young or adolescent girls, kept behind bars, deprived of their sanity, and with no hope of speedy redemption, it can at best be cold comfort

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

Sheela Barse, journalist and activist, has been doing outstanding work for children and women prisoners



The sinner atones

Surjit Singh Barnala seeks the Akal Takht's forgiveness for defying its orders

PUNJAB

It was for the second time in two and a half years that Surjit Singh Barnala had to suffer the ignominy of polishing shoes in the Akal Takht. Though the first time he had been let off lightly by the Sikh *panth* for his crime of sending the security forces inside the Golden Temple complex, he had no such luck this time. On 5 December, before he was relegated to polishing shoes to atone for his "sin" of defying the Akal Takht edict, he was tied to a pillar with a six inch board around his neck with the inscription "We are sinners, you are our saviours."

Barnala was excommunicated on 11 February, 1987 for refusing to dissolve his party, the Akali Dal (L), as ordered by the then Akal Takht *jathedar*, Darshan Singh Ragi. At that time, Barnala's stand of refusing to give in to the extremists, who had intended to manoeuvre their way into the mainstream of Punjab politics by unifying into one party with Simranjeet Singh Mann as its leader, had won the admiration of many. However, for Barnala and his family members who were declared "*tankhaia*" it had been a traumatic experience.

Finally, Barnala did give in to the religious leaders and offered to do penance for his sins. The fact that Union home minister Buta Singh had threatened to withdraw his security guards unless Barnala supported the unity moves which have been afoot clinched the issue for him. Also, the former chief minister risked losing his supporters as it became evident recently when nearly 20 members of his faction defied his orders to boycott the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) elections and attended it. Fearing that he would be completely isolated, Barnala decided to win back not just his supporters but also the sympathy of the people, and approached the Akal Takht *jathedar* for exoneration.

On 5 December, the *granthis* (priests) announced that Barnala's penance would last for 15 days during which he would have to wear, at all times, the board around his neck. And throughout the proceedings, the *jathedar* kept addressing Barnala as "*paapi*" (sinner). (Incidentally, it was Ragi whose orders he had defied who handed out the punishment.) The Sikh leader, on his part, said: "I am grateful to the Akal Takht for having shown such sympathy and considering the plea of a sinner like me." Not since Maharaja Ranjit Singh was meted out similar punishment more than a century ago, for having illicit relations with a Muslim woman, has any Sikh undergone such humiliation.





S.S. Barnala being tied to a pillar; (inset) polishing shoes: rites of exoneration

Barnala's action, however, once again reaffirmed the continuing dominance of the Sikh *panth* in political affairs. And though the leader's penance may or may not earn him personal sympathy from the people of the state, it has undeniably damaged his image among his politician-colleagues both within and outside the state.

The very same people who had admired his action of refusing to capitulate to the extremists only last year are now criticising him. Said Piara Singh Deosi, secretary of the Punjab state council of the CPI, "He had taken a correct stand by declining to accept the mandate of the five head priests last year. But he has now bowed to the fundamentalists." The CPI leader also felt that the Centre was to blame for Barnala's plight since it was the government that had dismissed his ministry. As for Ragi, Deosi soundly criticised him for misusing his power as the head priest of the Akal Takht and exploiting the religious sentiments of the people.

Sikandar Bakht of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) also condemned Barnala's action and said, "I was ashamed to see Barnala tied to a pillar with a board hanging around his neck. I think a man who himself opted for this sort of humiliation, is of no use to the state or its people." It remains to be seen whether his exoneration by the *panth* will eventually work out in Barnala's favour politically. Though he has strengthened his position as an Akali Dal leader, the Jagdev Singh Talwandi-Prakash Singh Badal-Gurbachan Singh Tohra-Darshan Singh Ragi clique is going from strength to strength. With the Centre keeping its options open, only time will tell whether Barnala can establish himself as a power centre in Punjab's political imbroglio.

Rita Sharma/*Chandigarh* and Ritu Sarin/*Delhi*

Differing to agree

The CPI(M)'s conference underplays the differences between general secretary Namboodiripad and its state unit

WEST BENGAL

Rows of Maruti, Contessa and Premier cars, besides the ubiquitous Ambassador, were lined outside the Salt Lake Stadium in Calcutta during the four-day session of the CPI(M)'s 16th state conference held between 3 and 7 December. The rally at the Brigade Parade grounds, to mark the end of the session on 7 December, too was an extravagant affair and as fashionably attired Marxist delegates streamed in, few could have identified the *sarvaharas* (have-nots) whom the party has always claimed to represent. And like the new-found affluence of the delegates, the conference also witnessed a shift in emphasis in the nature of its contents, party members concentrated on evolving ways to oust the Rajiv Gandhi regime at the Centre.

The most important feature of the session, however, was the behind-the-scenes friction between the state party unit and the CPI(M) general secretary, E.M.S. Namboodiripad. The veteran Marxist, in a major deviation from the CPI(M)'s policy of Congress-bashing, issued a clean chit to Rajiv Gandhi's pro-Soviet foreign policy and gave a call to organise a world peace movement together with the Congress(I). It was not enough, said Namboodiripad, for the CPI(M) to expose the Congress' 'corrupt' ways but it should lay more emphasis on fighting against a government which adopted "anti-people policies". As for the Marxists' role in uniting all "democratic and secular" forces of the country, Namboodiripad admitted that to achieve such a "unity" was not an easy task. He also questioned the integrity of some Opposition parties.

All this, no doubt, created tremendous confusion within the state unit of the party which has all along adopted a 'Rajiv *hatao*' stand. But not for long. The state unit's general secretary Saroj Mukherjee countered by adopting a tough line and categorically stated that there was no way that the CPI(M) in West Bengal could cooperate with the Congress in the peace movement. "It is simply impossible," Mukherjee said and asserted that the party would make an "all-out effort to oust Rajiv Gandhi" in the next elections. A disgusted Namboodiripad left Calcutta, refusing to even attend the rally.

B.T. Ranadive, the other politburo member, was present and he obligingly toed the state party unit's line. Though it may seem that Namboodiripad lost out in this battle of nerves, party sources feel otherwise. They point out that the decision to pass a resolution calling for the ouster of Rajiv Gandhi was taken only after Namboodiripad's speech.

According to them, the call would definitely have an impact on the party covention scheduled to be held in Trivandrum. But surprisingly, the resolution was not passed. Reason, the proposers felt that such an "anti-EMS" proposal may not be acceptable to all. Moreover, it was best to underplay the differences within the party.

Though chief minister Jyoti Basu and Mukherjee later tried to convince mediapersons that there were no "differences" among party members, this argument did not find many takers.

Two other significant resolutions passed at the state convention related to the proposed anti-corruption drive in party circles and the scathing indictment of two constituent parties of the Left Front--the RSP and Forward Bloc. Basu, in what was undeniably a reference to the infamous Bengal Lamp controversy, remarked that "some" ministers of "other constituent parties" were violating the "norms of collective responsibility". The resolution also castigated the Left Front's minor partners for "intentionally maligning the CPI(M)" which was a reference to the *panchayat* elections when there was a virtual free-for-all among the front's partners.

There was also some discontent over the manner in which the new state committee was "elected". While 93 names have so far been announced by the "official panel" the remaining will be co-opted later. The leadership, however, disregarded the views of a section of the dissenting members and issued a whip that the decision of the official panel be accepted as final. It was Jyoti Basu who finally settled the issue in no uncertain terms. He declared that those who did not agree with the party's policies were free to leave it and join any of the other "revolutionary parties". Though the statement speaks volumes for the CPI(M)'s inner-party democracy, the issue was settled once and for all.





The CPI(M) rally at the Brigade Parade grounds, massive turnout ; (inset) E.M.S Namboodiripad

Debashis Bhattacharya/*Calcutta*

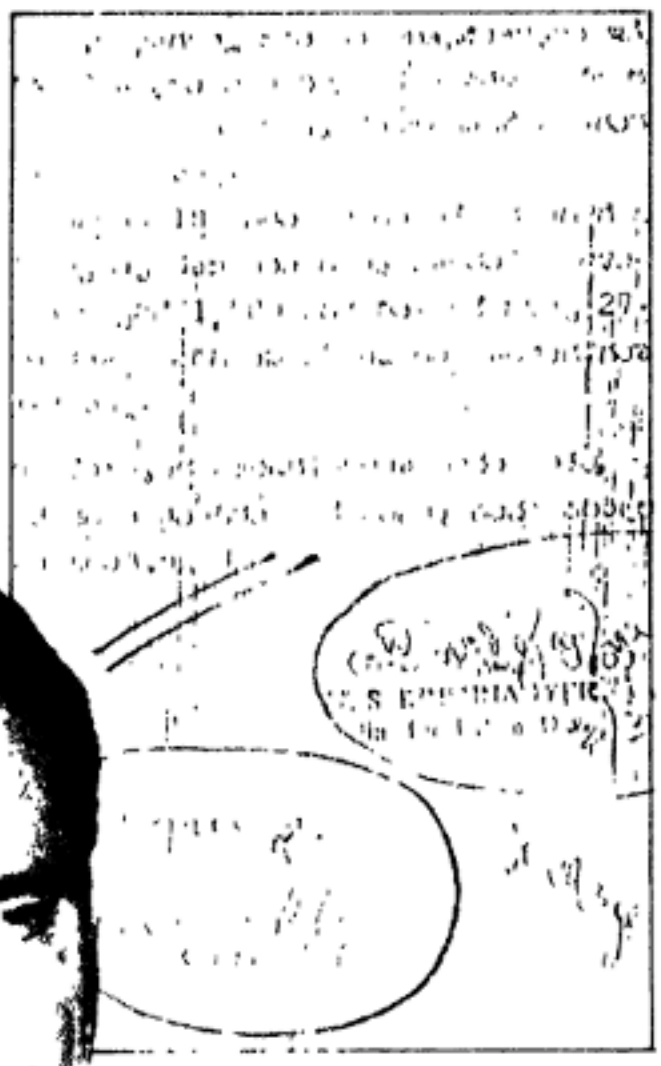
And now, real estate

Ramakrishna Hegde is embroiled in a fresh controversy over the underhand sale of prime property

KARNATAKA

Ramakrishna Hegde's affair with scandals has been a long standing one. Only months after his ignominious departure from the seat of power following the phone-tapping scandal, the former chief minister is believed to be involved in a dubious land deal that he had struck with the largest liquor manufacturers in the state, the Khodays. The volley of charges commenced with the Pro people Agitation Coordination Committee (PACC) releasing a series of documents as proof of Hegde's alleged involvement in the underhandsale of prime land, valued at Rs 35 crores, to the liquor barons. Another set of documents was released by the PACC which dealt with the sale of another Rs 25-crore plot. The committee has also named five of Hegde's grandchildren as shareholders in the Khoday Distilleries Ltd.





Ramakrishna Hegde; the document with his signature: another scandal

Both Hegde and his arch-rival, H.D. Deve Gowda, were on tour when the documents were made public by the committee on 3 and 7 December respectively. Though the committee claims not to be the "followers of any political party" and has nothing but condemnation for "the Bofors scandal and also the black deeds of Hegde", the PACC is believed to be a front organisation for the dissident camp.

The new scandal, named the "Madhuvan affair", promises to be an embarrassing episode for the Hegde camp for quite some time to come. Madhuvan, a 67-acre garden property at the foot of the picturesque Chamundi Hills in Mysore, belonged to the royal Wodeyar family. The property was purchased as agricultural land from Srikanta Dutta Narasimharaja Wodeyar, the Yuvraj of Mysore, in July 1974. A legal battle ensued and eventually a group of individuals, comprising movie producers, land developers, a film actor and a former manager of the royal household, managed to get permission for the conversion of the land for industrial purposes in September 1984.

On 14 November, 1984, when the Hegde government was struggling for survival, this group made a curious application to the chief minister. Pleading that they had exhausted their financial resources in the legal battle, they requested the chief minister to exempt them from the Urban Land Ceiling Act and permit them to sell the land. "There is no other alternative left to the applicants except to sell the land in question to pay off and to discharge existing liabilities," the letter read. The total debt, the applicants claimed, was around Rs 23 lakhs.

Within a week, Hegde sent the file to the then urban development minister V.S. Krishna Iyer urging him to consider the application "sympathetically". But it was met with resistance from the joint secretary Dilip Rao who caustically noted: "It is strange that all 18 persons who own adjoining lands are facing financial hardship. The total area involved is 67 acres, 14 *guntas*. The special DC Mysore has not reported what is the excess area held by each applicant. It is not known whether the land would be useful for CITB (City Improvement Trust Board) Mysore or for other public purposes. ."

Krishna Iyer sent for the file and on 28 December granted permission for the sale of the land. The chief minister signed with the comment: "Let it be so." But it was not to be. The secretary of the ministry, A. Ravindra, objected and he noted on the file that he had inspected the site and found that the property is a part of Mysore city. "It is a garden land with a number of coconut trees... tamarind, mango (trees), etc; an area of 39 acres and 14 *guntas* in favour of 12 persons has been got converted for industrial purposes."

Ravindra's note on the file brought to light the fact that not 67 acres but only 39 acres were involved. He also recommended that the government use the land for public purpose and additional land be allotted to the horticulture department. Another suggestion was that



Deve Gowda: is he behind the revelations?

the land be used for building a residential complex. He pointed out that the applicants could meet their liabilities by selling the land to which they are entitled. "In Mysore, each person is entitled to hold 1,5000 sq m. under the Urban Land Ceiling Act," he observed, "and land values are pretty high in Mysore. The reasons for seeking exemption for the entire land held by the applicants are not convincing." And on 23 February 1985, Ravindra recommended that the application "be rejected".

Krishna Iyer again called for a review of the file and Ravindra's objections were overruled. On 16 March, after a triumphant return to the chief ministership, Hegde put his signature once again on the file beneath Iyer's comment that "there is no visible reason to re-examine the direction issued on 28 December by the chief minister and myself". Hegde simply wrote: "I agree."

But the matter was far from closed. Between 15 and 30 July the same year, the property was sold to the Khodays. Coincidentally, on 30 July Ashwathanarayana Rao, one of the persons involved in the previous deal, applied to the CM in his capacity as vice-president of Madhuvana Building Cooperative Society Ltd for allotment of 100 acres for residential sites.

In another letter, dated 15 August, 1986, Rao requested that a further 700 acres be allotted to the society over and above the 51 acres and 35 *guntas* that the CITB had given the 5,000-member society. Though progress on this application is still not known, the issue is likely to be discussed threadbare in the coming weeks.

Prakash Belawadi / *Bangalore*

After the deluge, starvation

Flood relief is yet to reach the remote villages in Lakhimpur district where 45 people have died of hunger

ASSAM

Pipalguri is a little village on the banks of the Brahmaputra in the northern-most tip of Assam Today, it is bereft of all its inhabitants Only one old man has staved behind to "guard the land". Should anything happen to him, the village will only have some dilapidated huts and a few odds and ends as proof that the village once throbbed with life. Pipalguri, however, is not the only village in Assam whose inhabitants have fled There are others in the *panchayats* of Kulajan, Sisitangani, Sisbargaon, Muktiar and Dhemaji in Lakhimpur district, which have met the same fate. The reason: floods which first ravaged the crops, destroyed the men's source of livelihood and swept away the livestock. They were not helped either by the callous attitude of a state government whose idea of providing relief to thousands of stranded villagers was sending wheat/paddy/mustard seeds when the people were dying of starvation.

Death has, consequently, not been far away. Nearly 45 people have died of starvation in just Lakhimpur district, which has been the worst-hit by the recent spate of floods. It's little wonder then that instead of throwing away the seeds, the people have consumed these in a desperate bid to stave off death by starvation. In some villages, the aged and the children who have been left behind, are surviving either on water plants called *kol mol* or the barks of banana trees. And when they run out of even this, they eat grass!

Gorumaragaon, which is 25 km from the nearest town Silapathar, perhaps, typifies the situation. Seven persons—the youngest being three year-old Shankarnath, son of Tongaram Pegu, and the oldest, 45-year-old Tutaram Latum have died in the last two months "out of hunger". During the floods, this village was totally cut off and for almost two weeks, the people were marooned with no food or potable water. Worse still, they could not even hope to be rescued until one man, Kimani Doley, picked up courage and sailed to the nearest village on a boat fashioned out of the bark of a banana tree.



A flood-hit village in Assam: at the mercy of an apathetic government

Though Doley's SOS did reach the ears of the administration, relief came in the shape of measly food packets containing half-a kilo of rice for every villager. "This was given once a week for a month or so," said Doley. "How could I sustain my family of nine on this quantity?" asked Tongaram Pegu. "We got nothing else —no salt, no *dal*, no oil. For two or three days a week we ate rice and then starved. My youngest child who was already weak became more and more feeble and finally died. We got no medical aid and the nearest doctor is in Silapathar. How was I to take all the way through the water? Where was I to get the money for his treatment, his medicines?" he lamented.

Pegu, like so many others whose only source of livelihood, is farming is totally dependent on his relatives who

are not much better off. Even those who could hope to fish and earn a few rupees are suffering the same fate. Thanks to the ulcerative disease syndrome which has attacked different species of fish in Assam, this avenue too has been closed for them as there is no demand for fish.

The administration, of course, chose to ignore the deaths until the All Assam Tribal Students' Union (AATSU), an organisation fighting for the rights and interests of the plains tribals, raised the issue in the local press. The government was then compelled to acknowledge the fact that people were dying but these deaths were dismissed as "normal occurrences caused by various diseases". As the sub divisional officer (civil), R.L. Duwarah, put it, one of the "diseases" may be "severe dysentery induced by eating poisoned fish". The villagers, however, deny this and say that they stopped consuming fish soon after the floods. "Why should we voluntarily want to kill ourselves?" asked one of them.

Duwarah, who has not yet visited the affected areas, denied that these deaths were caused by starvation. "Our medical officer has pronounced that in order to die in this way, a person has to continuously starve for two months. But we have been providing relief regularly. So how is this possible?" But the villagers have a different story to tell. It is the AATSU, they claim, which has taken the initiative and set up relief camps in Silapathar. Said Jhuktanath Kumabang, the organising secretary, "We received no help whatsoever from the administration despite repeated requests." Instead, it was the much-maligned Marwari community which came to their aid by feeding people for three days. It was only after the AATSU staged a *dharna* in front of the SDO's office that the authorities responded and set up camps. But these too folded up within a week.

The SDO stated that an amount of Rs 2.5 lakhs had been sanctioned by the Centre for employment and 'food for work' schemes and that workers were being paid a minimum wage of Rs 17 for the work they did. However, only a handful said that they were absorbed in such schemes and even then their daily wage was only Rs 9.50. Other relief measures too exist but only on paper. These include the release of 1,000 quintals of paddy seeds for sowing and tractors for ploughing to those who will be able to purchase diesel. Besides, there is the grant of Rs 1,000 for all those whose houses were washed away in the floods. But of what use are such long-term schemes when the people are dying of hunger?

Radhika Ramaseshan/*Guwahati*

Dalliance over alliances

While the Congress(I) dilly-dallies Janaki and Jayalalitha decide to go it alone in the polls

TAMIL NADU

Poll fever has gripped the political parties in Madras. But the race for power has more to do with striking winning combinations especially when there are as many factions and parties involved as in Tamil Nadu. Of course, the Congress(I) has featured prominently in this talk of electoral alliances but the important question is will the Congress(I) join hands with the Jayalalitha faction or the Janaki group of the AIADMK?



Janaki Ramachandran greets her supporters: annoyed with the Congress(I)

Obviously, this question has also been tormenting Jayalalitha as it became evident recently. On 8 December, at the meeting of some 800 members of the general council, cyclostyled sheets of a questionnaire were distributed among them. They contained three questions:

- Must we form an alliance with the Congress(I) or can we fight the elections on our own?
- If we must align with the Congress(I), what should be the formula for sharing the seats?
- Full authority is given to the general secretary to decide on the alliance issue.

Against each of these, there were two little boxes to denote a 'Yes' or a 'No'. And the verdict was: Jayalalita should go it alone. But democratic though the whole process might appear, the senior party members had instructed the council members on the 'Madam's' point of view to ensure that the ballot did not throw up any unwanted surprises. And, of course, the council members did leave it to Jayalalitha to take the final decision in the best interests of the party. Not one to hide her true feelings for long, Jayalalitha did tell her party members that the party could no longer tolerate the dilly-dallying of the Congress(I). It is her contention that the Congress(I) hopes to grab most of the seats by thrusting an electoral pact on her at the last moment.

For a short while, the Congress had succeeded in hoodwinking both the AIADMK factions about the approaches being made to the other. But then the two ladies caught on to the Congress game and screamed foul. The Congress leaders, however, maintain that they do not need to strike alliances with anyone since the seven trips by the Prime Minister to the state amply indicated that the people would vote for the Congress.

But apparently, the Congress' moves have only annoyed both the ladies who are now unwilling to ally themselves with the party. While Janaki Ramachandran keeps reminding audiences at her rallies about how she was stabbed in the back by the Congress, Jayalalitha too has launched a tirade against the Congressmen. "They should not assume that they can exert pressure on us through their money and government power. We shall not be cowed down by such tactics," she tells her supporters.

Moreover, the Congress(I) has all along been accused of indulging in dirty politicking. When four senior party functionaries of the Jayalalitha faction led by S. Thirunavukarasu walked out, she claimed that it was the Congress which was behind the move. (Recently, the group of four rejoined the Jayalalitha faction claiming that only 'Madam' was capable of defeating Karunanidhi and the DMK).

Meanwhile, there has even been a suggestion that the two arch-rivals, Janaki and Jayalalitha, should join hands for the elections. As one Jayalalitha aide pointed out, "Why should we yield 50 per cent of the seats to the Congress(I) and make G.K. Moopanar the chief minister? Instead we might thrash out our differences with Janakiamma and merge the two AIADMK factions. In



Jayalalitha: peace moves that failed

that case, we can also get back MGR's poll symbol. And a majority of our cadres would love such a merger."

Even if Jayalalitha is amenable to the idea, Janaki is not and she dismissed the merger prospects as mere media speculation. Jayalalitha's lieutenants once again alleged that it was R.M. Veerappan who was the main stumbling block in their unity moves. Veerappan, on the other hand, retorted that MGR himself had not permitted the two women to share the same platform as he was well aware of the differences between them, and added, "How can two swords be put into one sheath?"

So, for the present at least, the four important political groups- the Congress, DMK, and the two AIADMK – are going their separate ways. Given the fickle-minded ways of politicians, however, alliances cannot be totally ruled out.

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*

Caught on the wrong foot

The police's credibility is at an all-time low with the arrest of an innocent youth

BIHAR

The Bihar police force and foul ups go together. So it was not surprising when a week after its "major achievement" of nabbing an alleged terrorist, it was desperately trying to figure out where it had gone wrong. The train of events began on 14 November when the police arrested a youth, Amarjeet Singh Sohi, in the "Naxalite-ravaged Jehanabad district". Later, at a press conference, the director general of police, J.M. Qureshi, claimed that Sohi was in fact a terrorist who had been trained in Canada.

On 14 November the police arrested Amarjeet Singh Sohi, who they claimed was a dreaded terrorist. But a week later pride gave way to embarrassment when doubts about the police's claims surfaced



But a week later, pride gave way to embarrassment when doubts about the police's claims surfaced. Officials of several organisations in Punjab sent letters of protest, telegrams and memorandums urging the Bihar government to immediately release the youth. While the police insisted that Sohi was connected to the Party Unity group of the CPI(M), the protest letters claimed that Sohi had been associated with the Inqulabi Kendra, Punjab Sahitya Sabha and other progressive and democratic organisations in Canada as well as in Punjab.

And as the letters poured in, the police changed their version of the story. They claimed that after interrogating Sohi they had arrived at the conclusion that though he was not a terrorist he did have links with some extremist groups including the Babbar Khalsa. They even said that Sohi had been training extremists in Jehanabad in the use of firearms.

Soon the pressure started mounting on the state government to release Sohi as there was not sufficient evidence against him. Opposition leaders too got in on the act and demanded Qureshi's removal for branding an innocent youth a terrorist.

Teams from the Peoples Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR), Peoples Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL), Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) also converged in Patna to investigate into Sohi's arrest and the validity of the DGP's claims. According to the PUDR team, Sohi is the convener of the Canada-based Punjabi Sahitya Sabha. He has been associated with the Amritsar School of Drama during his six-month stay in the country, it pointed out.

With this incident, the Bihar police force's morale has touched rock-bottom. Only recently, the Union home minister, Buta Singh, had declared in Parliament that the police force alone was not enough to contain extremism in rural Bihar. And perhaps, in a bid to prove the home minister wrong, the police nabbed Sohi even before they could establish his credentials.

The police and other security agencies are now trying to solve the "Sohi mystery" though they agree that dubbing him a terrorist had been an error. But the mistake has definitely cost the Bihar police a great deal: its credibility is now almost non-existent.

Faizan Ahmad/*Patna*

Romancing the stone

Smugglers are operating a thriving business in gemstones in western Orissa

ORISSA

The glittering shopping arcades of Bangkok and Hong Kong may seem a world apart to the gem stone diggers in Orissa's Bolangir district. But it is there that most of the precious and semi-precious stones that they slave to dig out for measly sums, end up. The perenially poverty-stricken districts of western Orissa are rich in gemstone deposits and the 50-km belt between Athmalik in Dhenkanal and Kalahandi has yielded some of the most sparkling arrays of precious and semi-precious stones including emeralds, rubies, sapphires, garnets, aquamarines, quartz, etc. But the richest deposits have been discovered in the Junagarh-Dharmagarh Sinapali region of Kalahandi district and, more recently, in Boudh, Phulbani district.

The discovery of the gemstones, naturally, has attracted smugglers and diggers of all hues to the districts. While the villagers, mostly tribals, dig and pan for the stones and are paid measly sums for their labours, the traders and their middlemen have formed a "regular trade channel" through which the stones are sent to Jaipur for "processing" and then despatched to the world market, especially to Bangkok and Hongkong.

The traders and their middlemen even have their own security set-up to monitor the digging operations. And despite the fact that the government is aware of the goings-on, it seems unwilling to bring the law offenders to book. In fact, the government is yet to arm itself with legislation to prohibit extraction, possession, carriage, processing and trading of the precious minerals that are littered in the five districts of Kalahandi, Bolangir, Sambalpur, Phulbani and Dhenkanal.

And even as the smugglers get away by making huge profits, the government's Prevention of Theft, Smuggling and other unlawful activities Bill, 1988, is still pending before a select committee of the state Assembly. The managing director of the state-owned Orissa Mining Corporation (OMC) which holds the right to mine for gemstones, N.C. Das, pleads helplessness in eliminating the smuggling operations in the absence of a "comprehensive law". He adds that since the deposits are spread over such a vast area it is difficult for the OMC to take on a policing role.

In fact, while the smugglers are getting away with the loot, the OMC which started operations six years ago, has failed to corner even a substantial share of the gemstones that are panned. The corporation has virtually stopped purchasing stones after it succeeded in selling less than Rs 10 lakhs worth of gemstones and collecting some more stock valued at about Rs 50 lakhs. The OMC, Das hopes, will be able to gain a foothold in the smugglers-dominated trade once adequate laws have been enacted to curb smuggling of stones.



A digger pans for gemstones

So, under the circumstances, the OMC's only option, it seems, is to go into partnership with one of the experienced firms dealing in minerals. But here too, its proposal of a joint venture project with two businessmen one from Bombay and another from Jaipur has been bogged down in a fierce controversy. Apparently, revenue officials have been tracking down one of the two businessmen for alleged economic offences and have cautioned the government against striking deals with him. And so, the stalemate continues while nearly 30,000 diggers continue to work in the most appalling conditions and earn wages which do not even cover the value of the precious stones.

Sarada P. Nanda/*Bhubaneswar*

The great land hoax

Tribals allege that government officials have cheated them of their own land by tampering with record books

MADHYA PRADESH

It is only the very brave or the very foolish who would dare to provoke a tribal of the Bastar region. While it is well known that these tribals think nothing of killing their foes, beheading them and then marching to the nearest police station with the dismembered head to report the crime, the Madhya Pradesh government seems to have disregarded their violent traits. And the tribals are now a very angry lot. What has provoked them this time is the fact that in the record books, the government officials have listed the plots of land that rightfully belong to the tribals under the names of others. Now, faced with evacuation due to the ongoing work for the Indira Hydel Project, the tribals are threatening to agitate.

As far back as in 1963-64, the Bastar district administration had directed a land survey to be carried out in the 94 villages of Dantewada *tehsil*. The survey teams visited the villages and left. While most of the tribals ignored the officials some of them shrewdly extended their hospitality and plied them with food and drink. This hospitality was paid back by the officials and to the dismay of the others it was discovered that only the names of some tribals had been entered in the government books as the legal owners of their land. As for the rest, their names did not feature anywhere in the books and their plots were shown either as government property or as the property of some other people.

The tribals approached the concerned government officials and presented their case but in vain. Another representation was made in 1972 to the then chief minister P.C. Sethi. He assured them that he would look into the matter but even though 15 years have passed the revision of records have not yet begun. But with work on the hydel project carrying on in full swing, the tribals are desperate to make their voices heard.

M.V. Kher/*Raipur*

Politics of persuasion

Some Congressmen are determined to drag Sonia Gandhi into politics

'All in the family' may have been the maxim that governed his mother's style of functioning, but Rajiv Gandhi seems to have different views. He has always scotched rumours that Sonia Gandhi is entering politics. And has firmly turned down repeated requests of Congressmen that she be allowed to contest the general elections. But despite the Prime Minister's negative attitude, speculation continues and his partymen go on trying to persuade him.

The matter came up again recently, when Bhaskar Pandey, an ex-Congress(I) MLA from the Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh, organised a function to celebrate the 42nd birthday of Sonia Gandhi in Lucknow on 6 December. For the past three years, Pandey has been badgering Rajiv to bring Sonia into politics and distributing pamphlets and putting up posters in praise of the "great lady". In fact, last year he even staged a hunger strike in support of his demand.

The high command frowned upon these activites, but, undaunted, Pandey continued his campaign to bring Sonia Gandhi to the people. This year he has organised graffiti on the walls of Lucknow and other important towns in UP boosting her. "*Gaon gaon se uthi bayaar, Sonia Gandhi bahoo hamaar*" -is a common slogan that appears on many walls.

Then, on 6 December, the persistent Pandey organised a function on the occasion of Sonia Gandhi's 'birthday' at the Pradesh Congress office in Lucknow. Chief minister Narain Dutt Tiwari was invited to be the chief guest. But, realising the programme would not win the approval of the party leadership, Tiwari declined the invitation. Pandey then roped in Pradesh Congress president Balram Singh Yadav to preside, by telling him that the do was being organised with the Prime Minister's blessings. The unsuspecting Balram Singh believed Pandey without seeking verification from Delhi. He attended the function and waxed eloquent about Sonia Gandhi, describing her as "the great wife of a great leader".

Next day, Sonia Gandhi picked up the papers and saw a report on her 'birthday' celebrations. Indignant, she immediately rang up Rajiv at Parliament House to protest. He, in turn, summoned Sheila Dixit, minister of state in charge of the Prime Minister's office, and AICC(I) general secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad and asked them to demand an explanation from the UP Congress leaders. Who had given them permission to organise a programme on 6 December, especially since Sonia's actual date of birth is 9 December?

A rattled Balram Singh Yadav explained that he had been conned by Pandey into believing that the programme had been cleared by the party high command. Meanwhile, Bhaskar Pandey issued a defiant statement that he would go on celebrating Sonia's birthday as he is a disciple of the "great lady". "Let anyone tell me not to celebrate her birthday. I will go ahead with my campaign. Otherwise, I will take *sanyas* from politics," he said. He even challenged the party high command that Sonia's birthday was not on 9 but 6 December.



Rajiv Gandhi has always scotched rumours that Sonia Gandhi is entering politics. He has firmly turned down repeated requests of Congressmen that she be allowed to contest the general elections

Pandey may have taken his 'promote Sonia' campaign a bit too far, but there are others like him who believe that Sonia Gandhi should join politics. The first to raise this demand were local Congressmen of Rae Bareli district, after the expulsion of Arun Nehru from the party. They feel that since Arun Nehru is no longer in the Congress, Indira Gandhi's old constituency should now be represented by some other member of the Nehru family and who better than Rajiv or Sonia Gandhi to replace Arun Nehru as Rae Bareli's MP? If Rajiv was going to contest the Rae Bareli seat at the next Lok Sabha elections, they reasoned, then Sonia could stand from Amethi.

With this end in view, local party functionaries gave Sonia a very warm welcome during her last visit to Rae Bareli and Amethi along with her husband. Posters of her were strung up all over the place and a 100 member delegation, including block *pramukhs* and village *pradhans*, requested the Prime Minister to choose Sonia Gandhi as the Congress candidate for the Lok Sabha elections. But Rajiv turned down their proposal, saying, "*Sonia ko kyon rajneeti mein ghaseet rahe ho?*" (Why are you dragging Sonia into politics?).

Speculation about whether Sonia will join politics or not has been fuelled by her activities in her husband's constituency. She and Priyanka regularly visit the villages, distributing blankets and medicines and asking after the welfare of the villagers. Despite Rajiv scotching such rumours time and again, they keep making the rounds. Perhaps, this is because it is so hard to believe that there is someone in the Gandhi family who wants to stay clear of politics.

Rajiv Shukla/*New Delhi*

CONSUMERISM

The American invasion

From designer shirts to chewing gum, the famous brand-names of the US are about to flood the Indian market

What will the clued-in Indian teenager of the 1990s be wearing and doing? It's a bit early to start predicting but it isn't too hard to make a few guesses. He is likely to be wearing Wrangler or Murjani jeans and Adidas shoes. Maybe he will be wearing a Playboy or a Van Heusen shirt, and she slipping into Benetton colours. And as likely as not, they will be sipping a Pepsi or a Coke between sliding strips of Wrigley's Spearmint chewing gum into their mouths. Meanwhile, in the nursery, their younger siblings will be sending GI Joe, a great plastic warrior from America, into battle, maybe to fight that other doughty warrior He-Man.

On the dining table too there may be a few changes. Kellogg's cornflakes could be trying to nudge out *idlis*, *dosas* and *puris*. And Tang, the all-American orange drink, will be there in case anyone tires of Pepsi and Coke.

The trickle is turning into a flood. As India's consumer revolution moves into overdrive, more and more of the best names from the US and Western Europe are finding their way onto Indian shop-shelves. And they are all aiming big. Says S.K. Palekar, executive vice president of Funskool: "Our target is a 20 per cent share of the toy market in three years' time, which means about a Rs 20 crore turnover."

Funskool is not the only company aiming for the sky. Bata India is muscling into the garments business with a whole new range of brand-names to help sales. It has tied up with US-based designer Mike Murjani and in the process has collected his entire stable of designer labels including Gloria Vanderbilt and Tommy Hilfiger. And it is promoting its own less well-known Bubblegummers range of children's products. Says Vinod Kaul, manager, apparel, Bata India: "We have good names to back us in addition to our own loyal following."

Designed by Murjani, retailed by Bata: shoes to garments



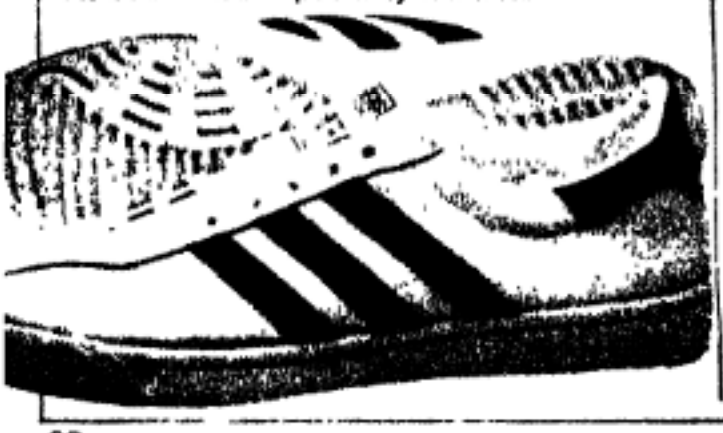
Inevitably, these well-known brands start with a built-in advantage. Kothari General Foods has calculated that Tang already has a loyal clientele who've been buying the drink from their local bootlegger at Rs 90 a bottle. And it hardly needs any reiteration that the market for Wrangler jeans never slacks over the year. And, as for Coca-Cola and Pepsi, they are probably better known than their local equivalent, Campa-Cola or Thums Up. Campa-Cola still uses the Coke logo and, in fact, has now received a deadline to change it.

However, not everybody is banking on a well-known brand-name to carry them through. The toy manufacturers, for instance, are counting on the fact that there has always been a shor-

The Ambassador range from Bata



Adidas shoes speciality footwear



tage of high quality toys on the Indian market and they are rushing to fill the void. Funskool has already introduced ten products on the market and it plans to bring in another ten over the next one year. Leo-Mattel already has about 20 per cent of the market and Funskool also reckons that it can grab one quarter of the market.

Both the companies admit that they would not be able to make a breakthrough in the toy market without the help of their foreign collaborators. Toy moulds are notoriously expensive and have to be changed frequently as toys fall out of favour in the playroom. Funskool and Leo-Mattel have both taken their moulds on lease from their foreign collaborators. In addition, the foreign collaborators also often pass on sophisticated gameplans for selling their products. He-Man is backed by powerful



Tang: the all-American orange drink

marketing which includes its own He-Man television serial which has even run on Doordarshan. But both companies are gung-ho about their future prospects. Says Palekar: "As far as competition is concerned. I have no competitors in the market. My only problem would be to develop the untapped potential."

But a well-known brand-name is not a surefire guarantee for success. Kothari General Foods (KGF) reckons that Tang is quite successful --though not all their competitors agree. But KGF's Ju-C failed to make the grade even with its high-powered marketing effort. And earlier, HMM which has launched Florida, a slightly less well-known brand-name,





Toys from Leo and Funskool: opening up the child's world

The trickle is turning into a flood. As India's consumer revolution moves into overdrive, more and more of the best names from the US and Western Europe are finding their way onto Indian shop-shelves

which they got under licence from Beecham's of the UK,also had to be withdrawn after it flopped during test-marketing in New Delhi.

Technically, all the foreign products depend on a bit of sleight of hand and a little fudging of the rules. Under the guidelines laid down by the government, foreign names cannot be used in India, but in practice there are countless ways of getting around it. KGF claims that its collaborator, General Foods, has not asked for payment for the use of their brand names. Similarly, Wrangler says that it has not made any payments. Double Cola, too, claims that it never had a problem since a non resident, V.C. Kumaran, who bought the foreign company, has the full rights to use the name in India without paying for it. Dilip Piramal of Leo Mattel, however, uses the more ordinary way of beating the system. His company is named Leo-Mattel and as far as he is concerned, Barbie is merely the name of the doll made by his company.

The foreign companies have been attracted to India by the prospects of a huge consumer market that has never been tapped fully. And for most Indians the presence of a foreign brand-name is a vague assurance of quality. But, as many of the entrants into the market are finding, an established name is not by itself a guarantee of success. Still that by itself is not going to keep the foreign companies out of India.

Paran Balakrishnan with Bhagwan Singh/*Madras* and Olga Tellis/*Bombay*

Enter the cola giants

PEPSI

Coca-Cola

MEDIA

Battle of the broadsheets

Two new contenders are gearing up to corner a slice of the weekend newspaper reading market

Just when people thought the newspaper boom was trickling to a stop, there is news of the battle for readership being joined by two new ventures.

The contenders are the Business India Group of Publications – which publishes India's best-selling business magazine – and Rajpal Singh Chowdhry, London-based NRI and publisher of the *Delhi Recorder* magazine.

Both ventures – visualised as Sunday broadsheets to be published from Bombay and New Delhi – have ambitious plans, but are yet to be worked out to the last detail. However, both appear ready to spend large sums of money to get their products off the ground. They have already strung together teams of experienced journalists; large investments in computer equipment and software programmes are also on the cards. Both entrants have enough funds, but the real battle will begin when the readers and advertisers are sought out for the publications.

They will have to fight it out with Bombay-based *The Sunday Observer* and Delhi-based *Sunday Mail*, which together with weekend newspaper supplements hold a commanding presence over the market.

The *Observer* has a total circulation of one lakh copies, a quarter of it in Delhi; the *Mail* claims a weekly circulation of 25,000 copies and is jostling for the number one spot with the *Observer*. To add to the melee, *The Hindustan Times*—Northern India's largest selling newspaper—*The Times of India, Indian Express, The Hindu* and *The Statesman* already provide weekend readers with attractively packaged magazine supplements. While it is not known what initial print-run figures Chowdhry is aiming at, *Business India's* editor-designate for the broadsheet, Bharat Karnad, says he is looking at a print-run of either 25,000 or 50,000 copies.

Says Karnad, one-time Washington correspondent for the *Hindustan Times*: "As things stand, it won't be out earlier than February. It's yet to be decided whether we'll bring it out only in Bombay or Delhi, or simultaneously in both cities." Karnad also feels that editions in both cities will depend on whether the new equipment the group is buying can handle a computer-telephone link for faster news processing. A satellite link, says Karnad, is "uneconomical at the present stage". Chowdhry, the other new entrant, was unavailable for comment. However, he has a long—albeit controversial—track record behind him as a publisher. For years, he has brought out the *Delhi Recorder*. More recently, he suddenly switched his base of operations from Delhi to London where he brought out a glossy, highly-priced magazine called *Kohinoor*.

Whatever the plans, both ventures may prove to be difficult propositions. Says a media planner with a major advertising agency in New Delhi: "The market is too heavy." The executive, who declines to be identified, points to the problems that the *Observer* and the *Mail* currently face to bolster his argument. He says the *Observer* "came in with a lot of expectations" in Delhi, but

Both ventures have ambitious plans, but are yet to be worked out to the last detail ...The real battle will begin when the readers and advertisers are sought out for the publications

hasn't really been able to make much headway, especially as far as procuring advertisements is concerned. "Their advantage is that they have a strong advertising base in Bombay, so they manage to bring over some ads to their Delhi edition." As for the *Mail*, he says their volume of advertising depends "entirely on personal contacts". Adding, "We don't see much of a future for another broadsheet, not to speak of two. It should be quite disastrous."

Karnad doesn't appear fazed with the ad-world perception. He says his publication will have a competitive edge as the Business India Group has "an awful lot of goodwill in the market."

Such proclamations of optimism are obviously necessary, both for the success of the ventures as well as for boosting morale. Optimism and morale will form very important aspects of the broadsheet broadside that lies ahead.

Sudeep Chakravarti/*New Delhi*

***The Sunday Observer* and *Sunday Mail*: competition ahead**



Whimsical planning

The private sector in the electronics industry seems destined to be a big loser with theDepartment of Electronics (DOE) and the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) letting it down badly. First, it was the issue of licences to manufacture fax machines. DOE initially wanted a minium of six units in the private sector to encourage new entrepreneurs. But the cabinet secretariat felt two units—one in the public sector and the private sector—would be sufficient. However, in a strange about-turn, the DOE finally plumbed for just one unit in the public sector. Reason: to prevent the heavyweights in the private sector from cornering licences!

On its part the DOT has completely blanked out private units in placing orders for jelly-filled cables which are essential for a smoothly functioning telecom network. Its orders have all gone to the government-owned Hindustan Cables, leaving private units in the lurch. Fears that the enormous capacities created will remain unutilised now seem quite real. While 63 lakh circuit kilometres (CKM) of capacity has been installed, another 37 lakh CKM capacity is being created. Strangely, industry sources aver, these capacities were created as a result of DOT's own demand projections. One wonders if this is a result of bureaucratic whims or whimsical planning.

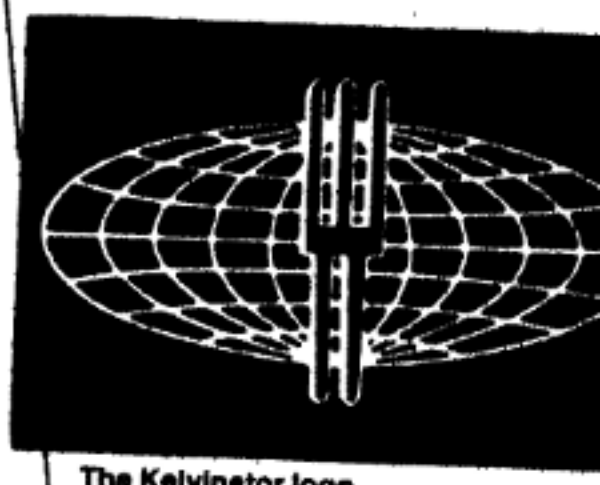
Spreading wings

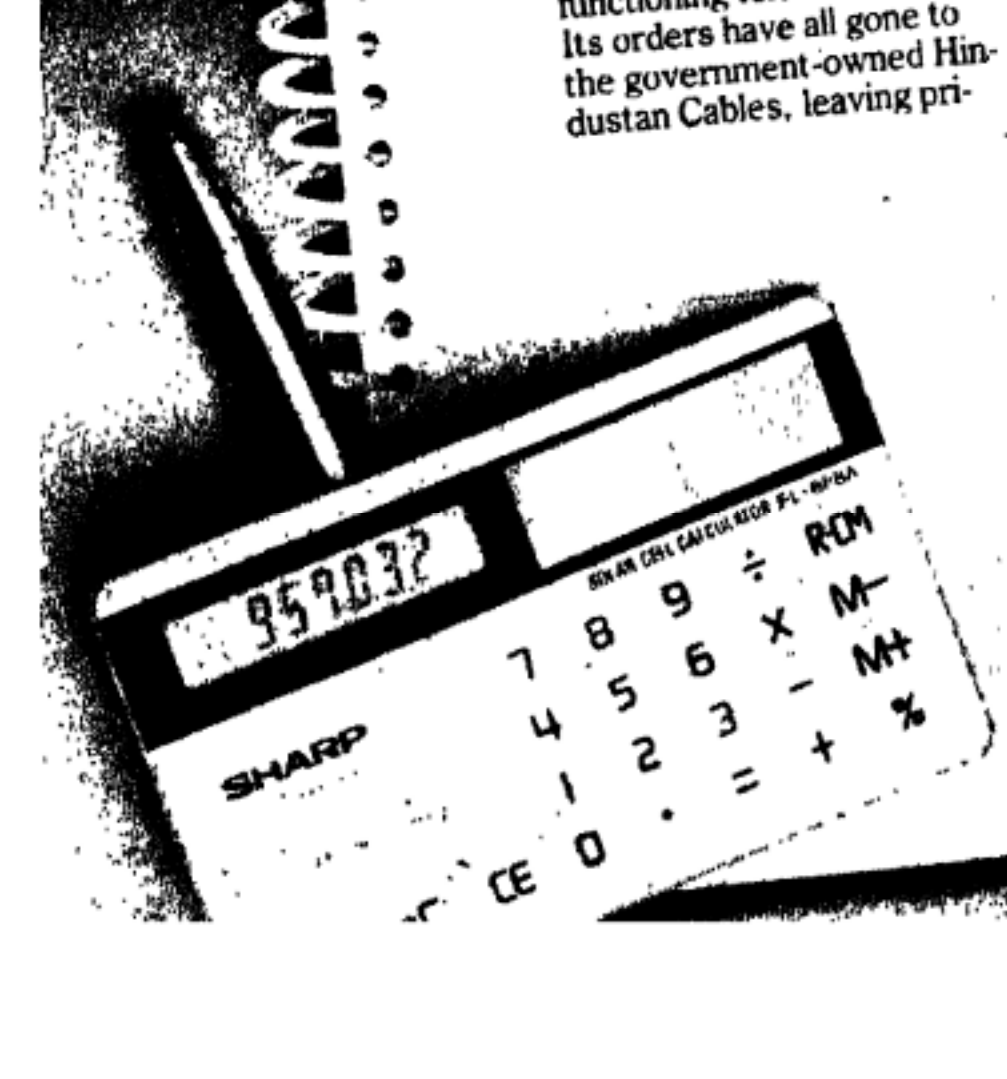
What is the role of Vijay Mallya in Berger, the international paint company? For one thing Mallya who recently turned non-resident appears to have bought out the controlling stake in Berger India. But beyond that he certainly wields a lot of influence in Berger's worldwide operations. A senior manager from Phipson's, one of Mallya's local companies which deals in liquor, has recently been posted as the manager of Berger's operations in the Caribbean. Another manager from United Breweries has also been sent abroad to look after Berger's operations in Africa. And one or two major conferences of Berger International are likely to be held in Bangalore in the near future. It should be interesting to see who presides over the conferences.

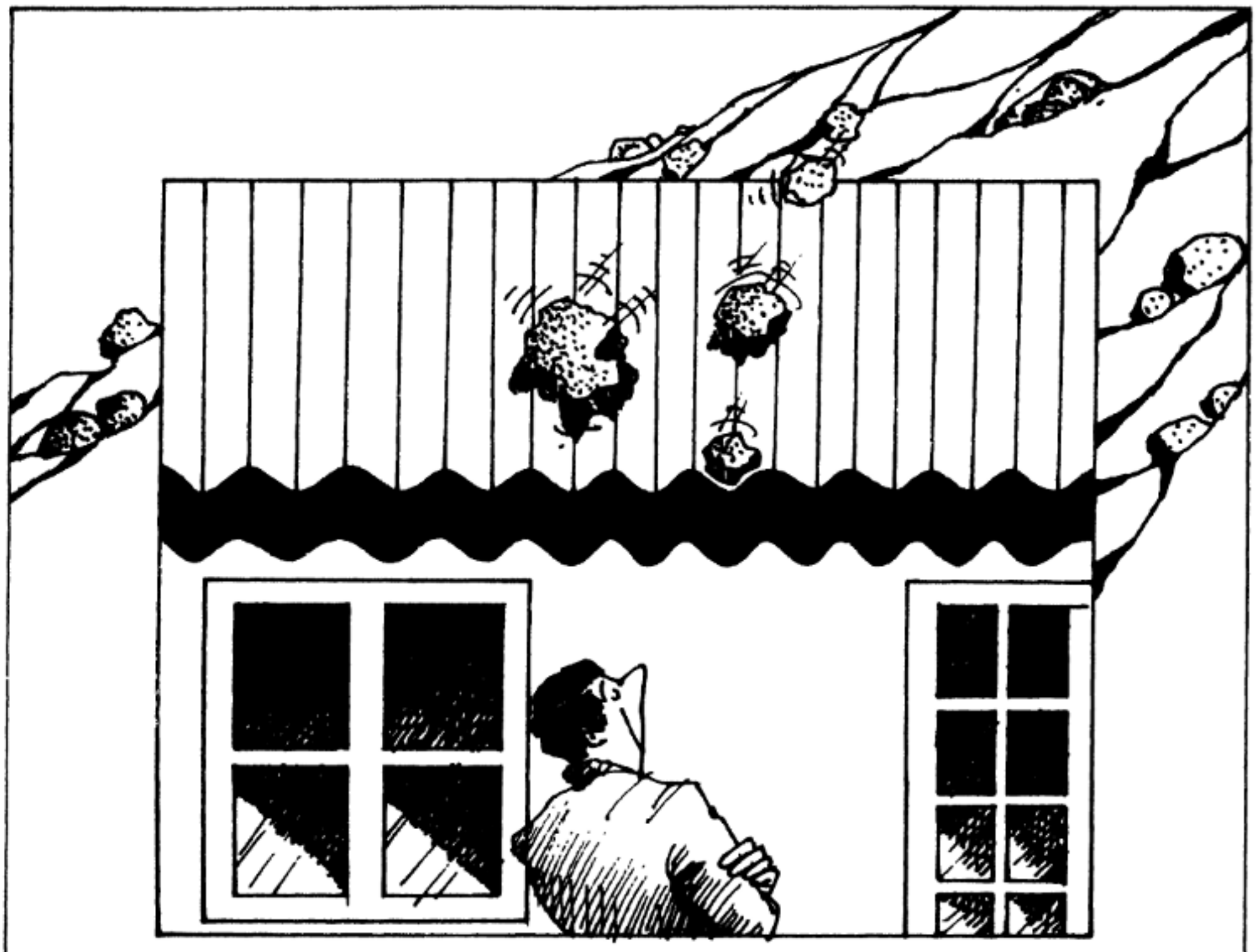

Vijay Mallya

False alarm?

What is happening at Kelvinator, the Delhi-based company which is a big player in the refrigerator business? The company's shares have been rising meteorically over the last few months. Only a short time ago they were stuck around Rs 40 but in recent months they have climbed to almost Rs 145. Sources in the company deny that there is any takeover bid in the offing. However, there are rumours that a non-resident, originally from the south has been trying to buy into the company. There is little likelihood, apparently, of the company being taken over as its chief executive J.R. Desai is said to have a big holding in the company and will be in a position to repel raiders.


The Kelvinator logo





Roofs that don't crack. Galvanized sheet roofs.

Galvanized sheets are incredibly tough They don't crack, or chip – their core of solid steel ensures that. So, you get a roof that lasts for years on end.

Apart from possessing amazing strength, galvanized sheet roofs are also light, leak-proof, economical, corrosion-resistant and absolutely safe from the health point of view.

No wonder galvanized sheets are the first choice for all roofing applications. From factory sheds to godowns. Railway platforms to bus shelters. And rain shelters to homes

Corrugated galvanized sheets for roofing are available in thicknesses from 0.2 mm onwards.

You can obtain galvanized sheets in a wide range for various applications like grain silos, buckets, ghamelas, trunks, water tanks, cooler bodies, drums, almirahs etc.

For more information about galvanized sheets, write to:

ALL INDIA COATED STEEL MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION
POST BOX NO 4206 NEW DELHI – 110 048

MEMBERS:
• Bharat Berg Limited • Essem Coated Steels (J & K) Limited • Munak Galva Sheets Limited • National Steel Industries Limited • Nippon Denro Ispat Limited • Sipta Coated Steels Limited • Sureka Coated Tubes & Sheets Limited • Usha Rectifier Corporation (India) Limited— Galvanized Steel Division. • Uttam Galva Steels Limited

Life-long roofs for healthier living.

Mudra D·AICSMA 3402

RAVI SHANKAR



The history man

How will President Jayewardene be remembered?

If leaders are to be judged by their political legacies, then President Jayewardene must rank as an unqualified disaster. When he retires from office this month, he bequeaths a civil war that has killed about 10,000 Sri Lankans, an accord that has been floundering ever since it was signed, an economy in dreadful shambles and all-round despondency and despair. After 50 years in politics (10 of these as President), Jayewardene now runs the real risk of receiving a bad historical press.

But he deserves to be judged more kindly. He is the only Sri Lankan leader who has gone some way towards meeting the demands of the island's Tamil minority. In the past, two Prime Ministers,Sirimavo Bandaranaike in 1956 and Dudley Senanayake in 1965, had entered into pacts with Tamil



The Indo-Sri Lanka accord: floundering

leaders that sought to protect the community's interests. But both pacts were abrogated in the face of protests from the Sinhala majority. Before he swept to power in 1977, Jayewardene had promised, among other things, a better deal for the Tamils. And during his first term, took a few steps towards appeasing the minority. He set up the District Development Councils (a move to meet Tamil aspirations for autonomy); partially redressed an educational policy that was blatantly slated in favour of the Sinhalas; and accorded Tamil a semi-official status under the Constitution.

But these measures, as Jayewardene himself has admitted on occasion, were too little too late. And as Tamil politics fell increasingly under the sway of the militants, his own policy towards dealing with the minority began to take on a rather confused and contradictory character. There were times when Jayewardene seemed hell-bent on a military solution to the ethnic problem. He would rant about crushing the extremists and wiping them out with armed might. At other moments, he seemed only too willing to negotiate with them, eager for India to mediate in an arrangement that would secure the Tamils a measure of autonomy.

In the end, Jayewardene signed the Indo-Sri Lanka accord and conceded virtually everything that the Tamils had been clamouring for. Under the accord, the Tamil-dominated Northern and Eastern Provinces were merged into one unit—thus granting the Tamils' most important demand. It was a disagreement over this issue that led to the breakdown of the Thimpu talks in 1985 between the militants and representatives of the Sri Lankan government. When a pressman asked him why he couldn't have conceded the demands earlier, Jayewardene, who was somewhat thrown by the question, replied: "Because I was stupid." In any case, the concessions under the accord were no longer satisfactory to the militants, particularly, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Once again, Jayewardene could have been too late.

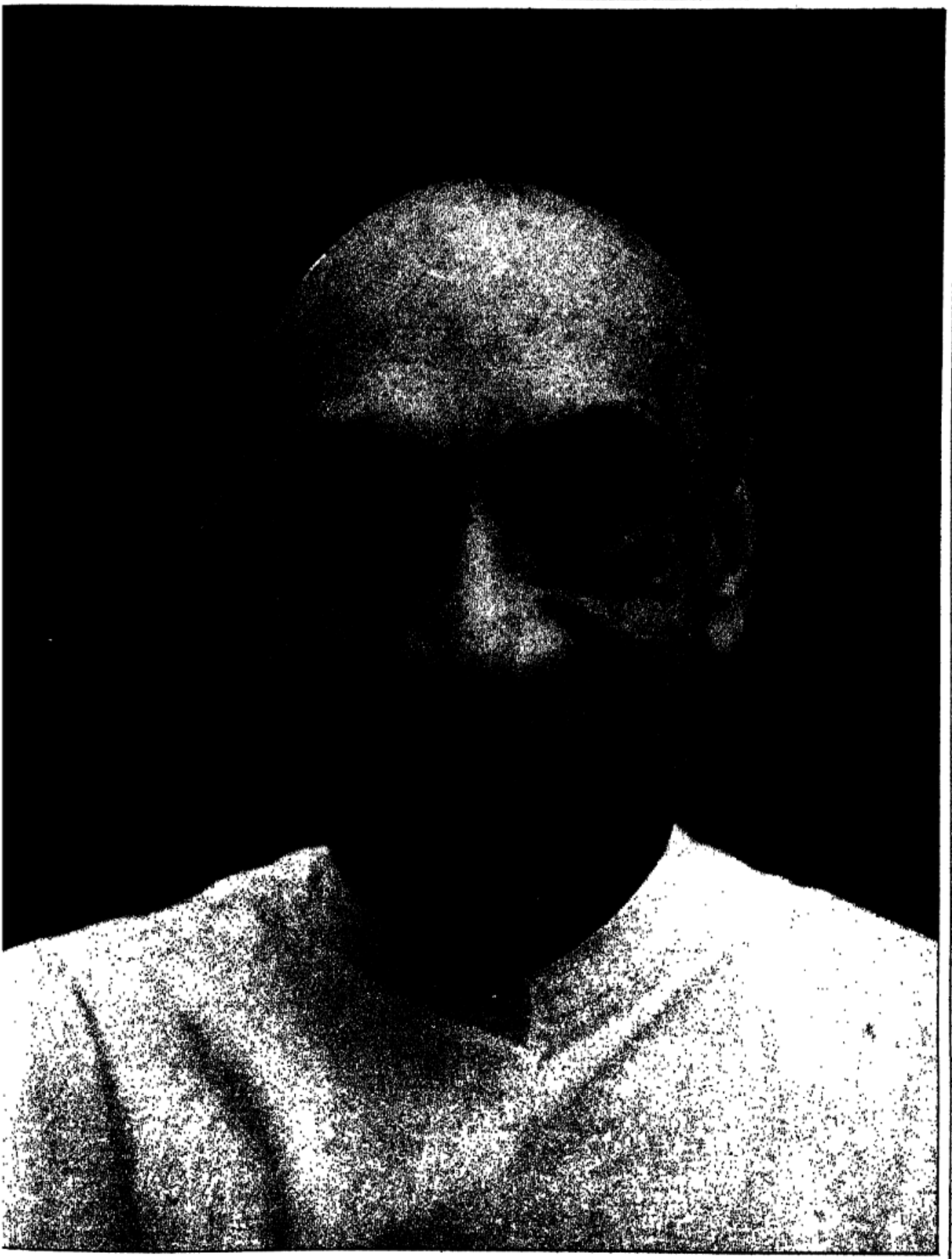
In comparison to the large majority in the ruling United National Party (UNP), Jayewardene is something of a moderate on the Tamil question. If he has been able to carry the party with him in his attempt at conciliation, it is largely because of his total constitutional supremacy. In 1978—a year after he was elected Prime Minister—Jayewardene had Parliament adopt a new Constitution based on the presidential form of government. The Constitution vested the President with unbridled power. Under it, Jayewardene became head of government, head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces all at once—as near a dictator constitutionally as anyone can get. In 1982, when elections were slated to be held, Jayewardene re-elected himself President for another six years through a referendum that extended the life of Parliament. The 19 December poll will be the first general election in the island in a decade.

At the beginning of this year, it appeared that Jayewardene was set to seek a third term in office. It began with him making ambiguous statements about his future ("Ah, I wish I knew where I'd be a year from now," he told *The New Yorker*). To be elected a third time would have required a constitutional amendment and soon his minions began demanding that this be done in the interests of the country. Then, in March, a six-member group was formed to examine the constitutional provisions "in response to suggestions that President Jayewardene seek another term". But he backed out, possibly because of opposition from within the UNP.

The toss-up for the presidency is now between Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa. The former, in a bid to appeal to Sinhala sentiment, has threatened to dishonour the accord and the latter (who has close links with the Buddhist clergy) is perceived as no friend of the Tamils. So, in a sense, Jayewardene could become the real victor at the poll. For it may make people remember that in Jayewardene, you had a man who tried—if only in fits and starts—to secure the peace.

Mukund Padmanabhan

After 50 years in politics, Jayewardene now runs the risk of receiving a bad historical press. But he deserves to be judged more kindly



Revealing titbits



Benazir Bhutto with husband Asif Zardari: rare candour

● Generally she is about as forthcoming as a clam when questioned about her personal life, but just this once that famous guard was down and ITV television (Britain) made the most of it.

In her first interview after becoming Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto talked about husband Asif Zardari and son Bilawal with rare candour. Bilawal got full marks for outwitting both mama and her *bete noire* General Zia, by arriving a month earlier than scheduled. She also placed on record her gratitude for his being as minor a nuisance as possible during the election *tamasha.* And yes, she would like Asif to call Denis (Margaret) Thatcher for advice on what it takes to be the country's first man. Evidently, Mr Zardari's threatening to go live in Karachi.

All the news that fits

● Newspapers in Indian languages are not exactly known for innovations. But one exception is surely *Eenadu*—the largest selling Telugu daily edited and owned by portly industrialist Ramoji Rao. Launched a decade ago, *Eenadu* was an immediate success; it addressed readers in simple, modern and unostentatious pro- at a time when others used language that was dated and difficult to understand.

Clearly, Rao is not content with resting on his laurels. Soon, he will publish 25 editions of *Eenadu*—one for each district and two for the capital. Each edition will contain a 12-page tabloid-sized supplement with only local news. This represents the first effort by any Indian paper to provide comprehensive coverage of local events and issues.

Forty winks

● *Zero Hour in Parliament and tempers were predictably running high. Shantaram Naik (Congress-I) had doubts (expressed with violent zeal) about the current status of the parties comprising the Janata Dal. Repeated pleas by the Chair that he desist were of no avail.*

So, Speaker Balram Jakhar turned to



Ashok Vaishe

H.K.L. Bhagat: nodding off

parliamentary affairs minister H.K.L. Bhagat, asking that he restrain Naik. But Bhagat maintained implacable silence. Until a treasury member bent over and nudged him gently, and it dawned on all that he had been asleep behind those impenetrable glasses.

All of which goes to prove that Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha is no sleeping matter.



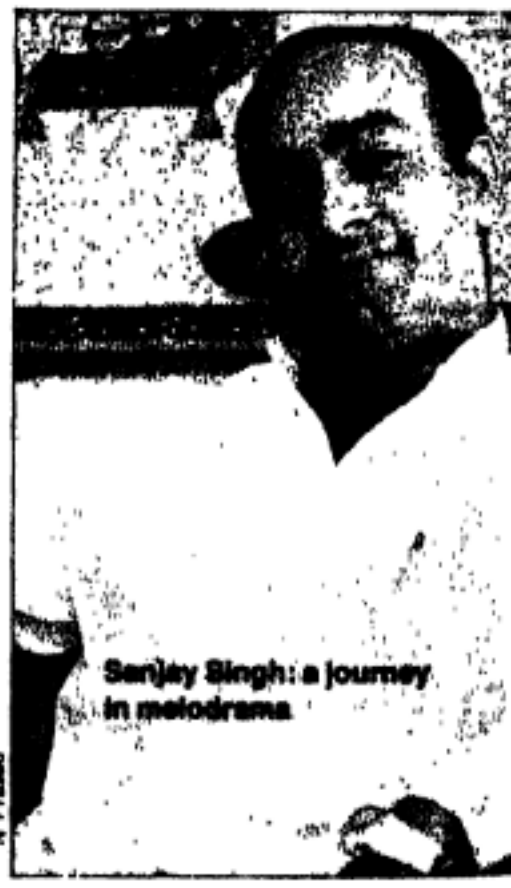
Sandeep Shankar

Buta Singh: VIP movement

But-a delay

● **Suppose you were on the Madras-Bangalore flight—arrival time, 11.40 am. And it was delayed by hours. Could you catch the 12.20 pm connecting flight to Delhi? Yes, if you were travelling with Union home minister Buta Singh.**

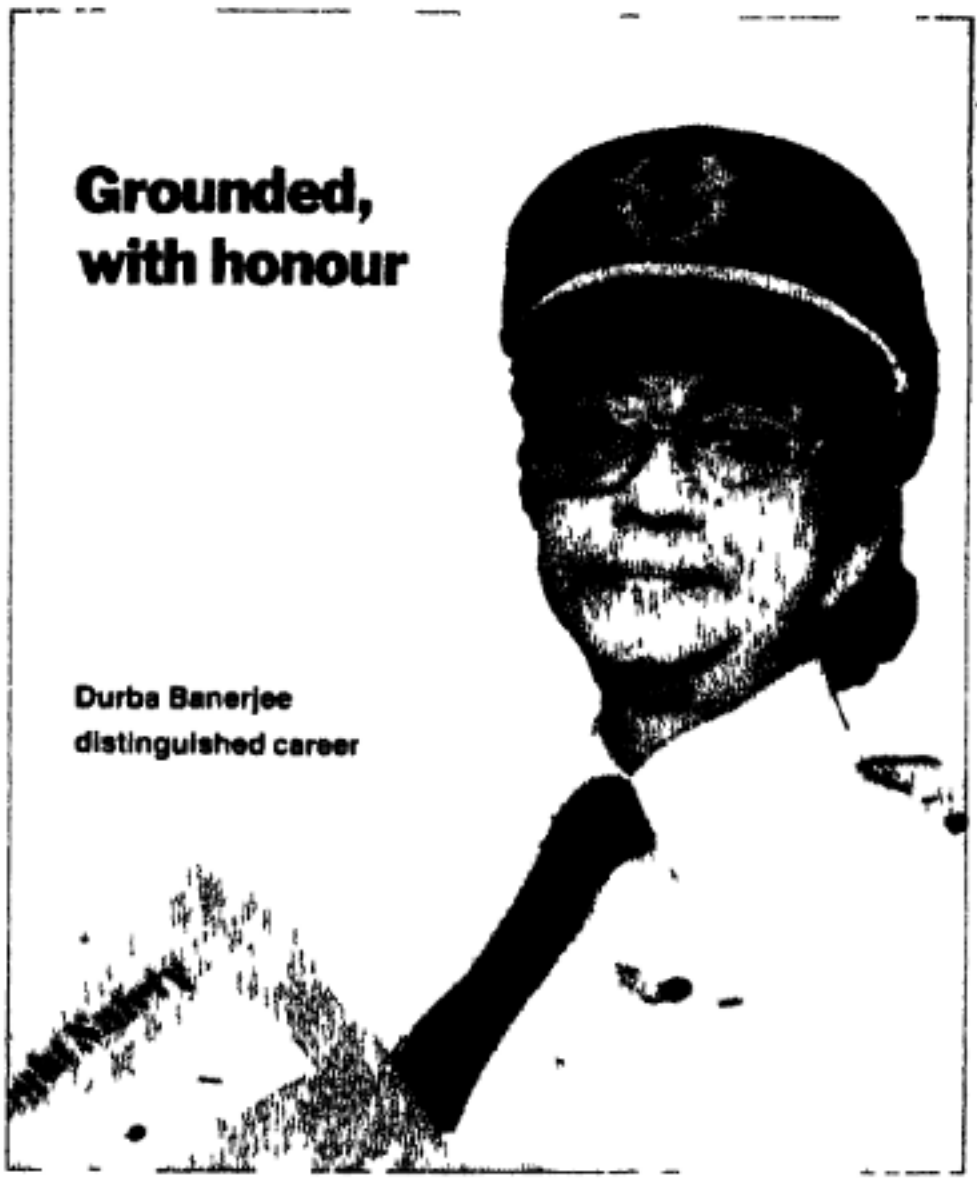
Taking off from Madras, Singh landed at Bangalore long after the scheduled departure time of the Delhi flight. But the authorities had, obligingly enough, kept the plane waiting for him. Irate passengers were placated by talk of technical snags. But they, enterprising souls, plagued the duty officer enough to make the authorities confess that the delay was due to "VIP movement"—yet another addition to the Indian Airlines List of Official Excuses.



N Prasad

Sanjay Singh: a journey in melodrama

Grounded, with honour



Courtesy Photos

Durba Banerjee
distinguished career

● *A female pilot may not be a big deal now but when Durba Banerjee Indian Airlines first woman pilot began flying things were very different Her commercial licence from the Patna Flying Club and stint with Air Survey of India notwithstanding there was general scepticism when she joined the airline in 1966 But countless flights (in Fokker Friendship Airbuses and what have you) proved her expertise and when Banerjee retired, having logged an impressive 18 500 hours, everyone lined up to say kind things*

So, all's well that ends well

A walk on the wild side

● His long constitutional from Amethi to Delhi may not unseat Rajiv, but it is providing enough melodrama to put any self-respecting soap opera to shame.

Janata Dal leader Sanjay Singh and his 200-odd *padayatris* were trekking through Kamalganj town. Walking past the house of the town area committee chairman, what should materialise before the bunch of heels but a phalanx of black-flag-waving, slogan-shouting goons, allegedly of the Youth Congress(I) variety. Police action to drive them away led to brickbatting from housetops and the police had to fire in the air to disperse the mob.

Further on, the Sanjayites were stopped by a road block. Only after much high drama could the *padayatris* progress—and progress they did, footsore but brickbatfree.

The final volley

● Everyone knows that the Amritrajs have ruled Indian tennis for umpteen years (too many years actually, some say). Everyone (even their staunchest fans), also knows that the Amritrajs are...er-...well...getting on a little bit, too. To be precise, Vijay is 34 and Anand 36.

Nevertheless, it was a surprise when the semi-retired Anand was finally dropped from the Davis Cup team (the first time since 1970) for our tie against Japan/South Korea in May. Time for new blood and all that, the Tennis Association decided. Yet, as usual, there was a loophole.

Though Anand wasn't in the three-member team, he is still included in the nine man reserve squad from where a fourth team member is to be subsequently chosen. So, despite all the hype, Anand may eventually return to his brother's fold.



Tarapada Banerjee

Anand Amritraj, past it



"I was impressed when my doctor said Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer really stops hair loss.

But I was convinced when I used it."

"My doctor told me Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer* is a unique scientific formula based on extensive research. He also told me it provides all the essential proteins, co-enzymes and vitamins for strengthening hair roots.

All I know is that it has certainly stopped my hair from falling and checked dandruff."

Here's an excerpt from the research report:

"66.66% gave excellent and 33.33% gave good results with complete disappearance of dandruff in all cases and nearly cent per cent stoppage of fall of hair...So, success rate with Keo-Karpin Hair Vitalizer may be stated to be cent per cent."

Indian Medical Gazette 118, 223 (1984)



The proven scientific way to prevent hair loss.

*It is not a toilet preparation.

Dey's® Dey's Medical. Care you can trust.

DMHV-4

Kimi s singing an entirely different tune of late Only some days back Hemant Birje was all that was detestable No longer Now he s the original Nice Guy, according to the green eyed damsel And to set all doubts at rest she has even agreed to star opposite him in one of the few films the muscle man has managed to sign

So it s back to you Tarzan me Jane days More luck to them

Farha a dream come true

Finally Farha's dream comes true Very own lover boy, Vindoo to you and me, is being launched into films and starring opposite him is none other than the Boy George clone of Hindi cinema

But all that talk of the Raj Sippy launch proved to be just that talk As it turns out B R Ishaara will be Vindoo s first director But the way the poor chap's (non)career is shaping up he can t afford to look Ishaaras horse in the mouth

It was Juhi Chawla s turn to get into the intense actress act Slated to play Draupadi in B R Chopra's tele serial *Mahabharat* Ms Chawla took up a Classics Illustrated Version of the great epic to prepare herself for the challenging task ahead But half way through she gave up

Why queried interested observers Sighed Juhi— there were so many characters popping in and out that she got thoroughly confused That's all right dahling We all have our limitations





Shilpa Shirodkar kiss and make up , (below) Juhi Chawla giving up on Classics

Sawan Kumar Tak and his latest protegee have kissed and made up after three months of intense bickering The contentious issue was Shilpa s dates—all of which Tak claimed were his for the taking For after all, hadn't he discovered her The discovery, unfortunately had other ideas Hence, battle royale And then impasse

Recently however, a compromise was affected Shilpa will devote the first 15 days of every month to dear Sawanji and during the rest of the time complete her outside assignments Neat, what? ■

Whose act is it anyway?

The CCCA has finally decided to discipline the chaotic Hindi film industry



Zeenat Aman: one-time superstar

Filmstars and their distributors seem headed for a collision course Threatened by video piracy and Doordarshan, and wallowing in its own dung-heap, the Hindi film industry is in utter chaos. Expenses are rocketing sky high. At the same time the stars are busier than ever before. Films are being launched, shelved, and new ones are being launched. Indiscipline and lack of planning seem to have become the trademark of film production.

To set matters right, the Central Cine Circuit Association (CCCA), which comprises film distributors in the important territory of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, clamped down with an Act, similar to the one introduced by the Film Producers Guild 18 years ago. This new Act stated that with effect from 1 May, 1988, no producer should sign on any star who has more than 12 films on hand. If he does, the Act threatened, the Association would not buy the film. Even if it is bought, it would not be registered, which means that it could not be released.

If they dismissed it as a desperate flexing of muscles, the stars had another think coming. The Film Distributors Council, the all-India body in New Delhi, in its executive meeting on 21 November, also decided in favour of the ceiling, which they said would apply from 15 December. The Indian Motion Picture Distributors Association and the North India Motion Picture Association have also agreed to the proposal

The CCCA also went so far as to list the actors and actresses with more than 12 films on hand—a list which began with Govinda (33 films) and Kimi Katkar (37) and ended with Rishi Kapoor (15) and Amrita Singh (12) The list was fairly long and included stars of the older generation like Shatrughan Sinha (29), a *kal ka bachcha* like Chunkey Pandey (22) and a media-made meteor like Sonam (26; and without a single release till then).

The simultaneous contracts for a sing-



Yatgan Chatterjee

Meenakshi Seshadri: Me Professional



Gautam Rajadhyaksha

Rishi Kapoor: fifteen films on hand



Amitabh Bachchan: sitting pretty



Anil Kapoor: taking things easy



Kimi Katkar: today's favourite



Sridevi: raising it in

le star were also allied to another trend—the astronomical figures that a successful star could command. Sridevi, after the success of *Mr India* and *Nagina*, hiked her rate to Rs 25 lakhs, something never done before by an Indian film heroine. Amitabh Bachchan, despite the failure of *Shahenshah* and the disaster of his political career, despite the slur of the big-budget *Devaa* (five reels of which were shot before it was abandoned), despite his sky-scraping fees, has, at the time of writing, also touched the "dirty dozen" mark in November. But, as Vijay Anand asked recently, if the stars are boycotted, whom will the producers sign on? And the demand for stars was started by the distributors themselves.

Nearly 20 years ago, Raj Kapoor had predicted the situation in *Mera Naam Joker*. He finds Minu Master (Padmini) pasting film posters on a hoarding and taunts "Minu Master, *tum sitaron ko baans pe chadhati ho?*" About seven years later, Raj Kapoor was doing the same when making *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*.

A year after *Joker*, Dev Anand introduced the *Dum Maro Dum* girl in *Hare Rama Hare Krishna*, Zeenat Aman, who wiggled away with the *Filmfare* best supporting actress award.

Hare Rama Hare Krishna, however, did more than project a luscious lady in a big way. Through it, producer-director Dev Anand challenged an Act enforced by the Film Producers' Guild of India. The Guild had ruled that no star could do more than six films at a time. But Dev being Dev, flashed a toothy smile at the Guild, and promptly whisked away Mumtaz, probably the busiest star then, to Kathmandu to shoot for his film. The Act, needless to add, died a natural death.

The Hindi film industry has been reeling out an increasing number of films each year, notwithstanding the fact that only a handful are able to score at the box-office. And the industry today is overrun by stars. Said Boney Kapoor, producer of one of the major hits of the last few years, *Mr India*: "If you ask me, the menace today is not the video boom, but the star boom."

Brother Anil, who did the title role of *Mr India*, also admitted: "It's madness. The tension kills you. I suffered the system for a long time, but my nerves can't take it anymore. I have opted out of all my new projects. I'm aware that a lot of my colleagues are laughing at me, but it's okay by me." Yet, Boney Kapoor started *Roop Ki Rani Choron Ka Raja* with the *Mr India* pair, Sridevi and Anil.



Sridevi: reigning sex queen

The CCCA framed an Act which stated that with effect from 1 May, 1988, no producer should sign on any star who has more than 12 films on hand.

Kapoor, who then had 14 and 18 films on hand, respectively

Producer Hafiz Nadiadwala called the shootings "a ball game", and cited the example of a recent blockbuster, *Sone Pe Suhaga*. "The atmosphere is more like a *mela* than a shooting. Everyone's relaxing, chatting, having a good time; work is by-the-way. The responsibility of a flop today is shared by all the stars collectively, so individually, they all feel less accountable."

Another producer-director, Nasir Hussain, placed the blame at the filmmaker's doorstep. "If the producer knows that the artiste is working in 20 films, why does he sign him in the first place? If I'm a clever producer, I'll see to it that I don't get into this dates hassle. Nobody is gaining from this madness, and the sooner we all realise this, the better."

Cinema may be the director's medium, but in India, it's the stars that



Gautam Rajadhyaksha

Amrita Singh: one of the victims

sell the film. *Ram Teri Ganga Maili* and *Tarzan* may have created stars, but in a scenario where three films are launched every day, each averaging a cost of Rs 75 lakhs, how many get the financier to loosen the moneybag strings on the basis of the director's name or the cinematographer's? The film editor and sound recordist may make or break a film, but it is still the names of the stars in the trade journal advertisements that make it at the box-office.

Yes, it does lead to the overbooking of



Gautam Patole

Dev Anand: rules are meant to be broken

stars and studios, which leads to loss of very expensive time (a cancelled studio shooting averages a loss of Rs 1 lakh a day) which, in turn, makes nonsense of quality. The battered distributors often have to salvage matters at great cost to themselves. Certainly, they have a point when they protest about this state of affairs.

Producer-distributor F.C. Mehra may stand "totally in favour of the Act" and feel that everyone is blaming everyone else, but another of his tribe, Pahlaj Nihalani, snapped: "Look, all this ceiling bit is just crap. Nobody is going to follow it, so why waste time discussing it?" If producer director J. Om Prakash feels that the decision should be left to the stars ("The actor himself is the best judge of the situation, the Act means nothing"), actor Rishi Kapoor dismissed the "useless discussions" with a grunt - "No one bothers about these Acts and rules, no one gives a damn, it's good only for the records."

Rishi, of course, has reason enough to climb onto the juggernaut. "A few years ago, I was probably the only actor who believed in doing one shift a day, but what happened?" he asked. "I was just being idealistic and got nowhere. I was jolted out of my trance in right time, I could have easily been left

The CCCA's Act is really a call for a semblance of discipline in an industry where there is simply no method, only madness

back on the shelf."

Lead star Sunny Deol, who is very selective, also resented the Act because he felt it was unfair to the artistes in general. "When there are no such restrictions on any other professional, why must only a filmstar be punished?" Kimi Katkar, whom the Act affects the most in a sense, hates doing multiple shifts, but feels helpless about it all. "How can I suddenly restrict myself—and why should I? As long as the audience wants me, I'm going to be here, and I'll continue to sign films. Once I flop, nobody will be there to sign me on, anyway." After all, from sequins to sackcloth is just a flop away.

Shelf-life, specially for female stars, is *the* thing, and that sense of insecurity coated with the lust for the lolly makes them go on a signing spree without as much as a quick look over the shoulder. Even Mithun Chakraborty, who was laid up in bed for nearly three months recently, and has over 30 films on his shoot list, found his "dates going awry" and was forced to do four shifts a day. "It's awful," he lamented, "and what irritates me more is that rather than understand my plight, I'm further accused of troubling my producers."

With the invasion of video, it has become imperative for the producer to complete his films as fast as possible, release it in multiple chains and rake in the money before the celluloid pirates close in. Hit and run is the name of the game.

Thus, we have the no-price-rise star, Dharmendra, even in his last phase doing 30 films at a time for Rs 30 lakhs a film, with a whopping signing fee for each. Between Dharmendra and Vinod Khanna, who also returned to the silver screen in a big way, there are about 60 films and Rs 100 crores at stake. "If a man throws Rs 30 lakhs in my lap, it doesn't bite me," Vinod Khanna told *Filmfare* (16 December, 1987) and shrugged off the whole blessed thing.

What the CCCA has done might be more an act of desperation than a draconian measure. The call really is for a semblance of discipline in an industry where there is simply no method, only madness. "Any kind of discipline is good for everyone," brooded Ms Professional Meenakshi Seshadri. "And the film industry is no exception." Latest reports augur well and the movement seems to be gathering some momentum. But as Meenakshi put it, "The only problem is that people here are so inconsistent. "They will start something today and do the opposite tomorrow." You can say that again Meenakshi!

Anil Grover with a correspondent

Her father's shadow

Salman Rushdie rips into the Daughter of the East

'*Cogito, ergo sum.*' Benazir Bhutto muses, translating helpfully: 'I think, therefore I am. I always had difficulty with this philosophical premise at Oxford and I am having much more difficulty with it now.' It's not that she doesn't think, you understand—actually, she thinks *even when she doesn't want to*—but that the thinking doesn't seem to help her *be*. 'I feel that I have nothing on which to leave my imprint,' she laments.

One might think an autobiography the very place for such imprint-leaving, but, alas, Benazir is curiously absent from her own book. The voice that speaks, the marks that are made here, belong to an American ghost.

It is a monosyllabic ghost that hates verbs and is much enamoured of sound effects. Here it is, describing what the Pakistan army did in Bangladesh in 1971. 'Looting. Rape. Kidnapping. Murder.' Here it tells us of Benazir's solitary confinement. 'Time, relentless, monotonous... Flaking cement. Iron bars. And silence. Utter silence.' And here is the funeral of her brother Shah Nawaz. 'Black. Black armbands. Black *shalwar kameez* and *dupattas*... Black. More black.' And what were the people doing... 'in the fever of their grief?' This: 'Crying. Wailing.'

But even this is lyrical by comparison with the evocation of Benazir's ear infection: 'Click. Click. Click. Click.' (Eleven times in all on Page 61.) Or of the sounds of prison as heard from a lonely cell: 'Tinkle. Tinkle. Clank. Clank.' Or of Benazir's choice of a husband: 'Asif Zardari. Asif Zardari. Asif Zardari.' Perhaps it is as well that Ms Bhutto's phantom doesn't attempt too much in the way of drama. When it does, this happens:' "No!" I screamed. "No!"' (On hearing of her brother's death) And: '"No!" I cried in Eliot Hall, throwing down the newspaper.' (On hearing of the Indian army's invasion of Bangladesh.) And, most tragically of all, when she dreams her father's execution '"No!" the scream burst through the knots in my throat. "No!"

If the worst smell emanating from this book had been that of rotten writing, however, it would have been possible—even proper—to be reasonably forgiving. After all, Ms Bhutto has had one hell of a life, and it ought to be an absorbing tale, even decked out in Joan Collins prose. Unfortunately, the politics stink, too. *Daughter of the East*, she calls herself, but in truth she's still Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's little girl, still unwilling to admit that the martyred parent ever committed the tiniest of sins.

The resulting omissions from the story are as revealing as the bits she puts in. She manages, for example, to get through her entire account of her father's government without once mentioning the little matter of genocide in Baluchistan. She speaks quite correctly of the Zia regime's torture camps, both in Baluchistan and elsewhere. 'Chains. Blocks of ice. Chilis inserted into the prisoners' rectums' - but draws a daughterly veil over the Bhutto people's very similar misdeeds. She fails entirely to mention Bhutto's strenuous efforts at election rigging in 1977, efforts which, by giving him a victory of ludicrously implausible proportions, gave Zia his opening, allowing him to take over on the pretext of holding new, non-controversial polls. Worst of all, she falsifies Bhutto's role in the events leading to the secession of Bangladesh to a quite scandalous degree.

In Benazir's version, the blame is placed firmly at the feet of Sheikh Mujib, leader of the then East Pakistani Awami League. After the 1970 elections, Benazir says, 'instead of working with my father... Mujib instigated an independence movement... Mujib showed an obstinacy the logic of which to this day defies me.' You feel like using words of one syllable to explain. Listen, dear child, the man had *won*, and it was your father who dug in his heels. In the elections of 1970, the Awami League won an absolute majority of all seats in Pakistan's two 'Wings' combined. Mujib had every right to insist, 'obstinately', on being Prime Minister, and it was Bhutto and General Yahya Khan who conspired to prevent this from happening. *That* was how the war of secession began, but you wouldn't know it from reading this book.

Benazir Bhutto: brave but naive



It is depressing to find Benazir still being so daughterly. She is a brave woman and has come a long way, as a politician, from the inexperienced days when she would issue Zia with ultimatums she could not enforce. If I'd had a vote in Wednesday's elections, I'd probably have voted for her. Now, Benazir Bhutto and the People's Party represent Pakistan's best (last?) hope of constructing a modern secular democracy and of putting the generals and mullahs back in their boxes, but this book's naivety, and its willingness to turn a blind eye to unpalatable truths, are indications of the faintness of that hope.

Her book does, inevitably, have its moments: when, for example, she tells us how she mistook Hubert Humphrey for Bob Hope, or when she gives us the behind-the-scenes dope on the post-Bangladesh peace negotiations at Simla between Mrs Gandhi and Mr Bhutto. And by far the most powerful chapter is the one about the farcical trial and subsequent execution of Bhutto by that fearsome 'cartoon', Zia ul-Haq. But by the end it's Benazir's difficulty with cogitation that strikes one most forcefully.

On my beloved's forehead, his hair is shining. Benazir's ghost sings at the henna ceremony preceding the marriage to Asif Asif Asif. On his forehead, eh? Well, no highbrow he, by all accounts, and on this evidence, his arranged marriage looks like a perfect match. ■

Daughter of the East by Benazir Bhutto. Published by Hamish Hamilton. Price £ 12.95

The lighter side of the serious

R.K. Laxman's brush with reality



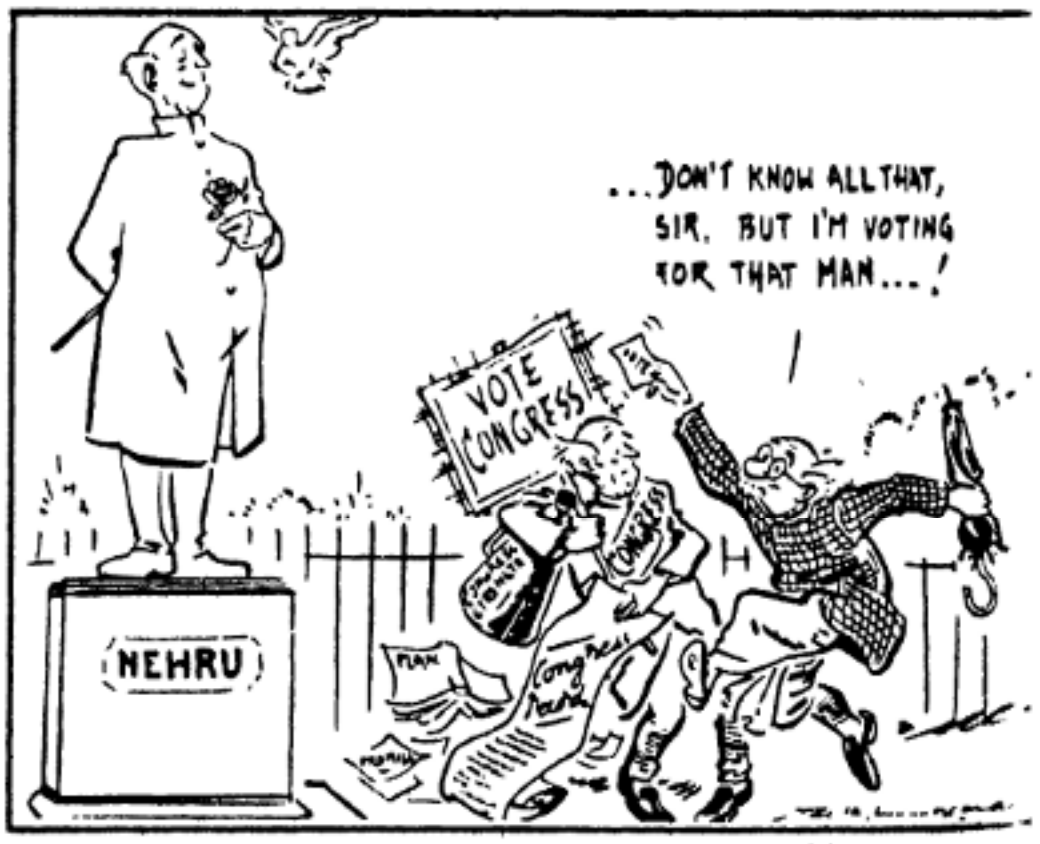
Whenever I have to make a selection of my cartoons I feel reluctant to go near the cupboard which stores them. The reluctance is due to the fact that I am a highly disorganised person. I keep my cartoons in chaotic bundles, undated and unclassified. In this happy mix-up it would not be surprising if a cartoon about the Berlin Blockade finds itself next to one, say, of NTR attired in the style of Sri Rama or Napoleon Bonaparte. Therefore I feel it is beyond me to arrange them in any sensible order.

That apart, I dread the very prospect of spreading out my old cartoons to look for the best. Somehow, such a confrontation with my past efforts drains away my sense of judgement and I cannot make out which is bad and which is good. What appears one moment embarrassingly poor might seem brilliant after a second look! The cartoon may even induce me to pat myself on the back and marvel at my creative genius and make me wonder how I could hit upon the idea. But, the next moment I might consign it to the heap meant for efforts unworthy of me.

This vacillation is the reason why I am unable to give a coherent answer when an interviewer asks, thrusting a mike at me, which in my opinion is the best cartoon that I have produced so far. I always mumble some reply, hoping it would be muffled with the other noises recorded on the tape. But, in one of the interviews, faced with the same question, I gave a spontaneous reply which sounded genuine. I said that I had not drawn my best cartoon yet!

There are other problems which crop up when wading through a sea of old dog-eared cartoons. Often I cannot make out what in heaven a particular cartoon refers to. It could very well have drawn national applause on the day it was flashed on the front page of the newspaper in the distant past. But it makes no sense to me now! It might be about an ephemeral chief minister of a minor state, who, perhaps, had brought on himself the attention of the whole nation by some indiscretion in his conduct or some pronouncements that helped me out with an idea for the day. This gentleman



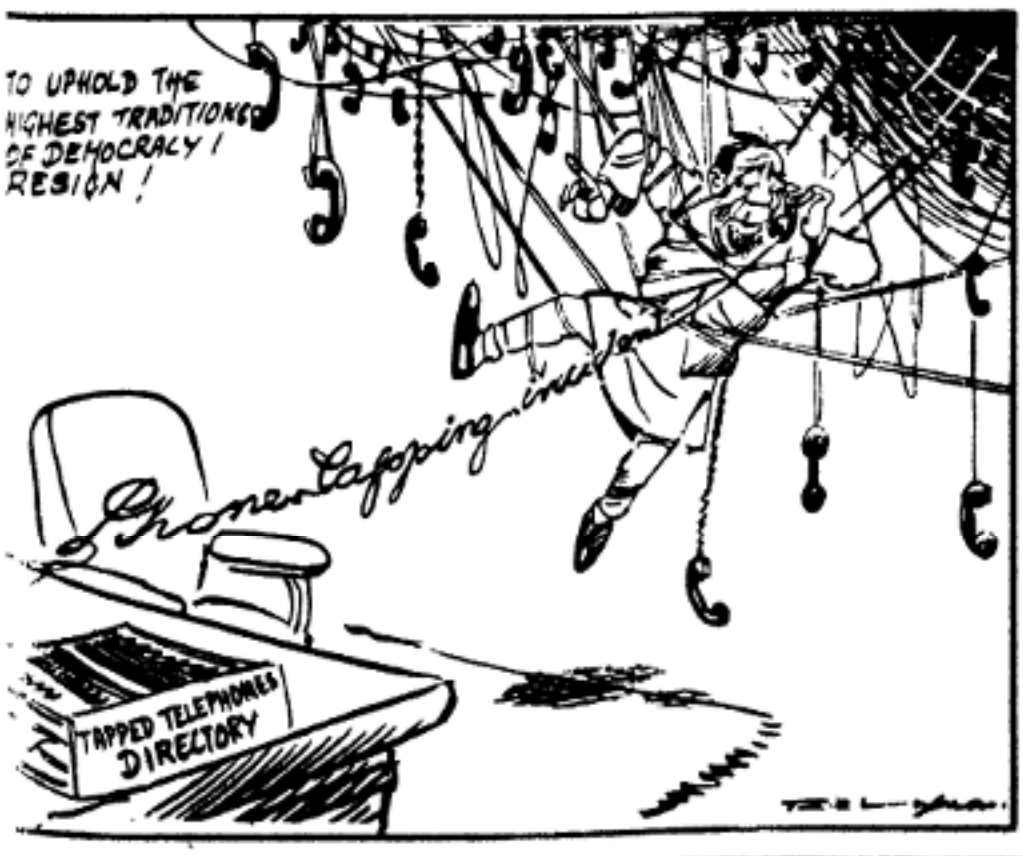






I dread the very prospect of spreading out my old cartoons to look for the best. Such a confrontation with my past efforts drains away my sense of judgement





has disappeared since into the vast multitude of political has-beens, leaving no trace behind, except perhaps this wilted cartoon.

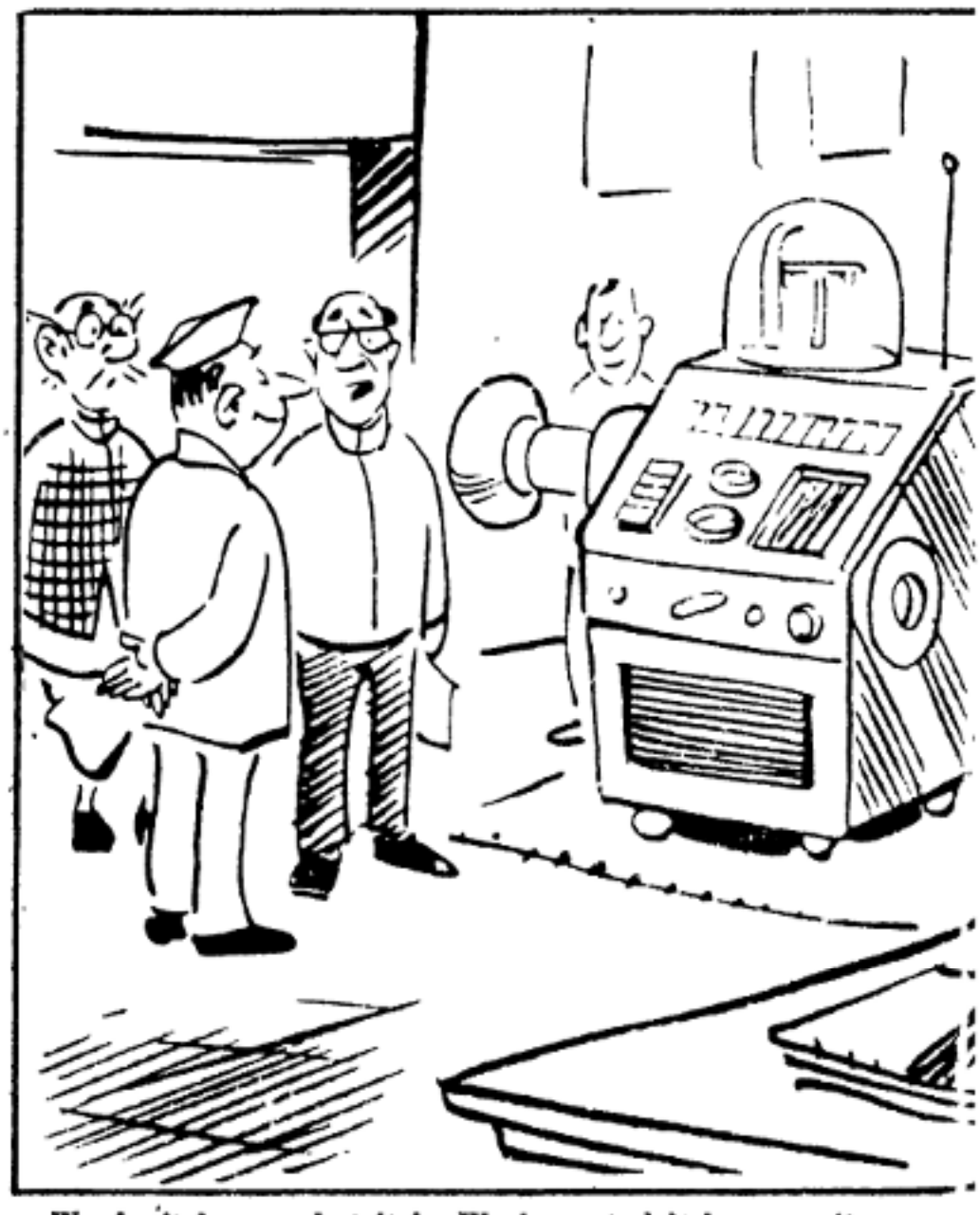
In the cartoon the character is shown plunging down a circus dome firmly clutching a trapeze bar with snapped ropes, as he says, "Not to worry, my dear Prime Minister, the situation is completely under control."

Though I cannot recall the background, the drawing holds my attention and I reflect approvingly on its composition, the powerful distortion of the faces and the unflattering details in them. For a moment I indulge in a bit of correction and mentally improve the drawing, perhaps the character's hands should have been raised upward in horror and that chap's expression could have been exaggerated a bit more and so on. I feel disappointed that I did not pay attention to all this while I worked on the drawing. But where is the time?





.. and lastly we come to the implementation of the practical side of our plan, that is we meet again in the third week of June!



We don't know what it is. We imported it because it is the latest in electronics.





Rajiv Gandhi was an awesome, unknown factor. The fear that his handsome features might defy distortion and not yield a plausible caricature proved groundless and he rapidly assumed a lively likeness to my caricature of him





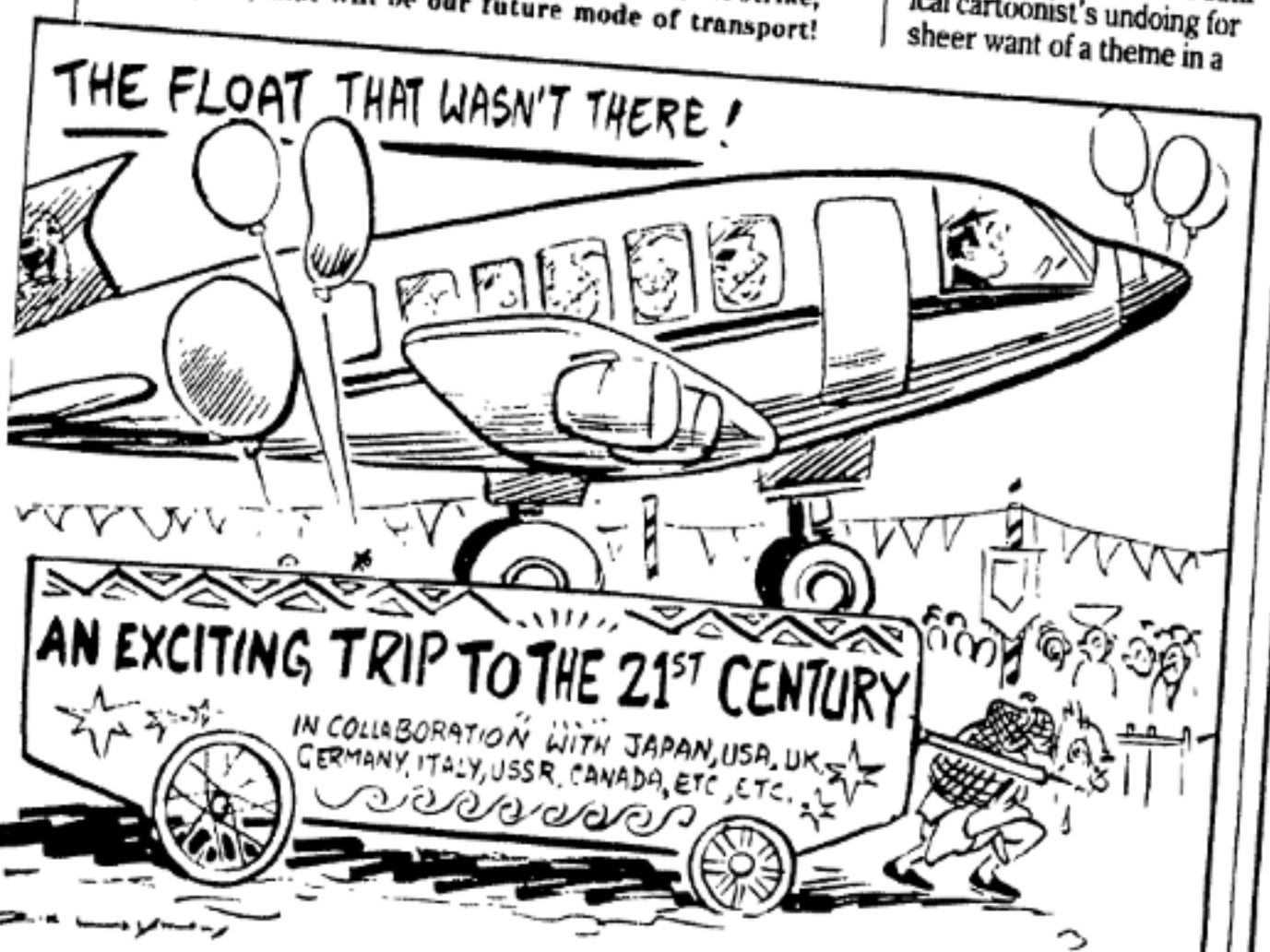
Next, I am puzzled by the label in the cartoons carrying such bewildering acronyms as (taking the liberty of exaggeration) PKPCCSI, or OPPOUWF and, of course, Cong (SDK (I) LB). These are inscribed on the edge of the coat of a leader or on the tattered flag of a drifting raft on the wide, wide ocean, or it might be on a charging bull, a tiger or a lamb.



With all these frequent rasta roko, rail roko, I A strike, I suppose, that will be our future mode of transport!

Most political cartoons have a very short life. A few, which satirise momentous events of national importance such as the Partition, the linguistic division, the Congress split, the Emergency, Mrs Gandhi's defeat, her subsequent triumph and, of course, the comic interlude of the Janata Party rule, are durable and need hardly any effort to recall events which inspired them.

The arrival of Mr Rajiv Gandhi on the scene as Prime Minister caused me some worry from the professional point of view. A good-looking young leader with unrevealed potentialities, yet reputed to be daring, dynamic, forward-looking and with a scientific bent of mind might very well prove a satirical cartoonist's undoing for sheer want of a theme in a







I am amused when I look at these old cartoons now, for quite a different reason. These acronyms stood once for certain parties which were formed in a fit of anger or hope or challenge, with the lofty aim of saving the nation from the Congress party. But alas, they had apparently served no more than the need of a cartoonist for a brief while before they disintegrated and disappeared forever from the political scene. Of course, with a bit of reference work, one could still understand these cartoons in their context.

Utopia which the young leader might succeed in ushering in! A cartoonist prefers someone like Morarji Desai or Charan Singh or NTR or MGR or Raj Narain as the centre of focus. They are easy to caricature and capable of keeping a cartoonist's profession flourishing.





Most political cartoons have a very short life. However, a few which satirise events of national importance, such as the Partition, the Emergency or Mrs Gandhi's defeat, are durable and need hardly any effort to recall the event which inspired them





I am rather proud of it..... the entire building is constructed with stones and brick-bats thrown by students.

Mr Rajiv Gandhi was an awesome, unknown factor. I watched him nervously as he took office and began to rule. But soon I realised that my profession, like those of millions of others, was safe in his hands. The fear that his handsome features might defy distortion and not yield a plausible caricature proved groundless and he rapidly assumed, like so many other international and national leaders, a lively likeness to my caricature of him! ■

The Eloquent Brush by R.K. Laxman. *The Times of India*, 1988, sesquicentennial publication. Price: Rs 250.



Who's afraid of Jagannath Mishra?

After the launch of the Jan Vikas Manch—everybody

An expression of dissidence? A show of strength? A threat to break away? Dissident Congressman and former Bihar chief minister Jagannath Mishra's decision to form the Bihar Jan Vikas Manch was possibly all three.

At a gathering of some 5,000 supporters at Patna on 3 December the 104th birth anniversary of Dr Rajendra Prasad Mishra formally launched the Manch, which elected him its president. Present were 35 dissident Congress legislators, two Congress MPs and a number of Opposition leaders. Floated as a forum to struggle for the prosperity and welfare of the backward and the downtrodden Mishra was at pains to stress that the Manch was a non-political organisation (he referred to it as a "research and development" body) But nobody has any doubt that the Manch is intended to provide a nucleus for dissident Congressmen in Bihar

Mishra also took care not to attack the central leadership of the Congress However, he charged the Centre and the state government for not advancing the interests of Bihar. He stressed that only the Manch could fill the vacuum created by irrelevant policies of different political parties. This is being interpreted by some as a hint that he is prepared to convert the Manch into a political party if needed

For Mishra, who has been at odds with chief minister Bhagwat Jha Azad for long, the timing couldn't have been better. The Congress(I) in Bihar is in a mess. Bhagwat Jha Azad is fast acquiring the reputation of being one of the most unpopular Congress chief ministers in the country. His frequent flashes of temper have only heightened his unpopularity within the party. Moreover, Azad and the Bihar PCC(I) chief, Tariq Anwar, do not see eye to eye. And to compound the merry confusion, there are Congressmen, like Sitaram Kesri, who have been playing politics in the state.

While Mishra was busy launching his Manch, a Youth Congress rally was being held at the same time just a furlong away The rally was an answer to Mishra's move and was intended to overshadow the gathering at the Manch. It was attended by a number of Congress heavyweights, including Azad, AICC(I) general secretaries Ghulam Nabi Azad and Oscar Fernandes, AICC(I) treasurer Sitaram Kesri, Union minister Rajesh Pilot and Youth Congress president Mukul Wasnik Speakers at the rally vowed to crush "traitors and dissidents"—an obvious reference to Mishra and his followers. The "traitors", they said, were planning to weaken the nation and create political instability and anarchy in the country.

Jagannath Mishra stresses that the Manch is a non-political organisation—a forum to struggle for the welfare of the downtrodden. But nobody has any doubt that it is intended to provide a nucleus for dissident Congressmen in Bihar

There were some significant absentees at the rally though. Among them, Union minister and former Bihar chief minister Bindeswari Dubey and Tariq Anwar. An indication of the infighting within the state party. Despite the use of government machinery, the Youth Congress rally did not generate the kind of response that was expected. The non-involvement of sections of the state Congress was the possible reason. But Youth Congress workers claimed, predictably, that it was a success. Says youth leader and MLA, Shakil-uz-Zaman: "The rally was a successful mini-referendum on the policies of the chief minister, who is held in high regard by the people."

Mishra's initiative put the high command in a quandary. By declaring that he was not indulging in anti-party activity and not floating a new party, he did not, on the face of it, violate party norms. And by saying that the Congress leadership was welcome to cancel his membership if it desired, he put the ball squarely into the high command's court. For days there was no response from



Delhi. Then on 8 December, two Union ministers, Sheila Dixit and Rajesh Pilot, and other Congress functionaries had talks with Mishra about the controversy. Mishra reiterated that he was not against the Congress(I)'s policies and stressed that the Manch's only objectiv was to safeguard the interests of the weaker sections of the state. He told SUNDAY in New Delhi: "I have given them (the high command) no reason to take action against me. There is a vacuum at the social level which has led poor and backward people in Bihar to join extremist organisations. The Manch is intended to check this trend and fill the vacuum."

The Youth Congress rally was an answer to Mishra's move. Speakers vowed to crush "traitors and dissidents"—an obvious reference to Mishra and his followers



Bhagwat Jha Azad at the Youth Congress rally

The constitution adopted by the Manch is significant, for, it identifies the constituency that Mishra wishes to be identified with. The Manch's programme is largely directed towards securing the interests of the weaker sections—backward classes, Harijans, Adivasis, landless labourers and poor farmers. It pledges to redress the grievances of this section of people by launching a "non-violent" agitation on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's. The constitution directs the Manch to exert pressure on both the central and state governments to act justly with respect to the people of the state.

It is difficult to say whether Mishra is using the Manch as a tool to bargain for political office or whether its launch is only the first step towards a full-fledged confrontation with the Congress. Loyalist Congressmen believe that it is a pressure tactic towards securing a ministerial or party post. As for Mishra, he refuses to answer. When asked whether he will abandon the Manch for the promise of office, just as he abandoned his *jan jagran* programme for a Rajya Sabha seat, he merely laughed. "The Prime Minister insisted and that is why I joined the Rajya Sabha," he said.

Whatever the truth, Mishra is the most powerful Congress leader in Bihar today. He can command a sizeable audience at short notice and has the backing of a good number of Congress legislators. Moreover, he is the only Congress leader in the state who has a political constituency--the weaker sections.

As of now, there is little chance that the high command will offer Mishra a post either in the state or at the Centre. Nor is there much chance of Mishra dissolving the Manch—he is clearly in no mood to retreat. The Opposition parties are sending out feelers to him and some leaders have already begun boasting that they have his support. Rumours have it that he has been meeting V.P. Singh, Chandra Shekhar and H.N. Bahuguna over the past few months. The presence of Opposition leaders at the launch of the Manch has given rise to speculation that Mishra may form a regional party and forge an alliance with the Opposition.

Mishra is keeping his political game plan under wraps. It is likely that he will feel his way around for a while before taking any radical step. Much will depend on how the high command responds to his challenge. On whether it restores him as a major political player or not. Until now, the Congresss high command has treated him with kid gloves—suggesting, perhaps, that it wants to seek a *rapprochement* and not alienate him from the party altogether.

Mishra is clearly going to be closely watched over the next few weeks. And if a solution to everybody's satisfaction is not found by then, Bihar's politics is set to take an interesting twist.

Seema Mustafa/*New Delhi* with Faizan Ahmad/*Patna*

Mishra (second from left) at the launch of the Jan Vikas Manch: a threat to break away?





Millions of vehicle owners all over the country get off to a flying start. Everyday With MICO.

MICO spark plugs incorporate the latest international technology from Bosch, West Germany – pioneers and leaders in spark plug technology.

An excellent example of this is the MICO Super – India's first bi-metal electrode spark plug.

MICO spark plugs are available in every part of the country.

So when you fit a spark plug, stick to proven quality. Buy MICO. And ride on confidently!

MICO

LICENCE BOSCH

MICO makes a matching spark plug for *every* Indian vehicle.

GUEST COLUMN

UDAYAN SHARMA

The breach in Bihar

Why the Congress should retain Jagannath Mishra's loyalty

Politics may or may not be the last resort of scoundrels; but forming a new party is very often the last resort of the politician who feels neglected, misunderstood or humiliated by his party high command. In Bihar today, it is Jagannath Mishra who feels that the state Congress(I) leaders, particularly chief minister Bhagwat Jha Azad, are obstructing him needlessly.

After years of experience, Mishra knows very well that he would gain nothing by walking out of the party in a huff. The Opposition would have nothing desirable to offer. The Janata Dal, in particular, is a morass of intrigues that even a leader of Mishra's experience would not be able to deal with. And as one colleague of Mishra's put it, "In the party (Congress-I) you have to make obeisance only at one place. But in the Janata Dal, there are a number of petty gods before whom one will have to prostrate oneself."

At the same time, Mishra knows that letting himself be pushed around indefinitely is not going to add to his stature or clout. He has declared that though he has no grievance against Rajiv Gandhi, he is not going to submit to indignities heaped upon him by the chief minister of Bihar. Mishra probably feels that the tussle between him and Bhagwat Jha Azad has gone beyond the point of tolerance.

Hence, the last resort solution: preparing the base for the formation of a new regional party by launching the Jan Vikas Manch. It is not only the chief minister who is after Mishra's blood. Many of the senior Congress(I) leaders would like to throw him out of the party, even though they realise that such a move might weaken the party's base in the state.

Behind this seeming paradox lies the nature of Jagannath Mishra's politics, which are not feudal like Veer Bahadur Singh's. Mishra has his political base among the minorities, the lower-level party workers and the poor. He is also considerably popular with the teaching community and the bureaucrats. Perhaps it is the consciousness of this support that has led him to conclude that the best alternative is to build a regional base for himself.

But the danger of such a course is apparent. If Jagannath Mishra spearheads a programme of regional politics that could well mean the end of unity in Bihar. It would inject a kind of divisive venom into the politics of the state, which would also affect national politics. Historically, Bihar has always



K M Kishan

Jagannath Mishra announces the birth of the Jan Vikas Manch: the last resort?

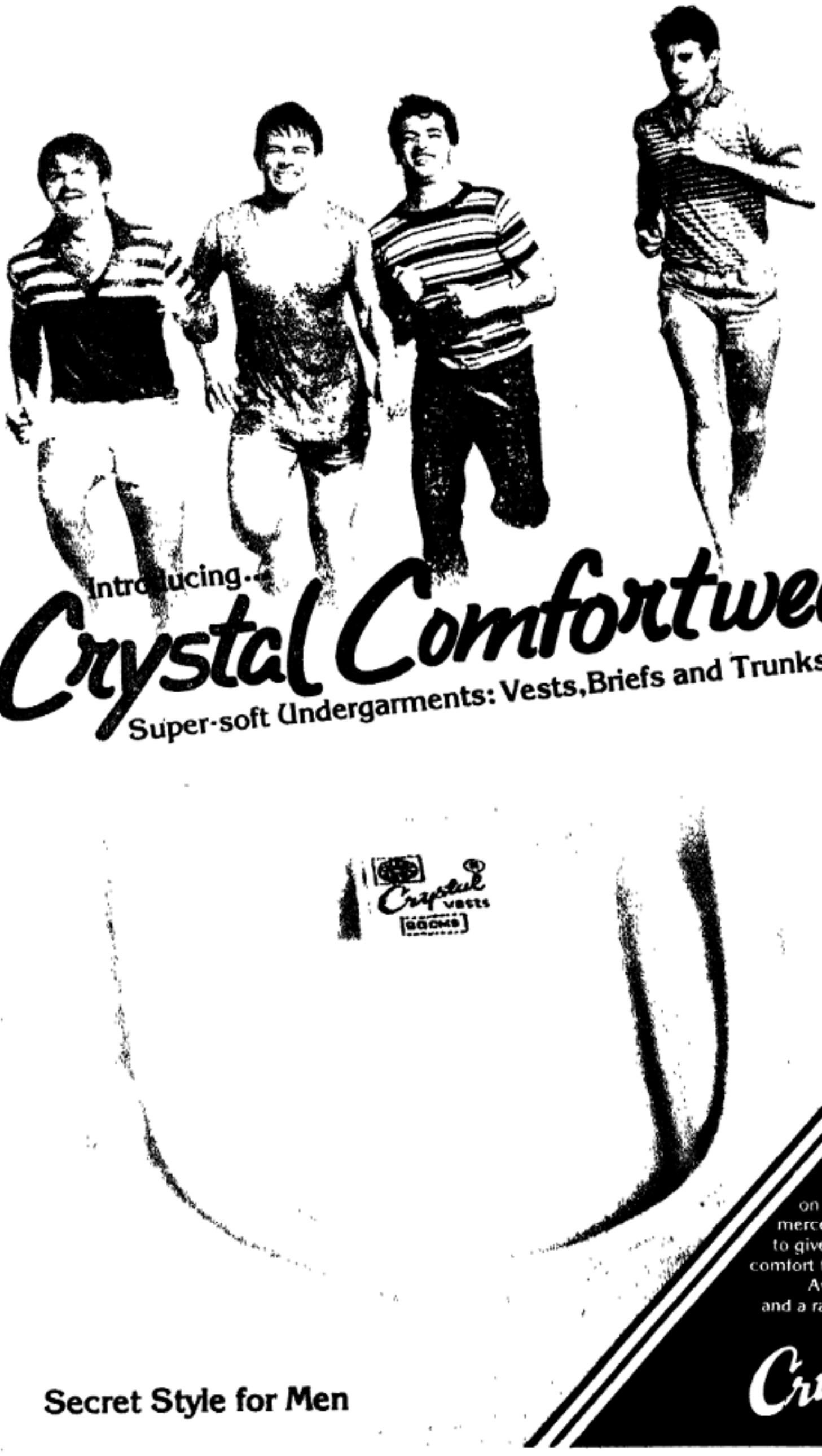
been a symbol of unity in India - whether it was in the times of the Lichchavi republic or the powerful Magadh empire. Both the Hindus and the Muslims of Bihar have so far held themselves aloof from narrow parochialism.

Jagannath Mishra, of course, may have justifiable cause for anger. He also has the right to form any political party or front. But even at his angriest he should remember that by pushing Bihar headlong into regional politics, he would be committing a crime against history. He has twice been chief minister of the state. As such, it is doubly incumbent on him not to indulge in a frivolous course of action.

Rajiv Gandhi should realise that even now it is possible to keep the party united in Bihar. But he can only do it by keeping Jagannath Mishra and his supporters with him at the time of the elections. They will need to be given posts either in the state party or at the Centre to keep them happy.

If Rajiv Gandhi is going to give Jagannath Mishra and his supporters posts in the party or in government, he will have to take care that he does so without humiliating Mishra's arch rival, Bhagwat Jha Azad. There is a good reason for not hurting Azad. He is a completely honest politician and an asset to the party. Unless Rajiv Gandhi takes such a step, the Congress could well be banished from Bihar. He must remember that elections cannot be won by speeches alone. And that a man with grassroots support is too valuable a political commodity to lose. ◻

Mishra has his political base among the minorities, the lower-level party workers and the poor. Throwing him out of the party would mean a weakening of the party's base in Bihar



Introducing...

Crystal Comfortwear

Super-soft Undergarments: Vests, Briefs and Trunks

Crystal vests

Crystal.
Processed
on a sophisticated
mercerising machine
to give you super-soft
comfort that really lasts.
Available in white
and a range of colours.

Crystal®

Secret Style for Men

SUNDAY WEEK

BY AMRITLAL BEGINNING 18 DECEMBER 1988



ARIES (21 March—20 April) There may be a few disappointments in the first part of the week. Domestic problems will continue to bother you but do not lose heart as things will soon change for the better. Social engagements will keep you busy during the second half of the week. Romance is well-signified. Marriage is on the cards. Friends and relatives will be helpful.
Good dates: 19, 21 and 23
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: East



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) Creative artists and writers will be rewarded. This is a good week for romance and marriage, so go ahead and make plans for the future. Those who are waiting to get married may find a partner at the end of the week. There may be a few problems on the professional front. Some of you are likely to suffer from minor ailments.
Good dates: 18, 20 and 22
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: South



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) This is a lucky week for employees. Businessmen are advised to be careful while signing new contracts. Property disputes will be solved amicably. You will gain from new investments. Your relationship with a member of the opposite sex may lead to a controversy. This is not a good week for romance.
Good dates: 21, 22 and 23
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: North-west



CANCER (21 June—20 July) This is not a favourable week for you. You are advised not to be impulsive. If you have any unfinished work, you would do better to complete it as soon as possible. Guard against enemies. The deteriorating health of an elderly member of the family might cause some anxiety. The time is not suitable for correspondence regarding matrimony.
Good dates: 20, 21 and 24
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: West



LEO (21 July — 20 August) A fairly good week lies ahead of you. Your financial prospects are bright but do not be extravagant. A letter you have been waiting for may bring glad tidings. Employees will be rewarded. Appointments and engagements will keep you busy. Lawsuits will cause you some anxiety. Matrimonial plans are best postponed.
Good dates: 22, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 2, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: North



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) This is a week of mixed fortunes. You are advised to avoid all kinds of controversies. The time is not right for commencing new ventures. You might suffer some financial loss. Those who are employed in the private sector might have a few problems with their bosses. Keep an eye on your own health as well as that of your partner.
Good dates: 18, 19 and 20
Lucky numbers: 1, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: South-west



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) This is not a favourable week for you. Pay heed to the advice of elders. Professionals should utilise all the opportunities that come their way. Your financial prospects are not too bright, but do not worry for things will soon change for the better. Do not mix work with pleasure.
Good dates: 18, 22 and 23
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 9
Favourable direction: North-east



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) Financially, this is a very lucky phase. You will profit from speculative ventures—you could head for the stock exchange rightaway. Businessmen will get new opportunities. Employees will progress steadily. However, the domestic front will not be free from trouble. A letter from a distant relative might bring some good news. The time is ideal for romance.
Good dates: 19, 20 and 21
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 6
Favourable direction: West



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) You might have to travel a lot this week. Students will do well in their examinations. This is a lucky week for lovers and bureaucrats. You might be ready with an engagement this week. Do not be extravagant. Be careful to refrain from speculative ventures. Be wary of a friend who might be envious of you.
Good dates: 21, 22 and 24
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: North



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) The stars are not favourable for love and romance. You might have a few problems with your superiors. This is a lucky week for artists and craftsmen. Do not be upset if you receive bad news, because things will soon change for the better. Avoid legal wrangles. An elderly member of the family will offer you help. Do not hesitate to take it.
Good dates: 18, 22 and 24
Lucky numbers: 3, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: South



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) This is not a good week for you. Your financial prospects will not improve. Social engagements will keep you busy. Under no circumstances should you mix business with pleasure. Do not overstrain yourself. This is the time to make new friends. Postpone matrimonial plans. A long awaited letter will reach you.
Good dates: 20, 21 and 23
Lucky numbers: 6, 7 and 8
Favourable direction: East



PISCES (21 February—20 March) This is not a good week for romance. A slight misunderstanding might become a cause for permanent estrangement. Rely on your intuition and business acumen to solve your financial problems. Do not change a job suddenly. The deteriorating health of someone close to you might cause you some anxiety. You may have to go on a tour at the end of the week.
Good dates: 19, 23 and 24
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 4
Favourable direction: North-west

Star Partners: Cancer—Leo

This relationship is one that is likely to have many ups and downs. While the Leo woman is likely to make a wonderful hostess, the Cancer man is unlikely to be pleased about her disinterest in housework. Besides the Leo woman is an independent sort while her Cancer partner enjoys the role of being the provider of the family.

In the lurch

Principals of most public schools in the capital are worried because of a recent circular from the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC). Delhi is perhaps the only city in which school were not required to have their own fleet of buses, because, under a special hiring facility, in force for 20 years, DTC had been providing the vehicles.

Now the DTC has decided to withdraw the school buses by December end. Reason: it has belatedly discovered that it had never obtained the permission of the central government as required under the Road Transport Corporation Act. Looks like Delhi's school children will have to say goodbye to the comfortable ride to school and face the inconvenience of finding their own means of transport. Obviously, good things don't last forever.

Pisciphobia

Bengalis are having to give up their favourite *macher jhol*. They are now in the grip of a strange pho-



bia—pisciphobia—the fear of fish. And the fear is not without reason. With media reports of deaths in Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya in the last few months as a result of the ulcerative disease syndrome which have afflicted different varieties of fish, Calcuttans are panic-stricken.

And the heat is keeping the fish-loving crowds away from the city markets. The usually crowded fish stalls wear a strangely deserted look these days. Fishmongers are naturally worried and fear that they will run out of business if the phobia continues for long.

All in all, given the fact that fish forms a staple part of the Bengali meal, a peculiar problem faces the Bengali *babu*: to buy or not to buy!

The last act?

Running private schools is a lucrative business these days. And business is often more important than a cause, as Amala Shankar, noted *danseuse*, finds today. She is faced with the prospect of having to close down the Uday Shankar India Culture Centre in Calcutta which functions out of a private school. The school authorities have served notice on the centre to vacate the premises as they intend to open a Montessori school there.

Amala Shankar, along with her late husband Uday Shankar, had founded the school 22 years ago with about two dozen students. Today, there are 500 students on the rolls and till date over 14,000 have passed out of the institution. The centre even received the Soviet Land Nehru Award for 1988.



The closure of the institution will not only mean a loss of a part of India's cultural heritage, but will also be a humiliation for the man who put India on the cultural map of the world.

Literacy drive

Unlettered passengers travelling by train in Gujarat would no longer feel bored for want of a pastime during their journey. As part of the ambitious literacy drive launched by an Ahmedabad-based Gandhian institution, Gujarat Vidyapeeth, young volunteers will pick willing men and women in trains and teach them the three R's in the quickest possible time with the help of specially prepared books. According to Ramlal Parikh, vice-chancellor of Gujarat Vidyapeeth, the state has 50 lakh illiterates in the age group of 15-35 years including 35 lakhs belonging to the fairer sex. The painstaking efforts of Parikh, who has bagged this year's Nehru Literacy Award, has paid rich dividends to the Amarsinh Chaudhary government. Some three lakh people from 1,200 villages can now read, write and count.

Stopping the herd

A herd of wild elephants on the rampage is one of the most dangerous adversaries in the countryside. It's well nigh impossible to check the determined progress of the behemoths, as the West Bengal forest department has realised. A wild herd from Bihar crossed into West Bengal's Midnapore district recently and is creating havoc. Conventional methods having failed, the state government, in desperation, has asked the defence ministry for a helicopter to drive the tuskers back to Bihar. An elephantine problem, indeed!



THIS INDIA

• NEW DELHI A student of the Vivekanand Mahila College is running from pillar to post to prove that she has appeared and passed her B A examination. According to the results published by Delhi University, the student had passed the examination. However, the marksheet issued to her has declared her absent for the English Language examination. The student's appeals, reminders with documented proof and records have so far fallen on deaf ears—*Patriot* (J R. Laroiya, NOIDA)

• BANGALORE This is a rare case of lecturers outnumbering students. In the Government Junior College at Belgumba in Arsikere *taluk*, there are ten lecturers and seven students. The government spends Rs 38,000 a month on the salaries of lecturers in the college—*The Hindu* (C.S N. Murthy, Bangalore)

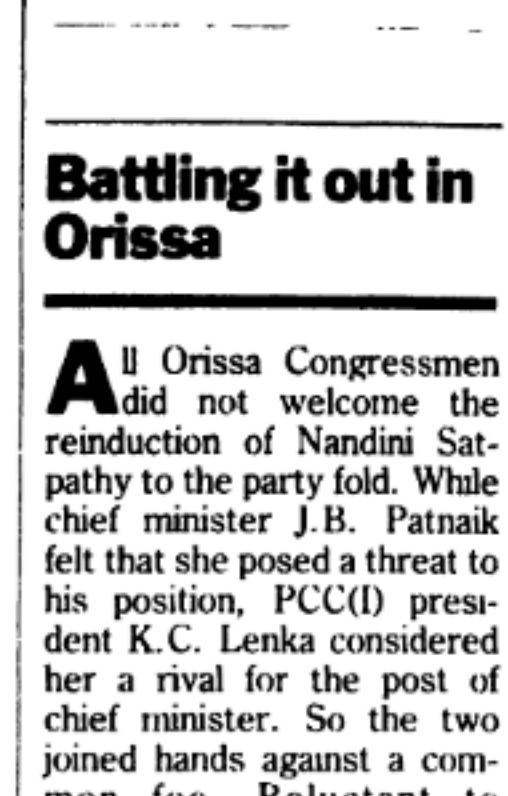
• BILASPUR Ever heard of "income tax" being being collected from consumers by traders? In the Himachal Pradesh State Forests Corporation, buyers are being made to pay "income-tax" on every quintal of firewood they purchase. This illegal extortion has increased the price of firewood from Rs 59 to Rs 68 a quintal. The buyers have now sought legal action against the corporation for this illegal "overcharging"—*The Tribune* (R.C. Goyel, Solan)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

Illustrations: Debashis Deb

Battling it out in Orissa

All Orissa Congressmen did not welcome the reinduction of Nandini Satpathy to the party fold. While chief minister J.B. Patnaik felt that she posed a threat to his position, PCC(I) president K.C. Lenka considered her a rival for the post of chief minister. So the two joined hands against a common foe. Reluctant to antagonise the party high command, Patnaik has been using Lenka to get at her. But Mrs Satpathy has not been cowed by the combined onslaught.



K.C. Lenka: fighting Mrs Satpathy

To mark Indira Gandhi's birth anniversary on 19 November, some of the partymen organised a function in Cuttack—this was besides the official programme—and invited Mrs Satpathy to attend. Obviously worried by reports of increasing mass support for Mrs Satpathy, Lenka announced at a meeting in Congress Bhawan that no 'parallel function' would be 'tolerated'.

But this warning did not deter Mrs Satpathy or her followers. She not only addressed the large gathering, but also launched an attack on the Lenka-Patnaik combine, asking those present to fight against 'ministerial and bureaucratic corruption'.



Nandini Satpathy: undaunted

The outcome of the battle within the Congress party in Orissa will depend on who the high command favours.

In the political limelight, at last

He could have been the Congress' MGR- the party's vote-catcher. At least that is what celluloid hero Sivaji Ganesan firmly believes. His greatest grouse when he was in the Congress was that he was not being given enough prominence. "It is sheer jealousy on the part of some of the leaders in Tamil Nadu, especially G.K. Moopanar, that has led to my being sidelined by the high command despite my popularity on the screen," was his constant complaint.

Now that he has formed his own party— the Tamizhaga Munnetra Munnani (TMM) -he is using his histrionic abilities against the Congress(I), especially his old rival, PCC(I) president Moopanar "How can these Congress(I) leaders now proclaim they will bring back Kamaraj rule in Tamil Nadu, when they all plotted against him and harassed the great leader during his lifetime?" thunders Ganesan at public meetings. "Women will not be able to walk safely with their jewels on," he warns the people of the state. But will his eloquence dissuade the electorate from voting for the Congress at the coming Assembly elections?



Sivaji Ganesan: taking on the Congress(I)

A tail of two politicians

They are both from Sangli. And therein lies a tale (tail?). Because, according to insiders, the reason A.G. Kulkarni, the Rajya Sabha MP, has it in for former Maharashtra chief minister, Vasantdada Patil, is because the two men--in their salad days—fell out over a matter of the heart.



Vasantdada Patil: unscrupulous?

Kulkarni, who is a Brahmin, misses no opportunity to portray Dada as an unscrupulous Brahmin. Now, he is demanding the closure of Maharashtra's largest sugar factory. The reason: it lets untreated effluent flow into Sangli's water supply, thereby causing innumerable gastro-intestinal epidemics in the area. The Centre, too, has issued a show-cause notice to the factory for failing to take adequate anti-pollution measures.

And guess who owns the Sangli sugar factory? Why, Vasantdada Patil, of course.

No helping hand for Singh

For the past six months, Union minister for communications, Veer Bahadur Singh, has not had a personal secretary. No, it is not that he enjoys office work so much that he does not feel the need for a helping hand. It is just that his chosen candidate for the post -S.P. Singh, an IAS officer of the UP cadre did not find favour with P. Chidambaram, minister of state for personnel.

Chidambaram objected to the appointment on the grounds that S.P. Singh was too junior to become the personal secretary of a Cabinet minister. V.B. Singh then wrote a letter to Chidambaram, pointing out that several other Cabinet ministers had personal secretaries who were junior to S.P. Singh. He received a reply not from Chidambaram, but the officer on special duty at the ministry of personnel that the matter was pending with the Cabinet Committee of Appointments and there was nothing the ministry of personnel could do. Veer Bahadur Singh is still smarting from such high-handed behaviour.

Will he, won't he?

In his SUNDAY interview, Rajiv said that he might bring Amitabh Bachchan back. This set off feverish speculation to the effect that the lanky superstar might be fielded in one of the forthcoming byelections.

But, *Delhi Diary* learns that Bachchan is unwilling to stand—given his health and his father's recent illness—and that Rajiv's remark was more bravado than anything else.

Bachchan could, however, still make a comeback at the general election.



Ashok Vohra



Ashok Vohra

P. Chidambaram (left) and Veer Bahadur Singh: cold war

Another deal for Bofors?

It now looks as though the government will go ahead with its plan to ask Bofors to repay the Rs 64 crores it doled out as commissions (*see SUNDAY 4 - 10 Dec.*). As Bofors wants another contract, worth several hundred crores, the Rs 64 crores are chicken-feed and the arms giant will gladly part with the money.

This should finish the Bofors issue off once and for all, according to Congress(I) sources. Will the Opposition be able to botch this strategy? Unlikely, considering the mess that the Raja of Manda and his cohorts have made of Bofors so far.

Amitabh Bachchan: goodbye to politics?

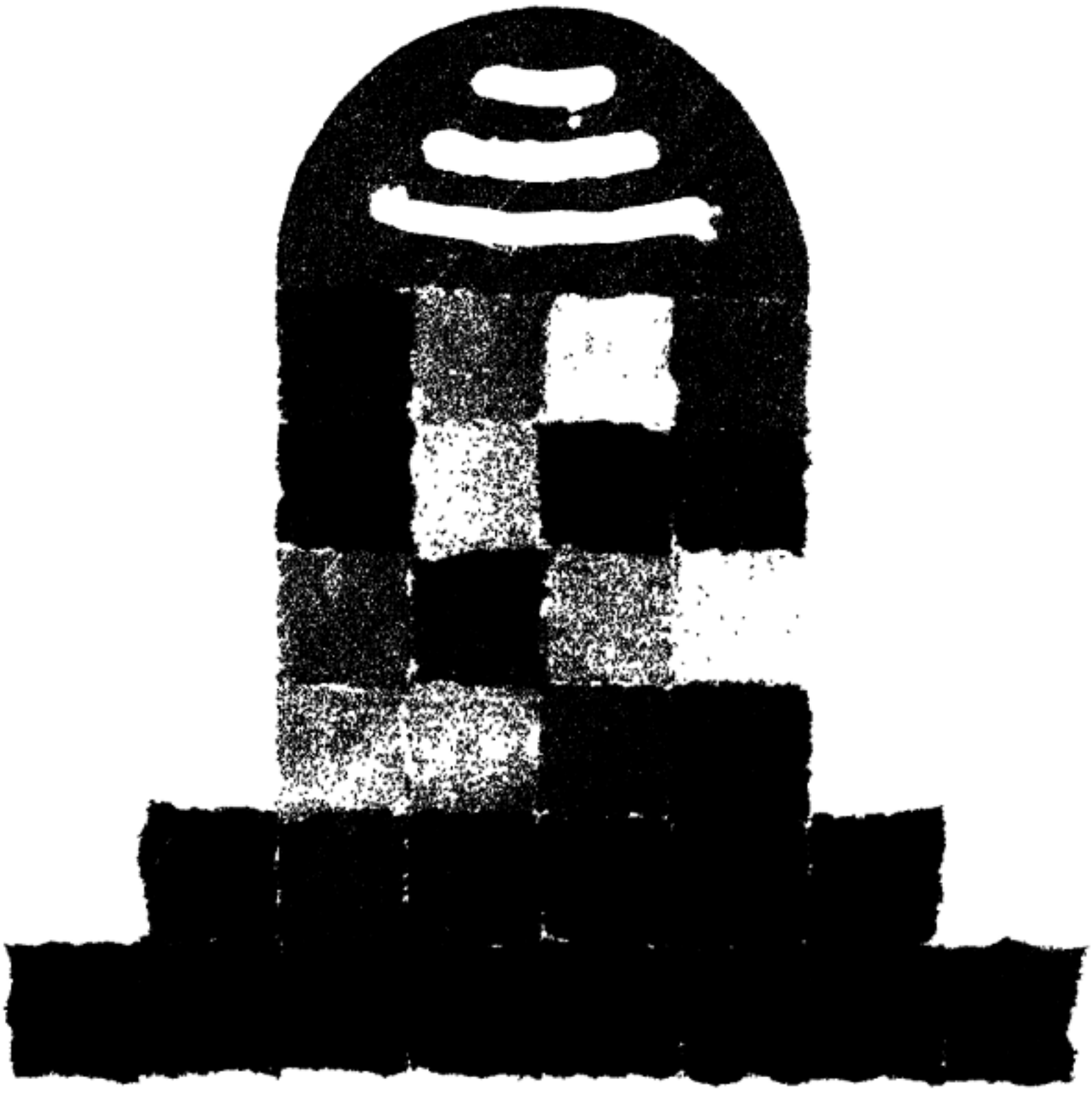
Papas make way

Sometimes the zeal of Congressmen can prove embarrassing, especially for their fathers. Recently, Vibhakar Shastri, grandson of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and son of Union minister of state for agriculture, Hari Krishna Shastri, put his father in an awkward position when Rajiv Gandhi came to attend a wedding at the Shastri residence.

Vibhakar asked the Prime Minister to rely on "younger men like me, instead of depending on old people like my father". As Rajiv Gandhi raised his eyebrows at this remark, Shastri Senior interjected, "Sir, do not go by his advice. He is a child." While fathers promote sons in politics, the younger generation seems to want their papas out of the way. ■



Vibhakar Shastri: embarrassing zeal



Ever since Vedic times, colour has held a very special place in India.

Scholars and sages studied the psychological and physiological effects of colour on human life Recent scientific findings indicate a closeness in thought to the colour symbolism studies of the great rishis.

Red.

Think red.
And you'll think anger
Think red again
And you'll think something else.
Courage.
Passion.
Pure natural emotions.
In fact each time you think red, you'll encounter different images.

Danger.
Drama.
Fire.
Vitality.
Will-to-win.
Vital force.
Desire.
Selfishness.
Sensuality.
But the most important thing is that red is all powerful in the world of colour.

Colour Chem **Where chemistry takes many hues.**

Colour-Chem Limited, 194, Churchgate Reclamation, Bombay-400 020.

Some possessions define a character.
Some distinguish it.



Chancellor

A cigarette so distinguished.
It's by appointment to your majesty.

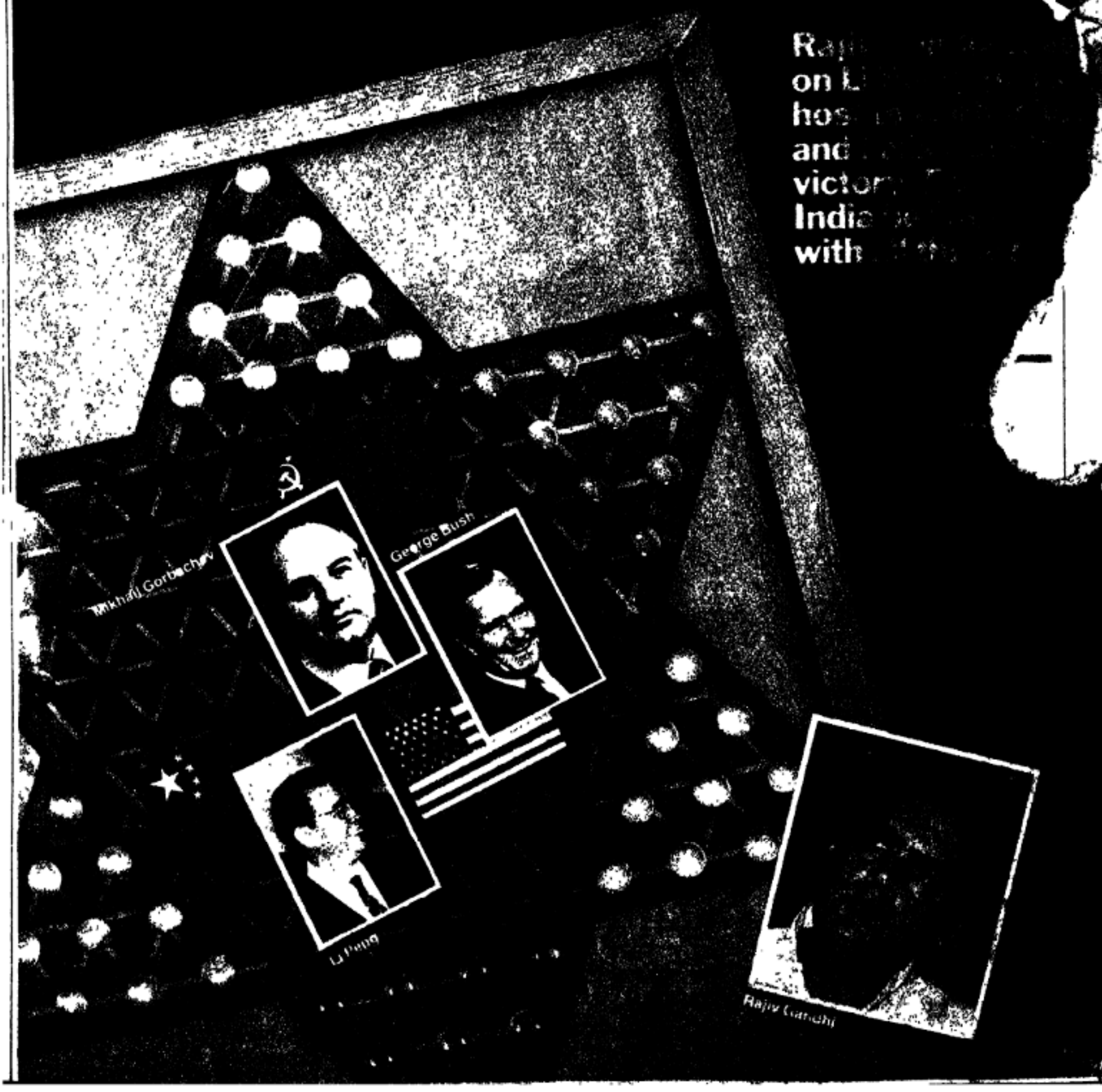
25—31 December 1988 □ An Ananda Bazar Publication □ Rs 6.00

ELECTORAL REFORMS: TOO LITTLE

SUND

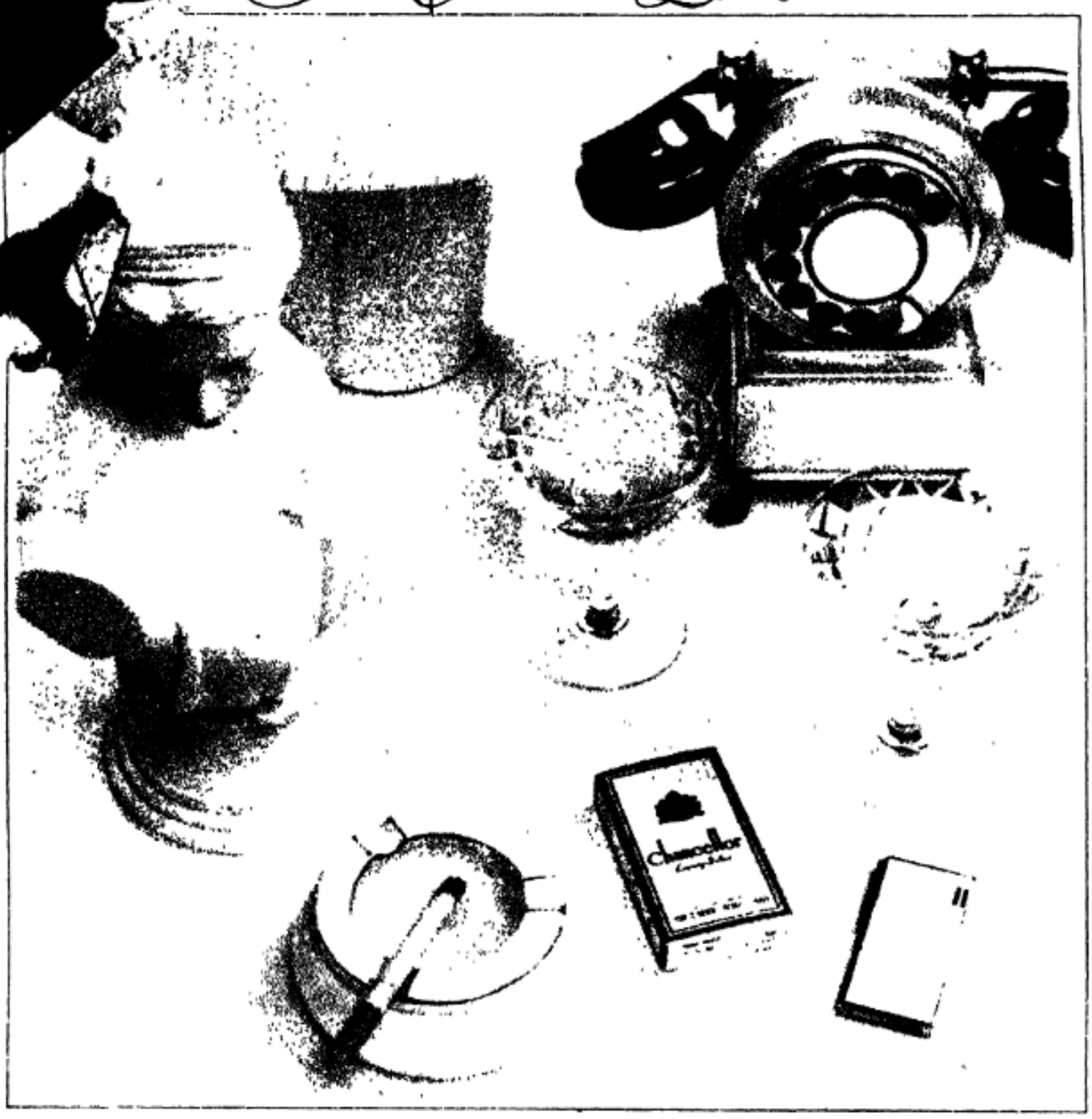
FRIENDSHIP MOVES

Raj
on L
hos
and
victor
India
with



Some pe

The Chancellor Lifestyle



A distinguished taste of luxury.

The world of quiet, understated elegance. Beneath it is a flurry of high excitement.
The excitement of good taste. And indulgence. The rich, smooth, satisfying flavour of Chancellor Luxury Filters.
A cigarette created from the finest tobaccos and a special filter.

Chancellor

Luxury Filter

Govan/CLF/1/88

STATUTORY WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

CONTENTS

VOLUME 13 ISSUE 4 RS 6.00

SUNDAY

AN ANANDA BA

25—31 DECEMBER 1988

Krishna Public Library

COVER STORY **23**

FRIENDSHIP MOVES

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visits China, hosts President Mikhail Gorbachev and hails George Bush's victory. But can India be friendly with all the three superpowers? An analysis of India's foreign policy.

SPECIAL REPORT **12**

ELECTORAL REFORMS: TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

The Centre has pushed through two Bills in Parliament which seek to introduce major electoral reforms, including lowering the voting age to 18. A report.

PROFILE **34**

SOUTHERN MAN

M.K. Karunanidhi is all set to play the Dravidian card in the forthcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly polls.

BUSINESS **44**

The mood is upbeat in the hotel and travel trade with the government launching a high-geared promotional campaign; it's boom time again on the stock markets and companies are about to come out with new issues

NEWS **53**



The GNLF sweeps the Hill Council elections in Darjeeling; there is a move to oust Arjun Singh from the chief ministership of Madhya Pradesh; the state of Bombay's premier hospital; and, in Assam, chief minister Prafulla Mahanta unearths a plot to malign him.



Page 23



Page 61

COMMENT

Letters 4
Byline M.J. Akbar 8
Sight and Sound 11
Gossip Sweet and Sour Khushwant Singh 15
On the Line Kuldip Nayar 18
Guest Column Udayan Sharma 37
Business Diary 51

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Random Notes 81
Delhi Diary 82

Cover artwork: Sandip Bhattacharya

Printed and published for Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd by Bijit Kumar Basu and edited by Vir Sanghvi from 6 & 9 Prafulla Sarkar Street Calcutta 700 001

Air surcharge for Srinagar ex-Delhi and Tripura 20 paise, North-Eastern states except Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Kamrup, Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nowgong, Goalpara, North Lakhimpur, Sonitpur and Dibrugarh districts of Assam 30 paise



SUNDAY SPO

A REBEL IS BO

Disillusioned with[illegible] Mohunder Amarna[illegible]ans t[illegible] in South Africa. What do the Cricket Board officials and players feel about it?

ARCHITECTURE **61**

A SPHERE OF EXCELLENCE

Auroville's architectural wonder is also the centre of a petty squabble. What is the controversy all about?

ART **66**

THE SPIRIT CALLS

Balan Nambiar chucked up a cushy job to pursue his artistic activities. Today, he is a successful artist and sculptor. A look at the man and his works.

INTERVIEW **70**

A DRAMATIC AFFAIR

A British drama group which is touring India, brings theatre home to the Indians. A report.

BOOK EXTRACT **72**

EIGHT ANNAS A TAIL

In this extract from the book, *Great Indian Hunting Stories*, Hugh Allen recounts his encounter with a leopard in the jungles of Madhya Pradesh.

Khaas Baat 63
Spotlight 64
Sundayweek 79
Odds and Trends 80



...er of pride

English literature has flourished even thousands of miles away from its place of origin (*The empire writes back*, 4—10 December). The current spurt in Indo Anglian writers can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the English language has been a medium of communication right from the days of the Raj. As with any other language, English too needs writers and readers to keep it alive. Given the style and deeply entrenched roots of the language, writers all over the world have adopted it. It was indeed heartening to know that a number of Indian writers are making their mark in English literature. The recognition and acclaim given to Indo-Anglian writers is a matter of pride for all of us.

Sachchidananda Satpathy, Hirakud (Orissa)

■ Our Raj hangover is far from over. When it comes to the English, we cannot see beyond our noses. Even mediocre talents who choose to write in the Anglian tongue are made much of, while the works of even the greatest genius in the vernacular is relegated to the shadows. Is it necessary to make such a song and dance about somebody like Upamanyu Chatterjee who has only one novel—dredged out of his occasionally existing times as a civil servant—to his credit?

We are disappointed.

Sumita Angrish, New Delhi

In name only

Your article (*Shuffling the pack*, 4 —10 December) made interesting reading.



Upamanyu Chatterjee: one-novel celebrity

The AICC (I) today has become a non-working body and its general secretaries mere 'figureheads'. Eighteen general secretaries in 48 months is surely some kind of a record! During Nehru's time as Prime Minister, party functionaries would play an important role in national issues. Mrs Gandhi too began on a promising note but astute politicians were never given their rightful positions by the late Prime Minister. Rajiv Gandhi has also proved to be his mother's son on this count. Today, the general secretaries are not much more than puppets who dance to the high command's tune. Ghulam Nabi Azad is a loyalist who refrains from issuing statements on his own. G.K. Moopanar, the PCC (I) chief of Tamil Nadu, has been honoured with the designation only to ensure a Congress victory in the state during the next Assembly elections. With the exception of Oscar Fernandes, nobody really matters in the AICC(I) framework.

It is time Rajiv Gandhi realised that to get the votes, he has to do more than just attract huge crowds to his rallies and that it is not possible to win elections on the strength of one's charisma alone. The Congress(I) would do well to strengthen its party at the grassroots level or else be prepared for an unpleasant surprise in the forthcoming elections.

B. Ganesh, Jamshedpur (Bihar)

Showmanship

The report only gives the official Indian version of the coup in the Maldives (*Male machismo*, 13—19 November). The views of the mercenaries are equally important. If they were successful, India would have continued to maintain friendly relations with them as it did in the case of countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh which are under military rule. President Gayoom's regime was certainly not without its share of flaws. It is doubtful whether those who initiated the coup were actually mercenaries. Besides, it is more important for our government to solve the mess in Punjab than get ourselves involved in the affairs of a foreign country. One can only call India's military adventure a simple case of showmanship.

S. Raghunatha Prabhu, Alleppey (Kerala)

Cooperation solicited

The story did not seem to be consistent with the actual position in the state (*Terror in the marketplace*, 4—10 December). The state government has issued clear instructions to the police to deal firmly with all miscreants. The problem arises mainly because of the reluctance of victims to give information to the authorities. The police are aware of this problem and have stepped up their intelligence machinery. In all, 64 extremists have already been arrested this year. However, for successful prosecution in courts of law, victims will have to cooperate with the police.

P.C. Bora, public relations officer, Assam police, Guwahati (Assam)

A new era

The cover story was interesting (*What next?*,27 November—3 December). After 11 long years, democracy has been restored in Pakistan. Benazir Bhutto deserves our praise for winning the fight she had begun so

Indian troops in the Maldives: military adventure



Govan/CLF/1/88



Benazir Bhutto

many years ago. The people of Pakistan must be congratulated for standing up for democracy. Above all, the army must be complimented for allowing democracy to return.

Mrignayani Singh, Dehra Dun (Uttar Pradesh)

■ For the first time in the history of Pakistan, a woman has taken over the reigns of government. However, her journey to the top was not without hurdles. The *maulvis* in Pakistan tried to foul her chances by claiming that according to the doctrines laid down by their religion, a woman could never become a political leader. Whether this doctrine is true is of course a matter of conjecture. Benazir Bhutto was indeed lucky to overcome all obstacles and become the Prime Minister.

Md. Salim Ansari, Calcutta (West Bengal)

■ To me Benazir Bhutto is the reincarnation of Cleopatra with her striking looks. Ms Bhutto, however, has a plus point in that she has inherited her father's political acumen. What remains to be seen is whether she can live up to the expectations of the people of Pakistan who have stood by her in her hour of crisis. May the Almighty give her strength and courage to put all speculation to rest and serve as an able leader.

K.S. Pillai, Trivandrum (Kerala)

■ The outcome of the elections shows that the people in that counry have always favoured democracy. Benazir and her mother Nusrat Bhutto have won the admiration of millions of people all over the world for having the courage and fortitude to fight against General Zia's tyrannical regime. With the restoration of democracy, one can only hope that it will mark the beginning of a new chapter in Indo-Pak relations. Let peace and harmony reign where there has been mistrust and hate.

T. Azad, Tirupur (Tamil Nadu)

A breath of fresh air

The photographer gives the impression that instead of using his camera lens, he has used his heart (*Calcutta revisited*, 20—26 November). The result is there for everyone to see. What a pleasant change from the weekly dose of political intrigues, points-counterpoints and scandals that is the staple diet of your magazine! However, I failed to understand what Aparna Sen was doing in this otherwise brilliant photofeature. You would do well to make such features a monthly fare to allow us respite from the often monotonous and repititive fare.

Hari Priya Sahu, Sambalpur (Orissa)

Cinema's hero

The feature on Naseeruddin Shah made interesting reading (*Of heroes and men*, 27 November—3 December). He is one of the few actors who hold a pride of place in the world of cinema. His decision to change over to commercial cinema was indeed a wise one, or else he would have been wasted in the oft-repeated themes of politics and poverty that form a part of art cinema. Naseer's problem lies in his eagerness to shake off the 'art' label by acting in absolutely commercial films. He would do well to exercise greater discretion in future.

P.V.L.N. Swamy, Berhampur (Orissa)



Naseeruddin Shah (second from left) in a scene from *Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron*

Why Azad only?

I appreciate the columnist's bold stand against politicians like Bhagwat Jha Azad (*On* ber) the poli- pra- of Ma- is the wo- zling the bu- political motiv- the columnist app- suffering from a mis- tion. Either he thinks India comprises only the Hi- di belt or that all is well within the non-Congress ministries.

Has Mr Nayar forgotten about Kerala where eight senior officers were sacked soon after E.K. Nayanar took over as chief minister? The latest example is Nayanar's attempt to amend the university statute in order to remove Calicut University's vice-chancellor Dr V.K. Ravindran. Does the columnist have anything to say about this?

T.S. Baby, Ethiopia

SUNDAY

Available By Post (Inland)

Rs 262 for a year (52 issues); Rs 504 for 2 years (104 issues)
An annual saving of Rs 50 on the newsstand price
Postage free
Address your order to:

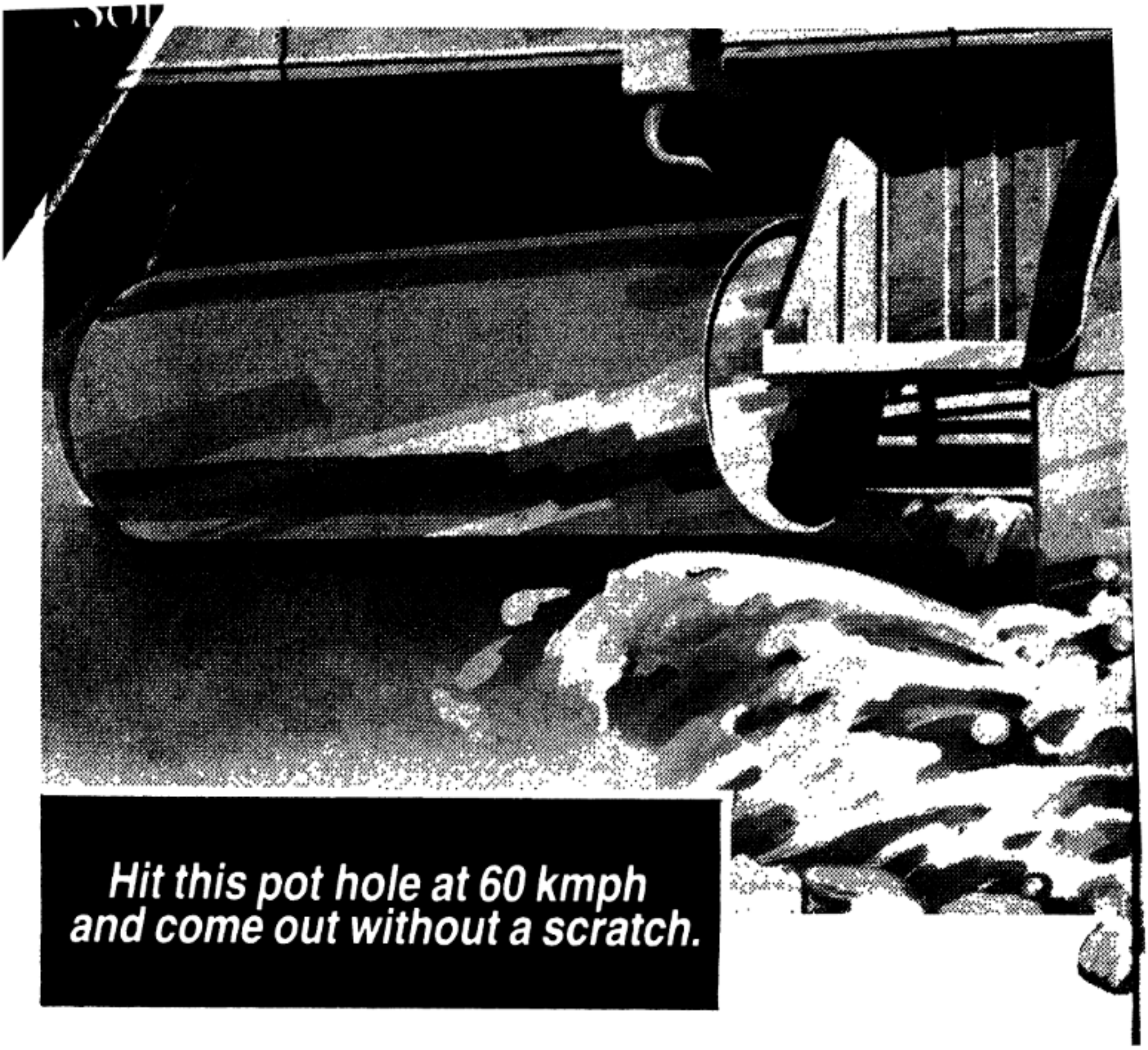
The Circulation Manager(U)
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd.
Calcutta 700 001

Please draw your demand draft/cheque in favour of :
Ananda Bazar Patrika Ltd., Calcutta

Leave sports alone

The article made it quite clear that political interference is responsible for the pitiable condition of sports in our country (*The wrangle for power*, 6—12 November). The Mehtas and the Adityans who have no sports background are indulging in petty squabbles only to grab power. Sportsmen with administrative abilities would be the ideal choice to head sports organisations.

Ratnakar Patnaik, Nalco Nagar (Orissa)

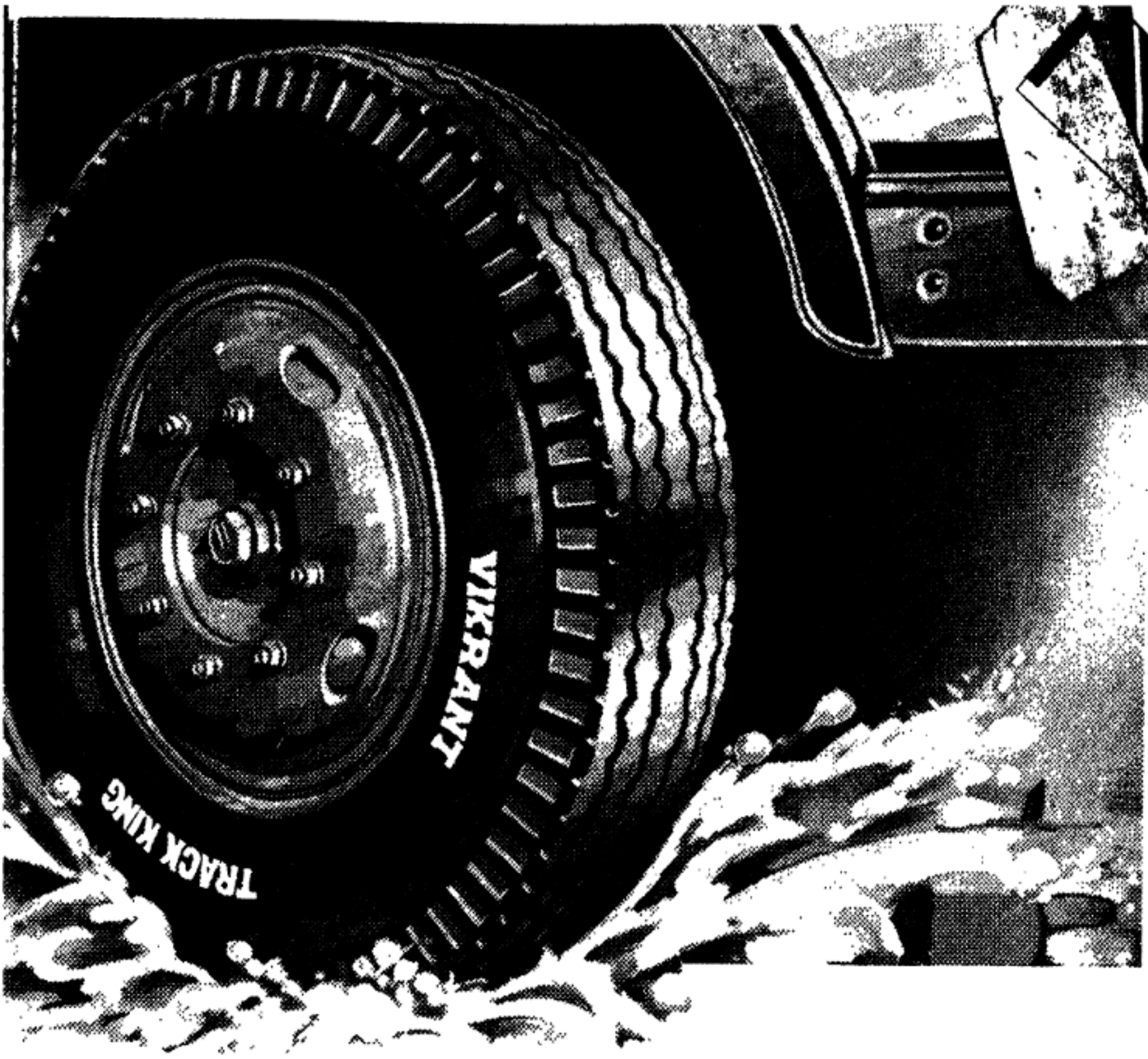


VIKRANT

the reliable tyre

With technology that built India's first truck radials.

M&A COMMUNICATIONS VT. 398



Heavy monsoons, lightning floods sweeping over the roads, landslides miles of pot holes, on an Indian road you can expect the unexpected One tyre is specially designed to meet the challenge of the unexpected — through thousands of kilometres and with tonnes of load Vikrant — the reliable tyre, with advanced technology tempered to Indian road conditions.

he world's No.1 racing tyre technology

Behind every Vikrant tyre is the chnological superiority of Avon of UK ne of the major suppliers of Rolls Royce the epitome of perfection in tomobiles. And the world's No. 1 name racing tyres. Vikrant R & D harnesses d improves upon Avon technology to it Indian road conditions

Technology that built India's first truck radials

When Vikrant R & D focussed its attention on truck radials the result was a tyre so tough it was quickly picked up by the British market Making Vikrant the first Indian company to produce and export truck radials to the UK

Vikrant — the original equipment

Vikrant's performance has proven reliable all over the transport industry It features as original equipment in the vehicles of premier companies like Telco and Ashok Leyland And carries thousands of people everyday on the buses of major State Transport Undertakings all over the country.

So if you want a tyre that has proven itself, that is built with advanced technology and that you can rely upon when the unexpected turns up, you know which tyre to choose

VIKRANT

The reliable tyre.
The responsible company.

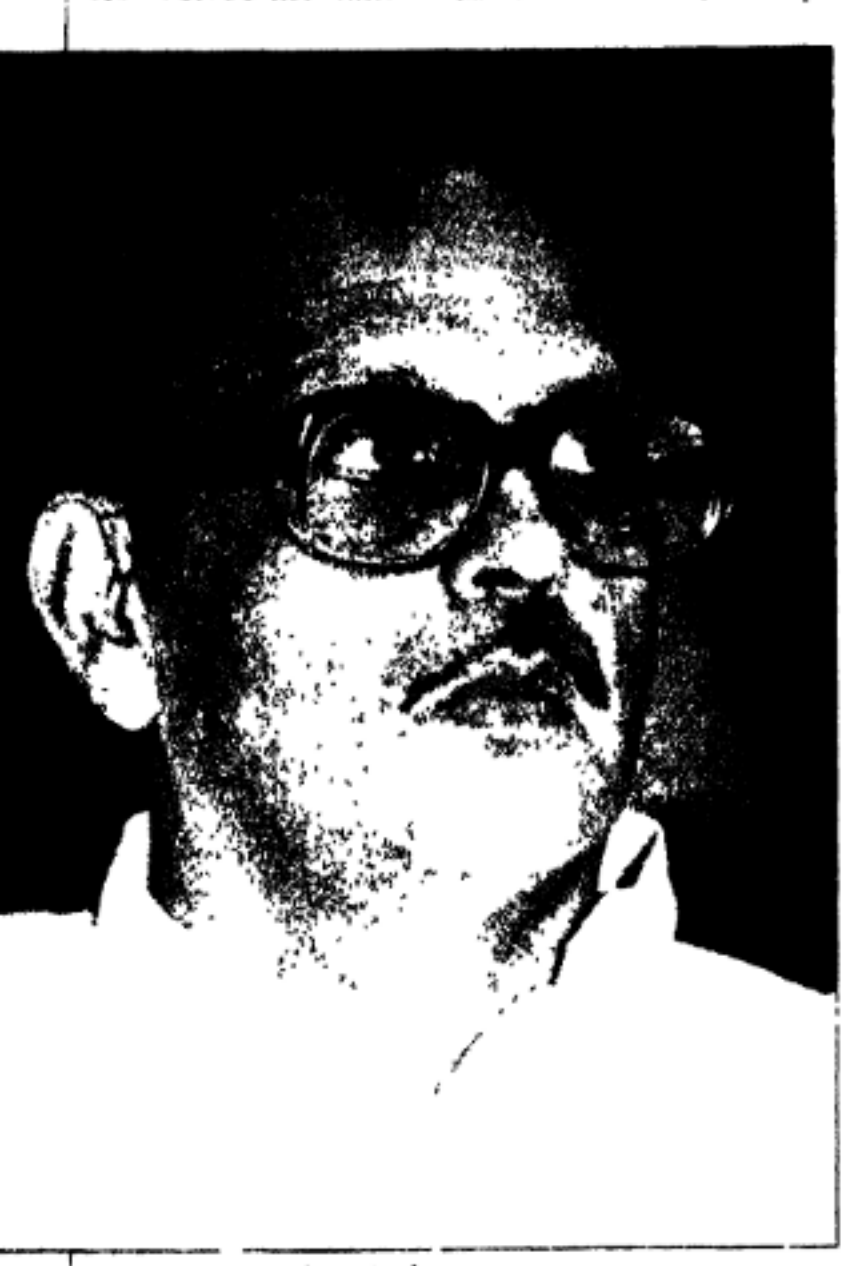
BYLINE



M.J. AKBAR

On the trail of the Left

From different corners separate statements have been made in the past few weeks which can be pieced together to complete one more corner of that massive jigsaw puzzle called Indian politics. To take the two most important On the eve of the meeting of the West Bengal state committee, held in Calcutta about a fortnight ago, CPI(M) general secretary E M.S. Namboodiripad gave a press conference whose import can hardly be underestimated. He was very clear in his assessment the biggest problem before the nation was communalism; corruption took only second place to that. The code was not very difficult to decipher. The only issue on which the Opposition has a semblance of unity is on Bofors. In fact, it is not really corruption which unites the spectrum from V.P. Singh to N.T. Rama Rao via Devi Lal, but just Rajiv Gandhi's corruption. It is not even the corruption elsewhere in the Congress which makes V.P. Singh *et al* rise up in holy anger, if anything they would happily welcome the arrival of any kind of Congressman into their ranks, no questions asked, if he or she only decided to make Rajiv Gandhi the target. That is the only plank on which V.P. Singh and Devi Lal hope to fight the elections, for the very good reason that they cannot afford to have a view on any other issue. Take a look at some of the other problems which have demanded that you take a position—whether it is the ban on *The Satanic Verses*, or Article 370 and Kashmir, or the China visit. It is not that V.P. Singh does not have a position—for instance, he would not have banned Salman Rushdie's book Incidentally, V.P. Singh loyalists did not extend the generosity of freedom of expression to that issue of *Ravivar* which catalogued all the statements—and therefore the many shifts—made by V.P. Singh in the last four years. *Ravivar* was publicly burnt in Allahabad. But he cannot afford to articulate it for fear of alienating some element of the coalition he is constructing. One does not envy his task. The enormous contradictions in creating Opposition unity are already taking a massive toll. Look, for instance, at the fate of poor Syed Shahabuddin. After using him for so long, and particularly in the Allahabad byelection, he has been humiliated and cast aside. But reality was bound to catch up at some point. You can either support Arif



V.P. Singh: envious task

An anti-Rajiv stance is the only plank on which V.P. Singh and Devi Lal hope to fight the elections, for the very good reason that they cannot afford to have a view on any other issue. It is not that V.P. Singh does not have a position...but he cannot afford to articulate it for fear of alienating some section of the coalition he is constructing.



Devi Lal: bulldozing the Janata Dal

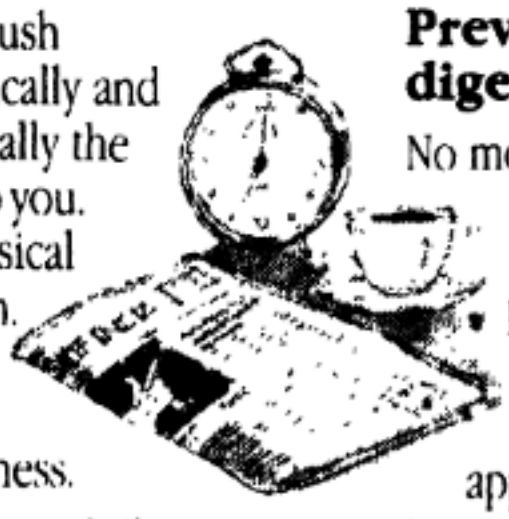


The CPI(M)'s West Bengal committee meeting in Calcutta: no truck with the Janata Dal

Mohammad Khan or Syed Shahabuddin: you can't do both. V.P. Singh has opted for Arif, and Shahabuddin has been told to sit in a corner, preferably hidden from public view. And this is only one of the many, many pulls and pressures. Ever since the National Committee (nicknamed "Airbus" in view of its size) was announced, there has been a virtual revolt in the Janata Dal, as it is now obvious to everyone that Devi Lal has hijacked the party. Accommodation is the very minimum requirement in Opposition politics, but the National Committee seems to have been created on just one criterion: Devi Lal's stamp of personal approval, plus the views of the Jan Morcha lobby. But if the Opposition was handing over its leadership to a recent arrival from the Congress under pressure from Devi Lal, it should have expected a preponderance of their people in the upper echelons of party ranks. Some of the ommissions are strange: the leaders of the Janata in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, for instance, do not find a place, but a host of unknowns do. And this is only the first decision taken by V.P. Singh. Can the Janata Dal survive a second? The point is that if there is any unity, it can only be on corruption. And every other issue has to be kept aside: communalism, women (Devi Lal's family, in any case, can hardly be a champion of women's rights), foreign policy—you name it. The Left, which sees the world in more than one dimension, is unlikely to buy such a proposition. It will demand that the alternative government offer both a national and an international perspective before it gets its support. It is not going to allow a rabidly pro-United States government into power merely because V.P. Singh says so. At some point, the Janata Dal will have to stop running away from issues if it wants the support of the Left. But a statement made from London indicates that the Janata Dal may have decided that since this is not possible, it is better to forego the support of the Left.

On the eve of the meeting of the West Bengal state committee in Calcutta, CPI(M) general secretary E.M.S. Namboodiripad gave a clear picture of the Left's assessment: the biggest problem before the nation was communalism; corruption took only second place to that

The man who made the statement is none other than Ramakrishna Hegde (who, by the way, should have been far less messy). Hegde ruled out, while talking to Rahul Bedi for the India Abroad News Service, any alliance with the Left, describing it as unnecessary. Hegde is probably making a virtue out of a necessity. But the moot point is that the Janata Dal and the CPI(M) seem to be gradually beginning to distance themselves. This may not be immediately obvious from the rhetoric of the leaders of the CPI(M) in West Bengal, but note, on the other hand, the silence of the Congress leaders *vis-a-vis* charges appearing in the press against Jyoti Basu and the Left Front government. Ms Mamata Banerjee is extremely vocal about Devi Lal's family (and rightly, too, for what is happening in Haryana is truly scandalous), but noticeably quiet in Parliament about her home state. After the bitterness that has marked relations between the Congress and the CPI(M) in the last two years, even an unadvertised rapprochement cannot be easy. But what is certain is that Rajiv Gandhi is certainly trying for one. The visit by Mikhail Gorbachev launched the process, and Namboodiripad responded by praising the visit as historic. The China visit takes the process one stage further. Jyoti Basu's conversation with Rajiv Gandhi on the eve of his China visit must be considered particularly significant in this context, for he has been the Prime Minister's sharpest critic in the CPI(M). It may have been a slow boat to China, but clearly this boat has many oars. And a very interesting variety of people are manning these oars—with an interesting variety of consequences on national politics. ■



Everyday you push yourself – physically and mentally. Naturally the pressure gets to you. Mental and physical fatigue. Tension. Digestion problems. Low resistance to illness.

That's why you need Chyawan Shakti – nature's own formula to fight symptoms of stress – created with over 46 precious herbs. Brought to you by Dabur.

Chyawan Shakti – combats stress, revitalises mind and body

The effects of stress on your nerves can be disastrous. Chyawan Shakti has ingredients like Draksha, Ashwagandha, Akarkara and Gokshur. These act as demulcents and tonics, while Kesar and other herbs build up physical vigour and invigorate the mind.

Prevents acidity and digestion problems

No more antacids and anti-flatulence pills. Natural ingredients like Akarkara, Lavanga, Madhu and Mukta Shukti Pishti prevent acidity, help digestion, stimulate appetite, relieve gastric and intestinal pains and help regular bowel movement.

Rich in Vitamin C to fight illness

Who needs orange juice!

Chyawan Shakti has an abundance of Amla, the richest source of Vitamin C

This, along with other herbs in Chyawan Shakti, acts as a powerful immuno-stimulant to build up resistance to common ailments.

Fountain of youth

Chyawan Shakti supplies you with Iron, Calcium, Minerals, Magnesium, Phosphorous and acts as an all-round health tonic.



Keeping you feeling young and raring to go. And since it is wholly natural, there are no harmful side effects. So go ahead and give it a try.

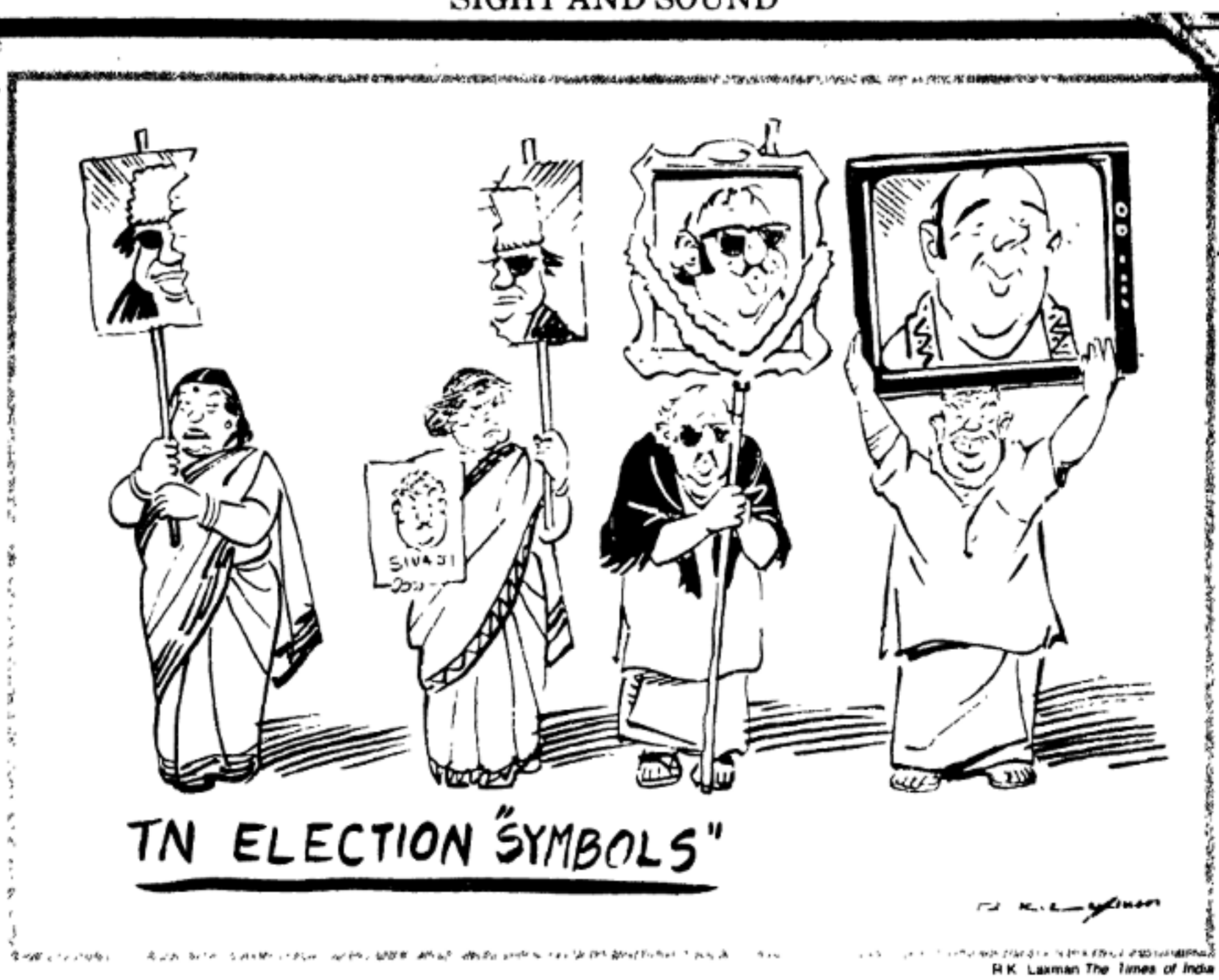
You have nothing to lose except the adverse effects of stress and strain!

SPECIALLY CREATED FOR PEOPLE WHO WORK HARDER

AYURVEDIC TONIC
TO KEEP YOU GOING STRONG

Dabur INDIA LTD.
Harsha Bhawan, Block E,
Connaught Place,
New Delhi-110 001.

everest/d89/DIL 371



R.K. Laxman *The Times of India*

"

This government cannot kill me. If I live or die, it will be by the grace of God.

KEHAR SINGH, *sentenced to death in the Indira Gandhi assassination case*

I have reprimanded all my sons...so that they will desist from involving themselves in any kind of controversies.

DEVI LAL, *Haryana chief minister*

I will lose my credibility among my workers if I concede prominence to the Congress(I) in the alliance.

JAYALALITHA JAYARAMAN, *AIADMK leader*

With this victory, the politics of the Darjeeling accord ends. Now a new kind of politics will begin in the hills.

SUBASH GHISINGH, *GNLF leader*

Politics is a matter of calculation.

BENAZIR BHUTTO, *Pakistan Prime Minister*

Let Jyotibabu fight (the Congress) face to face like a brave man. The one who survives will live.

A.B.A. GHANI KHAN CHOWDHURY, *West Bengal PCC(I) chief*

Does Mr Khan Chowdhury have any other job except shouting? Does he have any other thing to do?

JYOTI BASU, *West Bengal chief minister*

I'm the sort who gave up everything to enter politics and not one who could not make it anywhere.

N.T. RAMA RAO, *Andhra Pradesh chief minister*

Bihar's number one problem is Jagannath Mishra.

JAGANNATH MISHRA, *former Bihar chief minister*

Might does not make right, it only makes history.

GOVIND NARAIN SINGH, *Bihar governor*

If you are honest (in India) you will have to face starvation.

PROFESSOR BHABATOSH CHATTERJEE, *vice-chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University*

The real secret of my success I won't comment on, because I don't want too much competition...but by observing my profile I think anyone could guess!

ANNA BREDEMEYER, *top model*

Actually, I want to be in Rajiv Gandhi's shoes. I want to be the PM of the country.

SUNNY DEOL, *actor, on being asked what alternate occupation he had in mind, besides acting in films*

Chauvinistic, yes, every male is basically a chauvinist.

DANNY DENZONGPA, *actor, on the question as to whether he was a male chauvinist*

"

Too little too late?

The much-touted electoral reforms package turns out to be a damp squib

It was intended as a sweeping measure to revamp the electoral system in the country. But in the end, the electoral reforms package turned out to be something of a damp squib. The only radical proposal in the two Bills that were passed by Parliament last fortnight was the one which lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. The rest of the provisions dealt with relatively minor issues such as the introduction of electronic voting machines, provisions relating to the disqualification of candidates and penalties for corrupt practices. While the Opposition felt that the package ignored crucial issues such as the state funding of elections, the ruling party hailed it as a brave new step.

Nevertheless, the main proposal, to reduce the voting age, was welcomed by all. And the Bill which contained it—the Constitution (62nd Amendment) Bill—was passed unanimously by Parliament. The Opposition has been pressing for the introduction of such a measure for a while now. Janata Dal leader V.P. Singh had even threatened to launch an agitation for it. And so, discounting an ungainly squabble over whose idea it really was, there was rare unanimity on this matter.

The Opposition's main grouse was that the electoral reforms package did not deal with the key issues. Suggestions proposed by Janata Dal leader Madhu Dandavate and others for state funding of elections, an end to government control of All India Radio and Doordarshan, that paramilitary forces be deployed only with the consent of state governments, the setting up of a truly independent multi-member Election Commission and the introduction of the proportional representation system were completely ignored in the package. Dandavate charged that the Bills dealt with "peripherals" rather than "fundamental issues". "It is mere window-dressing," he said.

The fact that the only radical measure related to voting age raised the suspicion that the ruling Congress(I) had ushered in the package for opportunistic reasons. In one stroke, the measure creates 47 million new voters who will comprise 11 per cent of the total electorate. Some Opposition leaders felt that this was done with the sole intent of capturing a large vote bank after pleasing them through granting the right of franchise. The suspicion was lent some credibility because some of the Congressmen who lobbied for the proposal were openly arguing that Rajiv Gandhi would have the support of the majority of the youth.





Congress MP, V.N. Gadgil, rejected the suggestion that elections be funded by the state. He also shot down the proposal for proportional representation

The Bills were passed only after an acrimonious debate. Only a day before they came up for hearing in the Lok Sabha, the Election Commission had announced that byelections to 11 parliamentary seats and 32 state Assembly seats would not be held. Elections to many of these seats were long overdue and the main reason cited for not holding the polls was that the general election was but a year away. This led the Opposition to charge that the government's intent of according more powers to the Election Commission was just so much eyewash. The seven-party National Front claimed that the decision was "one more instance of the Election Commission's inability to take independent decisions". It argued that the





decision only buttressed the Opposition's case that the Commission, in its present form, should not be armed with more powers.

The debate on lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 has been going on for years. According to the report prepared by the Congress(I)'s recently instituted think-tank, the Committee on Policy and Programmes, chaired by former I & B minister V.N. Gadgil, it was in 1971 that this demand was officially articulated. The Petitions Committee of the Lok Sabha recommended this proposal. On the direction of the Union Cabinet, minister Karan Singh looked into the matter and submitted a report, but nothing concrete came of it. The Janata government also toyed with the idea, but collapsed before it could no anything about it.

Madhu Dandavate, the Janata Dal leader, charged that the electoral reforms package dealt with "peripherals" rather than "fundamental issues". He called it "mere window-dressing"



The Youth Congress and the NSUI now claim that they had been agitating over this issue with renewed vigour since the national convention of the Youth Congress at Tirupati in August 1984 and the national convention of the NSUI held in Nagpur in September, the same year, which was attended by Mrs Gandhi and the present Prime Minister, who was then the party general secretary. In September this year, the NSUI held a meeting of its national council in Delhi, where this demand was reiterated. "Did any Opposition party systematically hold seminars and debates on electoral reforms like we did?" asks 29-year-old Mukul Wasnik, president of the Youth Congress(I), emphasising the ruling party's sincerity in ushering in poll reforms.

What is the objective of lowering the voting age to 18? According to the Statement of Objectives: "The present day youth are literate and enlightened and the lowering of the voting age would provide to the unrepresented youth of the country an opportunity to give vent to their feelings and help them become part of the political process." But the Opposition was not moved by such rhetoric. Political considerations motivated the government's decision, they claimed. Otherwise, why was there no evidence of the Congress' reformist zeal earlier? As CPI(M) MP Somnath Chatterjee pointed out in Parliament, it was the Congress which filed a writ petition in the Calcutta High Court in 1980, challenging the lowering of the voting age to 18 years by the West Bengal government for the municipal elections.

Contrary to what it might claim, the Congress(I) was in two minds about going ahead with the constitutional amendment to reduce the voting age. Within the party, there was considerable debate over whether the 47 million-odd new voters would vote for the Congress(I), or against it. Even on the morning of 7 December, when the parliamentary

yda
Yours
mer
pr

What the Bills say

The government's much-publicised electoral reforms package consists of two bills—the Constitution (62nd Amendment) Bill and the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill.

The Constitution (Amendment) Bill reduces the voting age from 21 to 18.

The key provisions of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill include:

- Bringing the designated officers of the state governments under the control, superintendence and discipline of the Election Commission while discharging functions relating to elections.
- Defining a political party and laying down the procedure for its registration.
- Enlarging the provisions relating to disqualification of candidates so as to prevent persons having criminal records from entering public life.
- Preventing 'frivolous' candidates from contesting elections by increasing the number of proposers.
- Introducing electronic voting machines (the present Representation of People Act, 1951, makes mention only of the ballot paper system). The electronic voting machines will be introduced in constituencies identified as 'sensitive' by the Election Commission and such constituencies may number about 150 according to the financial memorandum of the Bill.
- Noting that the election law, as it stands, does not contain any provisions dealing with the increasing phenomenon of booth-capturing and rigging, it has been proposed to include specific and penal provisions in the Representation of the People Act, 1951, to deal with this offence and to make it a corrupt practice.
- Modifying the penalty for disturbing election meetings (presently a meagre fine of Rs 250). The proposed punishment is a term of imprisonment of three months and a fine of Rs 1,000.

session was originally scheduled to close, nobody in the ruling party could categorically say that the Bill would be introduced.

When Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha consulted the leader of the House on the evening of 6 December, they were assured that they would be informed whether the session was being extended, by 10.30 am the next day. But at 1.30 pm, the minister for parliamentary affairs M.M. Jacob, murmured sheepishly that the government would let the Opposition MPs know of its decision a little later. It was only around 2.30 pm that it was confirmed that the Rajya Sabha session was being extended

Younger Congress MPs, like Mukul Wasnik and Rajesh Pilot who actively lobbied to push the constitutional amendment through, feel that in political terms, the decision to lower the voting age is a sound one. As Wasnik put it, "Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is identified with the youth because of his programmes and policies like the New Education Policy. Moreover, the Congress party has strong youth and student organisations. The NSUI recently won elections in Gorakhpur, Aligarh, Varanasi, and even in Bombay against the Shiv Sena. The absence of an alternative national youth or student organisation in the Opposition with a wide base is a point in our favour."

The youth leaders also point out that the Bofors issue is less likely to sway voters in the age group of 18-21 because "they are more amenable to reason", and the fact that V.P. Singh failed to authenticate his recent allegations on the floor of the House will undermine the credibility of the Opposition. They feel that since the PM is identified with the younger generation, this age group can be counted upon at the time of the next general election.

But the older Congressmen have their doubts. Sitaram Kesri, Jagannath Pahadia, Darbara Singh and the octogenarian Uma Shankar Dixit, to name a few, had reportedly expressed their apprehensions about the political wisdom of such a move and Virendra Patil voiced his misgivings in Parliament. According to Patil, a lowering of the voting age would take politics into the classrooms and vitiate the atmosphere in our educational institutions.

The proposal for reducing the voting age from 21 to 18 will create 47 million new voters. Some Opposition leaders feel that this was done to capture a large vote bank by granting the right of franchise

The Opposition was, predictably, piqued because the Congress(I) did not seriously consider its recommendations. During the nine-hour debate on the two Bills, as many as 160 amendments were tabled, but except for Madhu Dandavate's suggestion that persons convicted under the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act be disqualified from contesting, all others were rejected.

V.N. Gadgil rejected the suggestion for state funding of elections. Gadgil, who had once been enthusiastic about the concept, argued that he had studied the proposal in great detail and come to the conclusion that it was not a feasible idea. It would involve an astronomical sum (Rs 90 crores, according to one estimate) that the government could not possibly afford. Besides, he said, experience in Germany, Italy and Japan had shown that state funding did not curb donations from industries to political parties. Similarly, the Opposition's proposal for proportional representation was shot down. The ruling party argued that such a system was not practical in India and would pave the way for an unstable government.

Though the decision to introduce electoral reforms is unexceptionable and some of the provisions of the recent package—like enhancing the list of disqualifications and checking the growing menace of booth capturing are laudable—the real question now is how these will be put into operation. The proposal to introduce electronic voting machines is praiseworthy but it is still not clear on what grounds certain constituencies will be considered 'sensitive'. The Bill seeks to make booth capturing a cognisable offence, but the question is how this will be enforced, particularly in rural areas, where past experience has shown that the administrative machinery is ill-equipped to tackle the problem and that criminal and anti-social elements are in truck with politicians.

The crux of the matter is whether the government is sincere in its intentions of curbing the abuse of the four Ms—money, muscle, media and (government) machinery. Otherwise, electoral reforms—however sweeping in their scope—will amount to precious little.

Patralekha Chatterjee/*New Delhi*

KHUSHWANT SINGH

Introducing Piet Hein's Grooks



The first thing I do on arrival in any country I don't know is to look for books on its contemporary literature: best-sellers, modern poetry, above all, humour. No sooner unpacked in my hotel room in Copenhagen, I set out with Professor Knud Bugge who teaches comparative religions at a teacher's institute, to investigate local bookstores. I soon realised that I'd have to count my kroners: in Denmark, books,like everything else,are murderously expensive. The slenderest paperback of under 100 pages costs 75 kroners (Rs 150), price of an average hardback ranges from 600-1000 kroners (Rs 1200-2000). A large section of every Danish bookstore is devoted to fairy tales of Hans Anderson. Viking sagas came next. Other Scandinavian favourites are Kierkegaard and Niels Bohr. When I asked for humour, the one name that kept coming up was of Piet Hein. And that after pondering over the word "humour' because Hein is not strictly a humorist: he is a poet who composes wise saws for which he has coined his own name, Grook. The word comes from the Danish *gruk* meaning a short, aphoristic-lyrical poem related to old Nordic poems. It has a superficial resemblance to the Japanese *haiku* without being hamstrung by the number of words or lines that may be used. And while a *haiku* usualiy conjures up visual images, the Grook is essentially thought-provoking. I am not aware if anyone else besidesPiet Hein writes Grooks: it is a one-man product. Take three short examples:

There is
one art,
no more,
no less:
to do
all things
with art-
lessness.

PROBLEMS

Problems worthy
of attack
prove their worth
by hitting back.

T.T.T.
Put up in a place
Where it's easy to see
the cryptic admonishment

T.T.T.
When you feel how depressingly
slowly you climb,
it's well to remember that
Things Take Time.

Piet Hein is a scientist turned poet, designer and architect. He illustrates his own Grooks by line drawings. He has been commissioned to design the new art centre of Stockholm. One of his enduring inventions is the super-egg that can stand on both ends and do endless tricks. It has been reproduced in various metals and stones and is used as a nerve soother.

Unlike most Europeans Hein has not been bitten by the bug of physical fitness and believes in less exhausting and pleasanter pastimes.

The human spirit sublimates
the impulses it thwarts;
a healthy sex life mitigates
the lust for other sports.

His interpretation of dreams is a four-line summary of Freud's:

Everything's either
concave or—vex,
so whatever you dream
will be something with sex.

A road-safety slogan is thus inscribed on the tombstone of a victim of fast-driving:

Here lies, extinguished in his prime,
a victim of modernity:
but yesterday he hadn't time—
and now he has eternity.

An advice to the smart alec types runs as follows:

You'll probably find
that it suits your book
to be a bit cleverer
than you look.

Observe that the easiest
method by far
is to look a bit stupider
than you are.

This summary of Hein's philosophy of life I found somewhat confusing:

Life makes sense
and who could doubt it,
if we have
no doubt about it.

Piet Hein has been composing Grooks since 1940. Over 7,000 are now available in translations in all European languages including Russian as well as Persian, Indonesian, Chinese, Japanese and Esperanto. The English collection has sold over 20 million copies. He has been shortlisted for the Nobel Prize for literature several times, and will undoubtedly be named in the next few years. Louis Untermeyer, American poet, anthologist and critic,has lauded his work: "He has everything- wit, wisdom, insight, the proper amount of scepticism and the almost miraculous genius for uttering large thoughts in the most condensed space". An English critic compared him to A.P. Herbert who shared much in common with Hein. "Piet Hein is his name. Poet is perhaps an inadequate description for him. In his native Denmark he is regarded as a national institution, like that mermaid at the entrance to Copenhagen harbour."

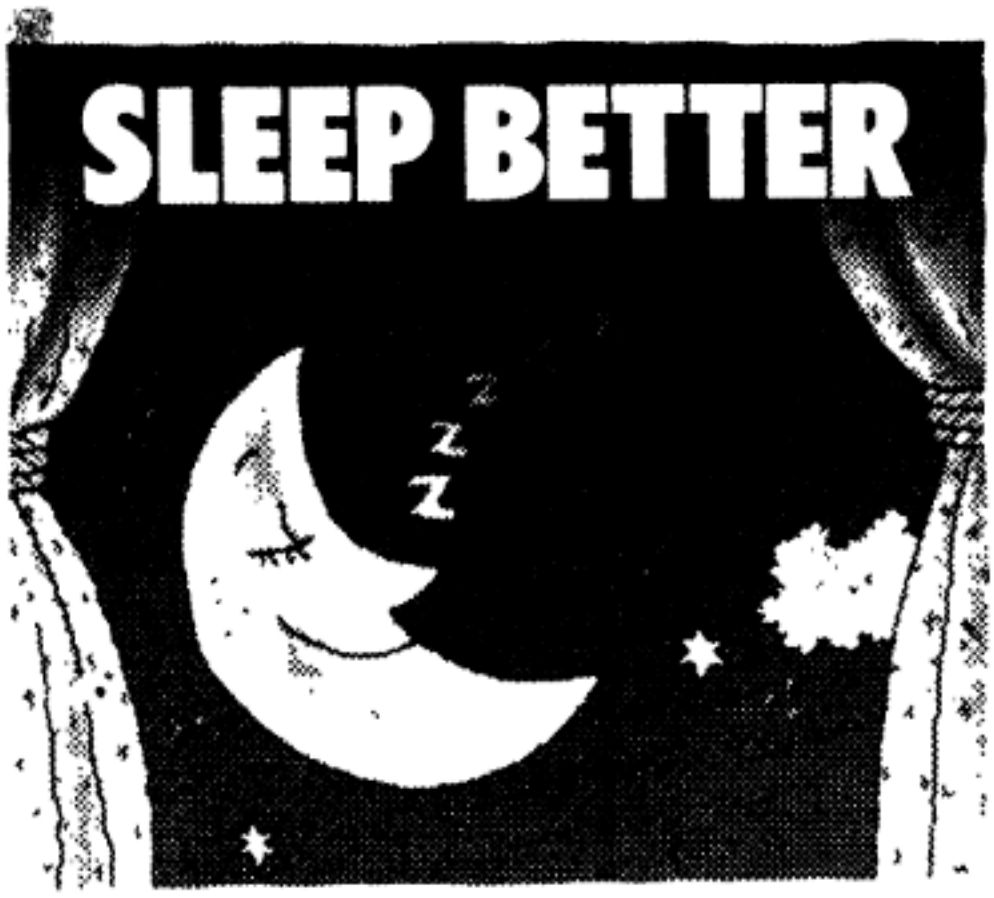
So how do we define a Grook? Perhaps the same way as Hein defined love:

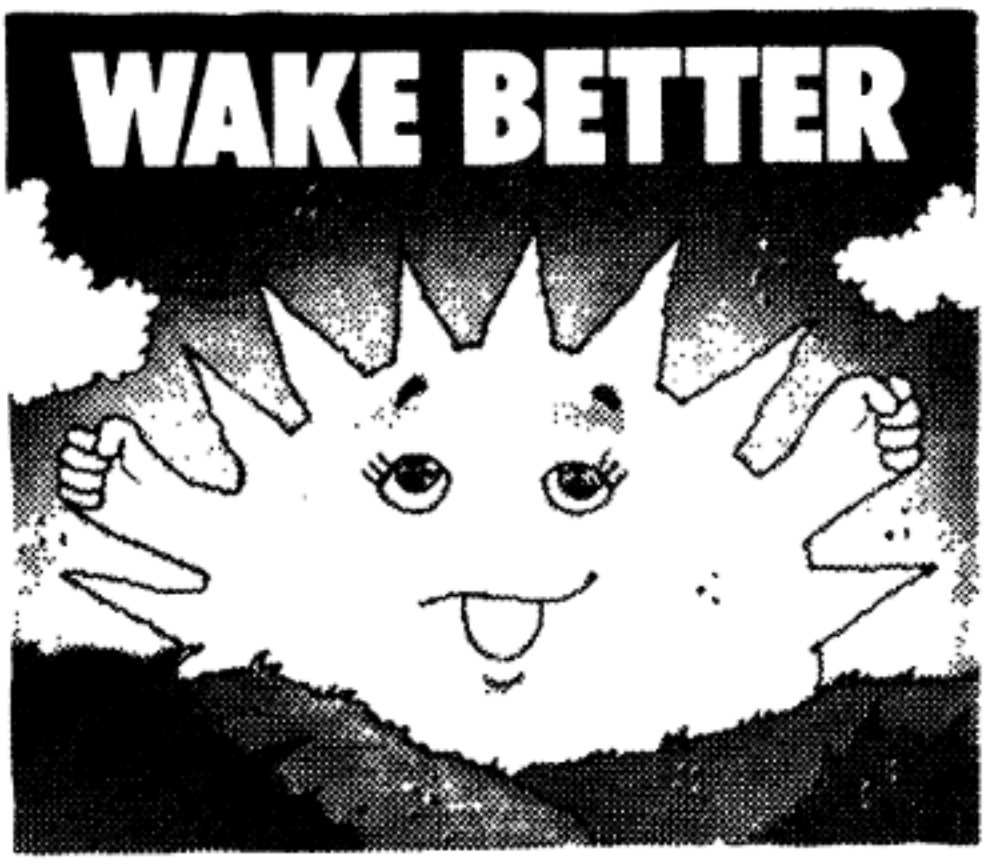
Love is like
a pineapple,
sweet and
undefinable.

Personally I found his observation on writers very reassuring:

THAT'S WHY
Why do bad writers
win the fight?
Why do good writers
die in need?
Because the writers
Who can't write
are read by readers
who can't read.

Piet Hein lives a recluse's life in London. ■







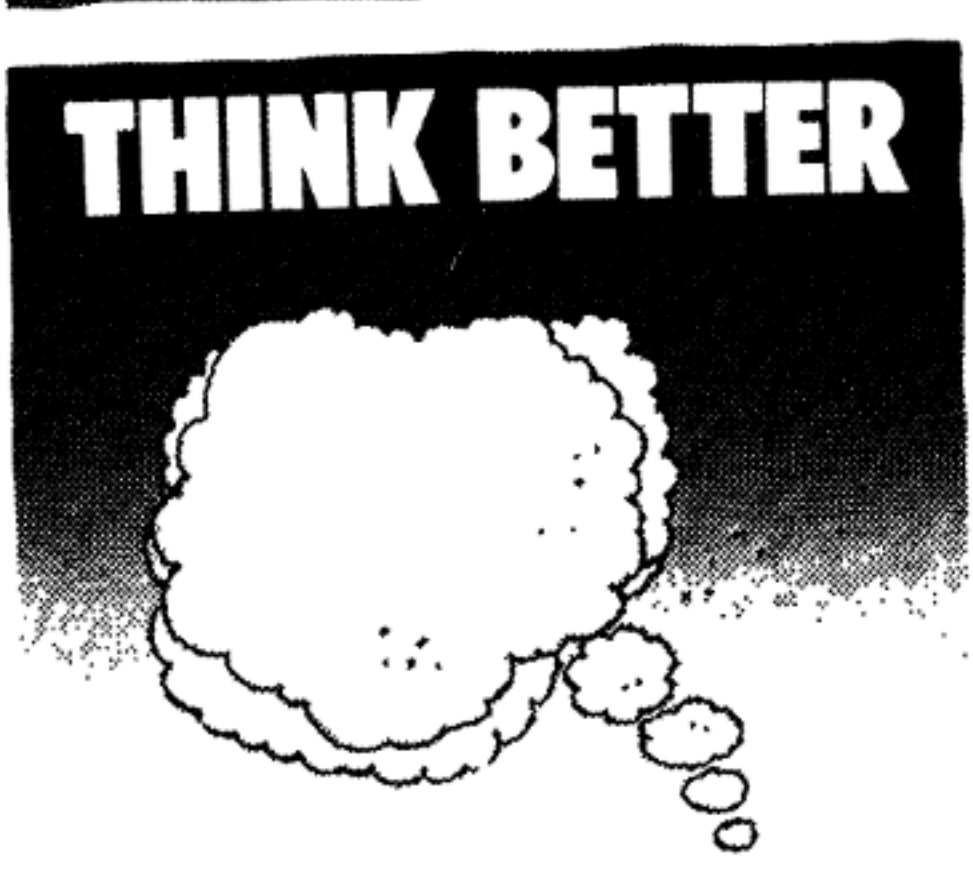




Fibre Foam Private Limited: Factories: Baliapatam **Cannanore** 670 010 Kerala Phone 78330 78408 **Nasik:** 61963
Sales Offices: Bombay: 221966 2872025 **Calcutta:** 207095 201871 **Guwahati:** 27109 **Madras:** 20837 91347 **New Delhi:** 352104 352429









Fibre Foam is made better. Made with natural coir fibre that breathes to keep you cool. Coir that's specially rubberised for lasting comfort.

Better than cotton that's lumpy and dumpy.
Better than foam that's stuffy and puffy.

So choose Fibre Foam. And choose better!



fibre foam

mattresses

A Periwal Group Product

IS 8391

HTA 8869

Sole Selling Agents: Intercontinental Marketing Corporation: C-2 Community Centre, Safdarjung Development Area, **New Delhi** 110 016 Phone 651268 653908 **Ahmedabad:** 77742 76442 **Bangalore** 364042 363706 **Calicut:** 62715 **Cochin:** 352855 364119 **Madras:** 90837 25578 **Secunderabad:** 77035 823532 **Trivandrum:** 65437 **Visakhapatnam:** 53468



ON THE LINE

KULDIP NAYAR

Diplomatic indiscretions

Apart from cliches like "goodwill" and "cordial atmosphere", there is nothing in the statements by New Delhi or Beijing to suggest that the border dispute between the two is anywhere near a settlement. And some of the recent observations from both sides have even been irresponsible.

Rajiv Gandhi, for instance, has said that he would not cede any disputed territory to China during his trip to that country. If he was ruling out the possibility of any compromise on the 35,000 sq km claimed to be in China's occupation, then why the trip?

Whether it is the Aksai Chin in the north of Ladakh or the area below the McMahon Line in eastern India, there will have to be a give-and-take approach by both sides to resolve the dispute. In any case, Rajiv Gandhi's statement was uncalled for, as some members of the team headed by the foreign secretary which went to Beijing twice to prepare the ground for the Prime Minister's visit, admit privately. The statement may not do as much damage as Nehru's did in October 1962—he had said that he ordered his forces to throw out the Chinese from Indian territory, which the Chinese claimed as theirs—but it certainly was indiscreet.

Beijing has been equally inept. It has announced that the trip was at Rajiv Gandhi's own initiative. One cannot make out the need for it because China's complaint all along has been that no Indian Prime Minister has reciprocated the last visit of Chou-en Lai to New Delhi in 1961. When I was in Beijing last year, the same point was made by the Chinese foreign office. Even if the observation was made to counter Rajiv Gandhi's statement that he would not cede any disputed territory, it was undiplomatic, to say the least.

Rajiv Gandhi in turn said in Parliament that China was not important enough in the contextof Soviet-Indian relations to be mentioned in the joint statement issued after his talks with President Gorbachev. It is true that New Delhi's relationship with Moscow is independent of its relationship with Beijing; but Rajiv Gandhi's explanation for China's omission from the joint statement was not necessary.

It must have hurt Beijing's sensitivity, and also must not have been to the liking of Gorbachev, who specifically commended China's relationship with the Soviet Union and India in his address after receiving the Indira Gandhi Award for Peace. He said that "good relations between them are extremely important for the stability of Asia and global progress". It is said that Gorbachev wanted to mention China in the joint statement but Rajiv Gandhi did not.

If this is true —and there is no contradiction from official circles—it is another sign of his immaturity. He could at least have learnt something from Gorbachev, who showed so much maturity and statesmanship in all that he said or did. Gorbachev was also very correct, though this may have disappointed many in the Congress(I) who must have been very keen that the Soviet President make some praise in public about the "dynamic leadership" of Rajiv Gandhi. With the elections only a few months away, praise for Rajiv Gandhi from Gorbachev would have been an advantage for the Congress. Perhaps, Gorbachev did not want to say anything which would sound partisan in the Indian political context.



Rajiv Gandhi: unnecessary statements

It is true that New Delhi's relationship with Moscow is independent of its relationship with Beijing, but the PM's explanation for China's omission from the joint statement was not necessary

At least one of the key persons in Gorbachev's delegation was frank enough to say at a breakfast meeting with a select group that they were not going to put all their eggs in one basket. Interestingly, one of the Soviet pronouncements, which appeared as an advertisement in a Delhi English daily before Gorbachev's arrival, pointed out that the Janata government did not disturb the close relationship between India and the USSR. What was sought to be conveyed was that a bipartisan policy regarding Moscow had evolved in India.

This is true. In fact, it was odd on the part of Rajiv Gandhi's government and the Congress(I) not to have associated the Opposition with Gorbachev's visit. Expecting to reap electoral dividends, the Prime Minister as well as his party kept others at a distance in whatever the government did in connection with Gorbachev's visit.

In the same way, Rajiv Gandhi should realise that a bipartisan policy on China has also come into being and the Opposition parties are conscious of the fact that the border dispute can be solved only through a give-and-take approach, and not through slogans like the one that every inch of "occupied territory" would be taken back. Rajiv Gandhi should have taken leading Opposition luminaries into confidence and discussed with them his strategy. Still better, he should have included one or two Opposition leaders in the delegation to China.

And one does not know why the visit of foreign minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to Beijing, which was scheduled before the second visit of the Indian team to China, did not take place. Besides, the second visit was unexpected.

Just as the effort during Gorbachev's visit was to extract as much as the Congress(I) could for the next elections, the aim is now to exploit Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing for the same. After all, even when he took the initiative to visit China, it was meant to refurbish his image tarnished by the Bofors gun scandal and his inept policies and observations.

The Congress(I) must be hoping that in Beijing at least, there would be some praise bestowed on Rajiv Gandhi, even if nothing else is gained. ■

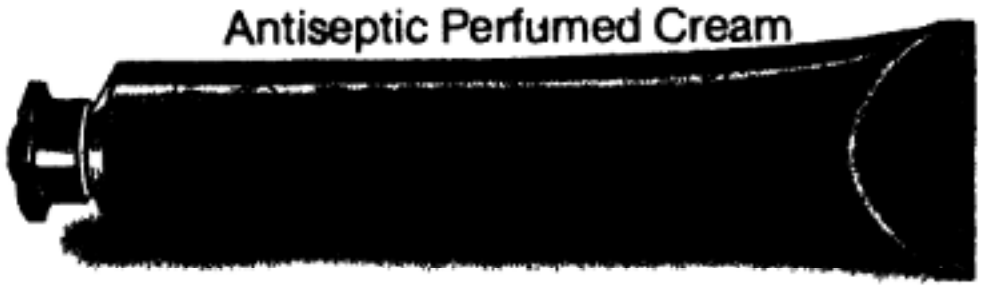
In a world full of surprises



...thank goodness you can count on

Boroline

Antiseptic Perfumed Cream



Ideal for dry skin and minor nicks and cuts

A friend of the family for 60 years

Boroline is not a cosmetic

G D Pharmaceuticals
Calcutta 700053

Response 1035





Because husbands dream in black and white and wives dream in colour.

He was interested in quality and long term value.

She felt Pampadour blue went well with the lampshade.

He wanted it to go with his budget.

She wanted a range to match her furnishings.

He was calculating costs.

She was insisting on an easy-to-clean surface.

He wanted the furniture well protected.

She wanted a smooth finish and a wet glossy look.

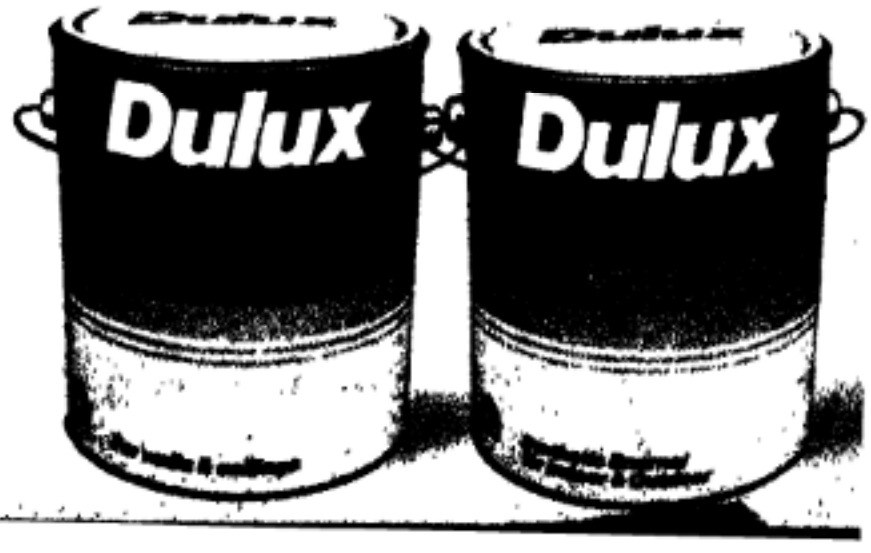
His decision, he knew, was made.

Her choice, she knew, was right.

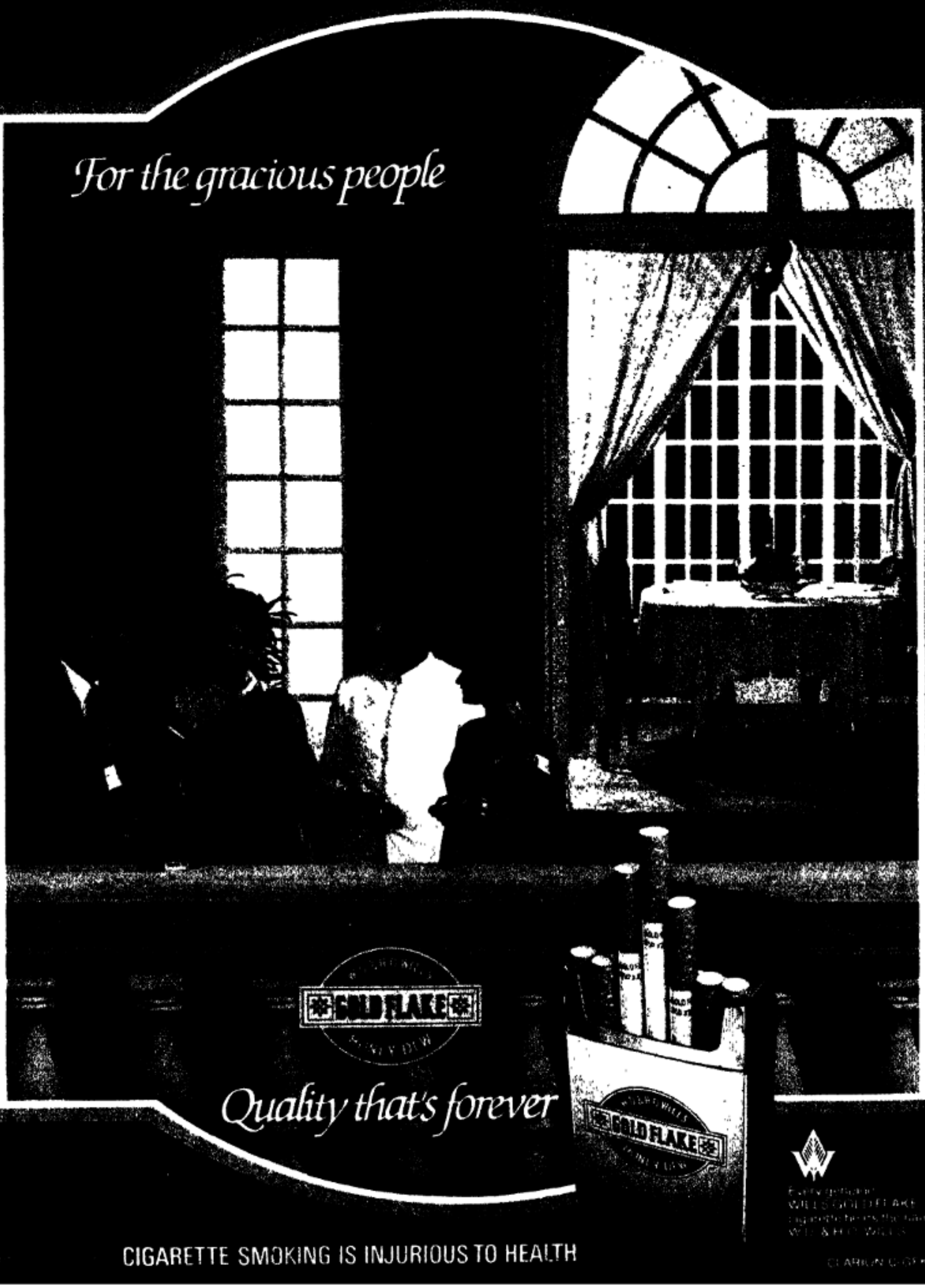
Dulux it would be for their home.

Because the best decisions in life are taken together.

ICI **Dulux**
World Class

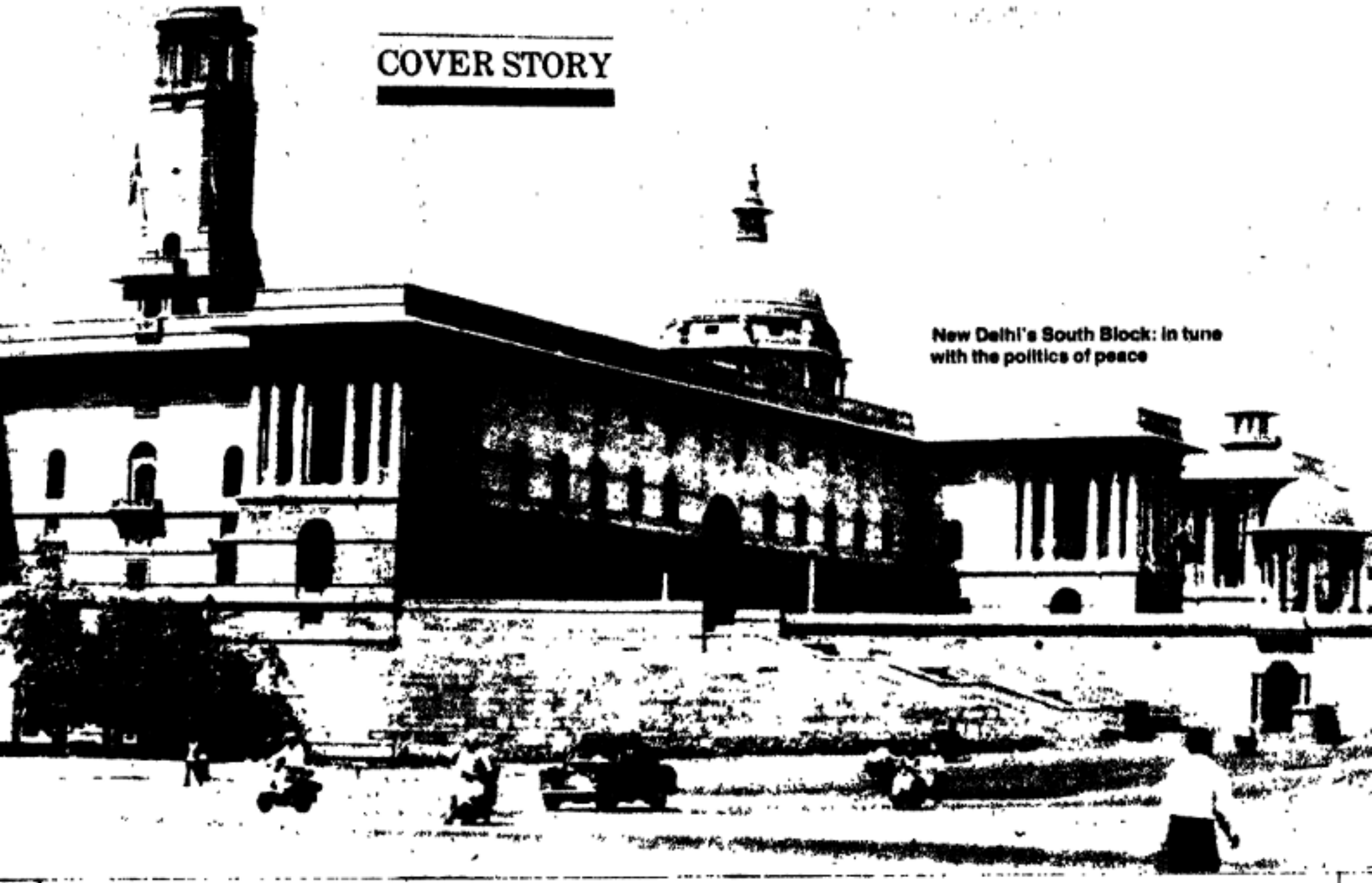


For the gracious people



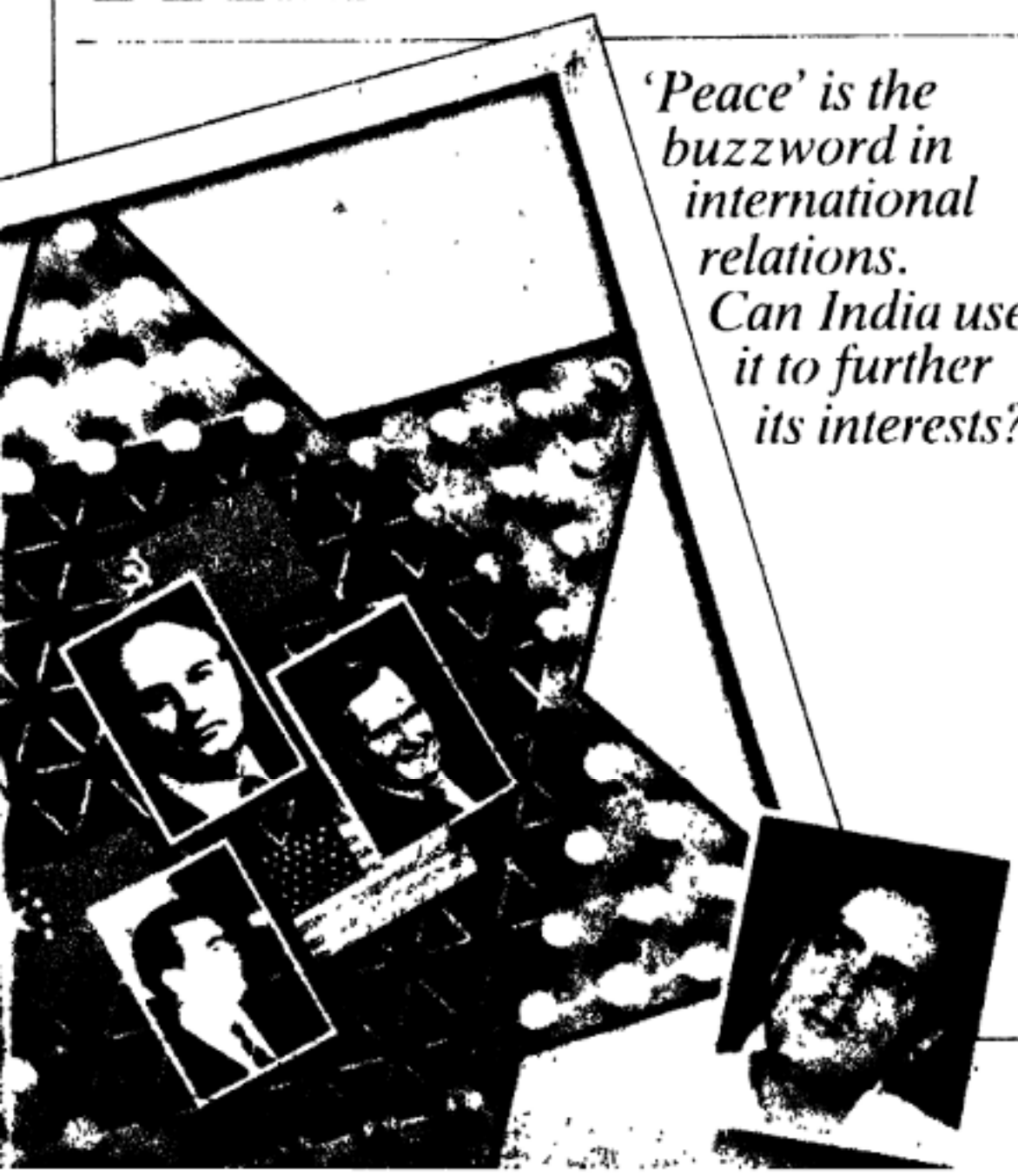
Quality that's forever

CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH



New Delhi's South Block: in tune with the politics of peace

THE NEW DIPLOMACY



'Peace' is the buzzword in international relations. Can India use it to further its interests?

In the unhurried world of Indian diplomacy, events are occurring with dizzying frequency. Deterrence is suddenly *passé*: nukes, missiles and masses of infantry are going the way of gunboats --into obsolescence. The new name of the game is peace. And India is racing to stay abreast. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Beijing visit set the pace. Later this month, he will meet the new Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in Islamabad. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has already been hosted and his message for global peace acknowledged. The election of the new American President George Bush has been hailed by New Delhi and fresh hopes for closer relations expressed with more than the routine emphasis. India is involved in sorting out international tangles in Kampuchea, Afghanistan and Namibia. Closer home, valiant attempts are on to ram peace down the unwilling throats of Sri Lankan Tamils.

The pace of Indian diplomatic moves is frenetic. The plans are ambitious, friendship with all three major powers, the Soviet Union, the United States and China, and supremacy in the subcontinent. But is this at all possible? Can India achieve with peace what it has not been able to do with all its infantry divisions, its





WHAT'S NEW... CHINA

● An Indian Prime Minister visited China for the first time in 34 years. Chinese leaders described it as a "historic event". The Chinese ambassador to India called for a return to *'Hindi-Chini bhai bhai'*.



● China is prepared to keep the border issue under freeze and expand other ties.

● China says it wants to reach an understanding to prevent border incidents.



● India and China feel that they can both gain by opening up their markets. The resumption of the centuries-old Indo-Tibet border trade becomes a possibility.



● The two countries prepare to sign an agreement to start direct flights between New Delhi and Beijing.

● Both governments feel their economies will benefit from the swapping of indigenously developed technologies, and are busy fixing details of a science and technology agreement

● Students, artistes and scholars are to be exchanged on a regular basis under a cultural agreement signed between India and China



● For the first time in recent history, India and China discussed global issues, including the withdrawal of the Soviets from Afghanistan, the Vietnamese from Kampuchea and the Cubans from Angola. The very fact that a dialogue between the two countries was conducted at the highest level may not have shaken the world, but certainly made all nations sit up and take notice.



Indian jawans at Indo-China border: diminished tension?

modern gunboats, missile programmes and its nuclear option?

The advocates of the diplomacy of peace are aplenty in the Indian external affairs ministry in New Delhi's South Block. They believe that the world can never be the same again after the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev and his plans for nuclear disarmament, entente and the scaling down of the global military-industrial complex. India, the advocates of the peace doctrine argue, can either choose to stay in tune with the new global trend or opt for isolation. It's a Hobson's choice.

The issue really is whether the current friendship moves are earnest or just part of a charade, an effort to keep up with the international Joneses. The clues, if any, are tucked away with inscrutable desk officers in the Indian external affairs ministry and in between the lines of official statements. For the moment, upfront is a new *bonhomie*, a new international face India is preparing. And this is evident most dramatically in the Indian decision to thaw the decades-old freeze in relations with its giant neighbour, the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Ever since the 1962 Indo-China war, the frozen wastes of Aksai Chin and the harsh mountains of Arunachal Pradesh have dominated the thinking of both sides. China, being in physical possession of Aksai Chin, has sought to legitimise its hold by insisting that even Arunachal Pradesh is part of China.

Trade and most other exchanges have dried up since the traumatic events of 1962. China, for all practical purposes, has remained a



hostile, alien area in the Indian psyche, separated by far more than the snow-bound Himalayan range.

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Beijing visit appears aimed at stepping over the great divide The impression created is of a momentous happening. The last time an Indian Prime Minister visited China was 34 years ago, the official media keeps pointing out. Rajiv Gandhi's acceptance of the Chinese invitation is interpreted as proof of India's desire to make for a less tense, less hostile world. India is determined to match Chinese gestures, be as effusive as required and gush all the goodwill in the world.

The Chinese, on their part too, have not been sparing in exhibiting *bonhomie*. The Chinese ambassador to India, Tu Guowei, recently declared: "I am looking forward to the day when the slogan of *'Hindi-Chini bhai bhai'* will once again be resounding over our ancient as well as young oriental land." On the Prime Minister's visit, the ambassador said: "I can say with certainty that his (Rajiv Gandhi's) China visit will be a major event in Sino-Indian relations, a harbinger of a new stage of development of such relations."

Back in Beijing, the official line was as encouraging. On 30 November this year, Chinese vice-premier Wu Xueqian reiterated that China's consistent policy has been to develop good-neighbourly relations with India under the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence or Panchshila. The Indian Prime Minister's China visit, Xueqian added, is in line with the wishes of the Chinese and Indian people and "will also be beneficial to peace and stability in Asia and the rest of the world". As foreign policy analyst, Bhabani Sengupta of the Centre for Policy Research, points out: "The very fact that India and China are talking to each other at the highest level after a gap of more than three decades will make a bit of history. It will not send tremors down the spine of the world, but will certainly command the eyes and ears of nations."

If the mandarins of the Indian external affairs ministry are hopeful about a turnaround in Sino-Indian relations, it is because they have been successful in pulling off a similar coup with the United States, a superpower that has been traditionally wary of, if not outright hostile to, India. Relations between the two countries took a nosedive following the Indian decision to dismember Pakistan and sign a security pact with the Soviet Union. India never quite got over the US decision to send the Seventh Fleet up the Bay of Bengal while the Indian army was engaged in mopping up the dispirited Pakistani defenders of erstwhile East Pakistan. And the United States did not forgive India for slipping into the Soviet lap.

Rajiv Gandhi's now famous 'opening to Washington' in 1985 led to spectacular attitudinal changes. The Indian decision to first sign an accord with Sri Lanka and then send in troops, instead of being condemned, was actually lauded by the United States. This was significant considering that the Soviet Union, while not overtly objecting to India's Sri Lankan adven-

Rajiv Gandhi's Beijing visit is being interpreted as proof of India's desire for a less tense, less hostile world. India seems determined to match Chinese gestures, be as effusive as required and gush all the goodwill in the world

Chinese premier Li Peng: new cordiality



WHAT'S NEW... THE UNITED STATES



● In 1971, when India sent troops into erstwhile East Pakistan, the United States responded by ordering its Seventh Fleet to sail up the Bay of Bengal. But last month, when India flew troops into the Maldives, the Americans cheered The circumstances were of course different But American attitudes towards India have also changed.



● The US administration had for long considered India to be no better than a Warsaw Pact state. This perception is on the way out For the first time, two US defence secretaries--Caspar Weinberger and Frank Carlucci visited India (both during the last couple of years).



● Conservative American opinion, espoused by people like former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger, has it that the Asia-Pacific region is fast emerging as the centre of global competition and potential conflict. To protect its interests, the US administration is being forced to take a new look at India, a country which appears destined to be the major naval power in the Asia-Pacific region.



● Till 1985, over 3,000 applications from Indian business for technology imports had piled up with the US government. After the memorandum of understanding on technology transfers (signed in November 1984) came into effect, the technology trickle into India from the US has become a flood

ture, had been conspicuously cool about the idea. At any rate, the US administration continued being gung-ho about India's role in South Asia. And when the United States actually cheered the Indian intervention in the Maldives, foreign policy observers the world over were forced to sit up.

The New York Times remarked: "Messages of support and congratulations for New Delhi from the US and Britain about the Maldives have only added to a growing perception in the region that the West has joined the Soviet Union in turning the entire Indian Ocean region over to India." The insinuation that India was emerging as a regional policeman was, of course, voicferously denied by India. But secretly, South Block was only too pleased at the growing realisation and acceptance of what the external affairs ministry has long considered the legitimate Indian role.

India and the United States today, according to South Block, recognise that they have a "mutuality of interests". There is general agreement in the Indian foreign policy establishment that, while India should still attach importance to the arming of Pakistan, this issue should not be allowed to preclude relations with the United States, and that India should be prepared to move ahead on other fronts for its own benefit. What the external affairs ministry describes as a "new maturity" in dealing with a superpower was prompted by the fear of missing out on the technological revolution taking place in America.

This realisation has set in motion a more fundamental, more powerful set of forces for the improvement of Indo-US relations. Just as Indian business views the United States as a big source of technology and capital, US industry sees in India a large and growing market which it wants access to. The results have been most spectacular and obviously beneficial to India. Economic interests have persuaded US departments, like defence and commerce, to allow the

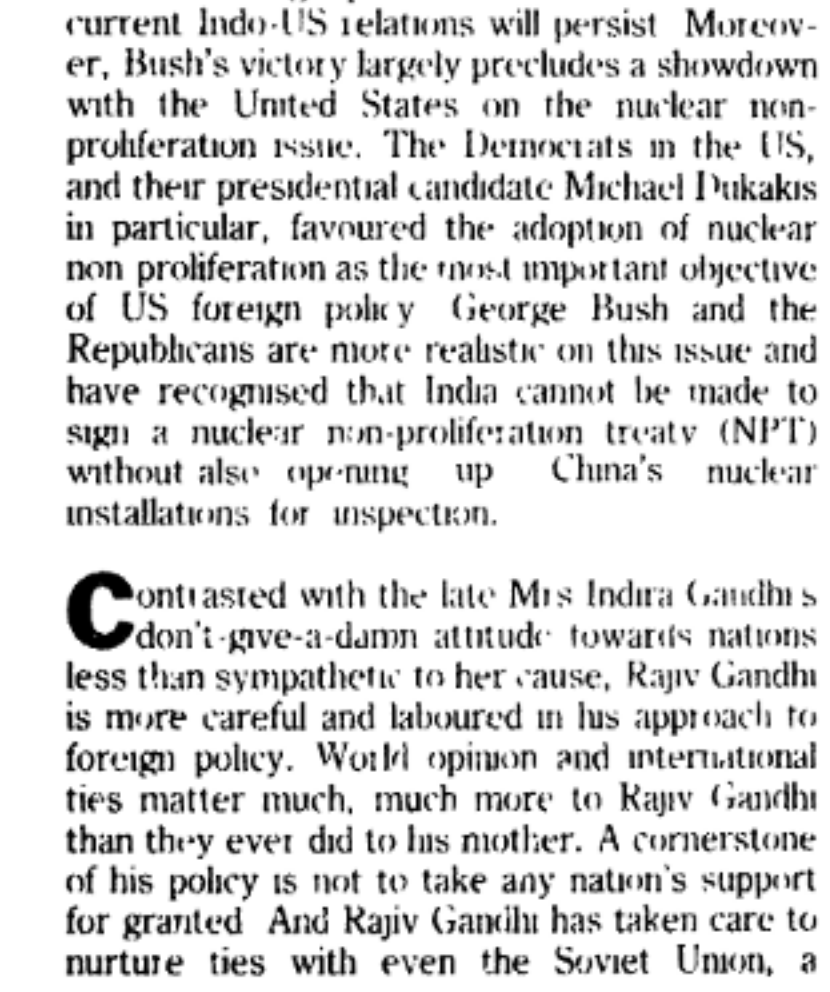
Rajiv Gandhi with George Bush: personal rapport

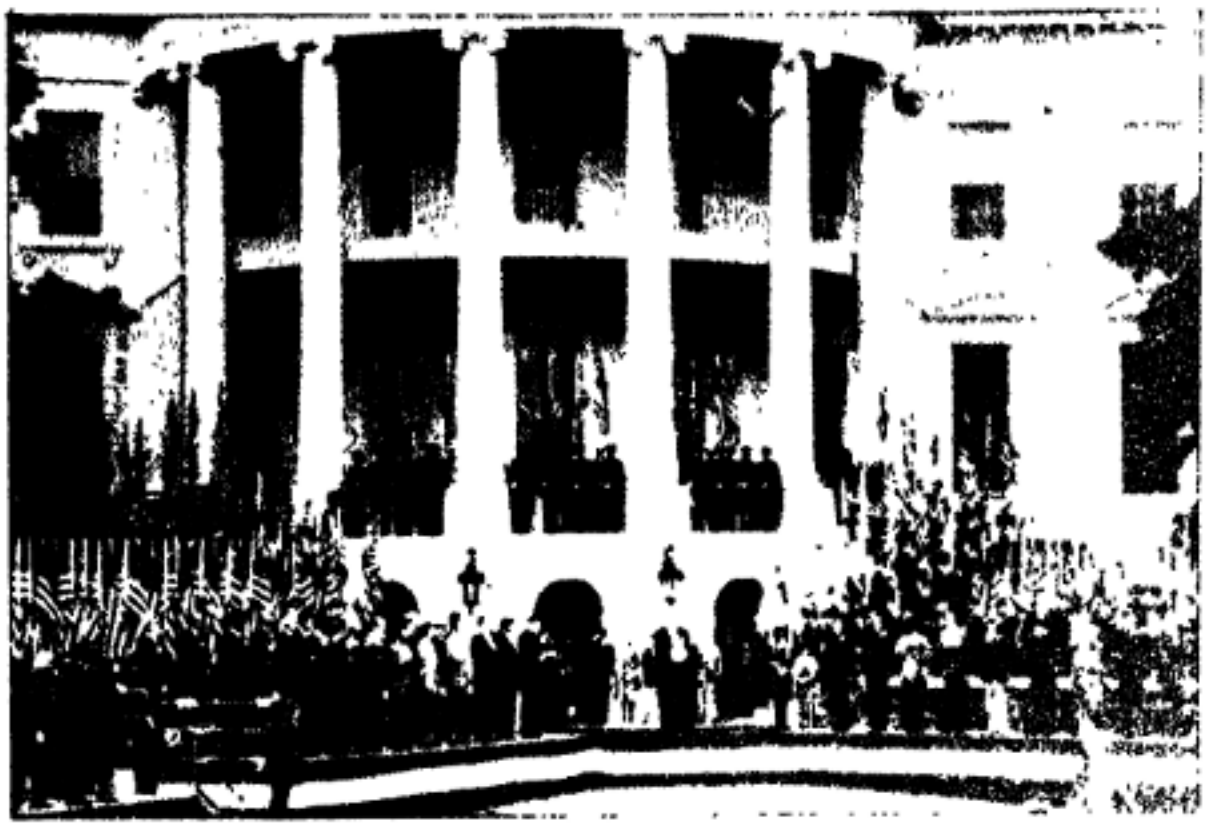


export of a vast range of technologies and equipment to India. The best examples are the sale of the Cray supercomputer, GE-404 jet engines and avionics for the Indian light combat aircraft project, and a host of sensitive technologies for the development of missiles and mainframe computers. Indo-US trade has neared the US $ 5 billion mark; technology transfers have soared from virtually nothing three years ago to US $ 1.5 billion; and till 1987, 40 per cent of the equity invested in India by foreign companies came from American firms. Friendship with a superpower, the Indian government has realised, can have attractive spin-offs.

No small wonder, therefore, that Rajiv Gandhi sent a warm personal letter to George Bush as soon as he won the presidential elections 'Given the Indian Prime Minister's good personal equation with Bush and the fact that Bush will substantially continue with the Reagan administration's foreign policies, the cordial tenor of current Indo-US relations will persist Moreover, Bush's victory largely precludes a showdown with the United States on the nuclear non-proliferation issue. The Democrats in the US, and their presidential candidate Michael Dukakis in particular, favoured the adoption of nuclear non proliferation as the most important objective of US foreign policy George Bush and the Republicans are more realistic on this issue and have recognised that India cannot be made to sign a nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) without also opening up China's nuclear installations for inspection.

Contrasted with the late Mrs Indira Gandhi's don't-give-a-damn attitude towards nations less than sympathetic to her cause, Rajiv Gandhi is more careful and laboured in his approach to foreign policy. World opinion and international ties matter much, much more to Rajiv Gandhi than they ever did to his mother. A cornerstone of his policy is not to take any nation's support for granted And Rajiv Gandhi has taken care to nurture ties with even the Soviet Union, a





The White House: accommodating India

country with which good relations can almost be taken for granted. The Prime Minister's deliberate cultivaton of the Soviet connection, especially his success in establishing personal rapport with the Soviet Union's unpredictable President, Mikhail Gorbachev, is paying regular dividends

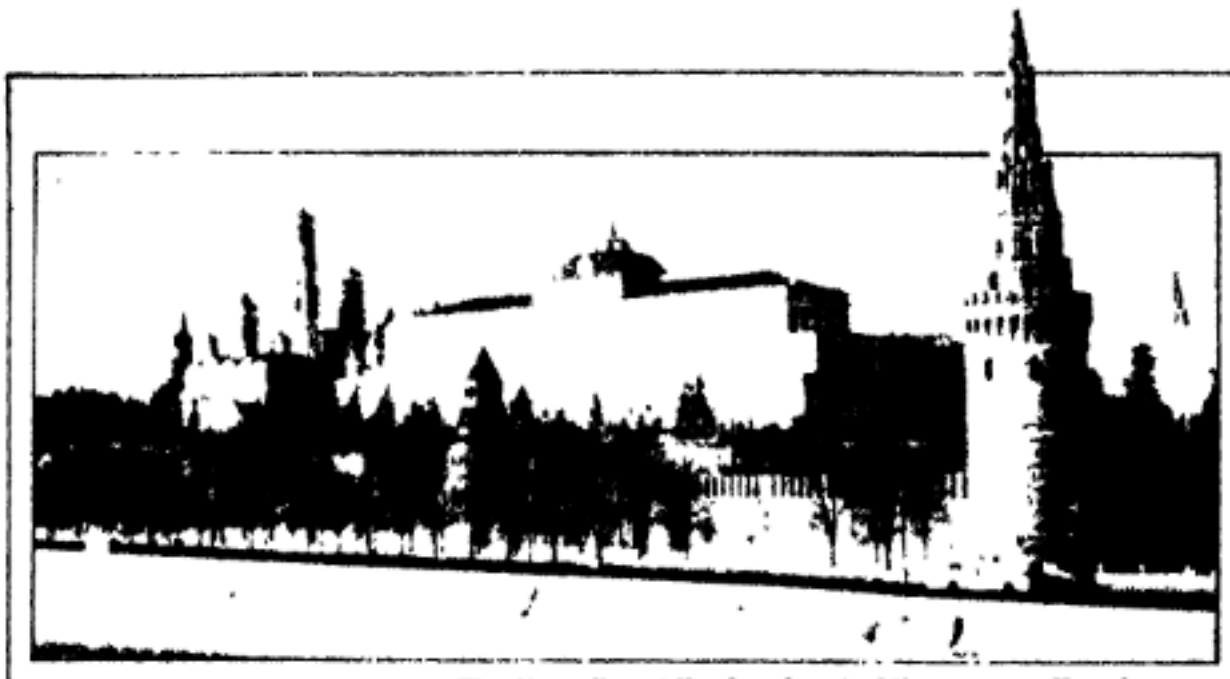
At a time when the world was carefully watching the rapid moves on the Soviet-China front – in particular the quick Soviet decision to withdraw from the Damansky Island in the Usori River, where frontier guards of the two countries had fought a bloody battle in 1969—Indian foreign policy analysts were chalking out a gloomy security scenario. If the Soviets wanted to end military competition with China, the analysts wondered, would they be willing to continue honouring the Indo-Soviet treaty, which guarantees Soviet support in the event of any military attack on India. The treaty, in practice, works to allay Indian fears of a possible attack by China, which possesses a considerable nuclear weapons arsenal; it means that India could get away by investing just enough to maintain a limited defensive capability against China Even a subtle change in the Soviet stance could change all this.

When Gorbachev visited New Delhi last month (18-20 November), he went out of his way to stress that nothing would change—if anything, ties between the Soviet Union and India could only get stronger. During one of his speeches, Gorbachev deviated from his prepared speech to address the persistent queries raised in the Indian media about the Soviet bear abandoning India to the Chinese dragon. "There are even some voices to the effect that the Soviet Union is changing its priorities, even cooling its attitude towards India," he admitted. "Comparisons are being drawn between our first visit and the current one, between Soviet-Indian contacts and the Soviet leadership's contacts with other countries...in my opinion, such totally groundless and obviously speculative assertions are not worthy of polemic," he declared.

The Soviet-India summit statement, signed jointly by Gorbachev and Gandhi, mentioned,



Indian foreign policy experts now feel that while India should attach importance to the arming of Pakistan, this issue should not be allowed to preclude relations with the USA. This feeling is probably prompted by the fear of missing out on the technological revolution taking place there



The Kremlin: at the forefront of the peace offensive

among other things: "The Soviet-Indian treaty of peace, friendship and cooperation is an outstanding milestone in their relations and provides a reliable and time-tested framework for the further development of these relations and for promoting peace and stability in Asia and the whole world." Perhaps to dispel Indian fears, the statement added: "The fundamental importance of the treaty in the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and India is even greater in today's changing world."

There could have been no greater expression of Soviet concern for Indian fears. And to show just how special India was, Gorbachev's visit was also used by the Soviets to announce a 4.2 billion rouble economic package, agree to step up bilateral trade and unveil a policy allowing Indian firms to deal directly with Soviet republics and state enterprises.

The advocates of the diplomacy of peace believe that the world can never be the same again after the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev and his plans for nuclear disarmament and entente. India, they argue, can either choose to stay in tune with the new global trend or opt for isolation. It's a Hobson's choice



The geopolitics of peace dovetails neatly into the framework of Indo-Soviet interests. "It's a coincidence that India and the Soviet Union share similar aims," says Sergei Velichkin, political analyst at the Soviet embassy in New Delhi. India has traditionally, and of late through the non-aligned movement (NAM) forum, espoused concrete proposals for a lasting peace in the regional and international environment. It has consistently demanded that the Indian Ocean be declared a zone of peace, that all nations, superpowers included, accept common rules for nuclear disarmament, and that all countries observe certain ground rules in their dealings with other countries. Till recently, however, New Delhi's constant—at times monotonous—trumpeting of a non-violent order generated more boredom than results.

After the advent of Gorbachev, the Soviet Union has become a powerful apostle of the same principles. "The rules of the game are changing," explains Velichkin. "No country today can seriously aspire to acquire territory, use military might to subdue another nation, and sovereignty is not negotiable." This congruence in international philosophy led the Soviet Union and India to come up with the Delhi Declaration: a blueprint that calls for nuclear disarmament by 2010 AD, for demilitarisation, democratisation, the ending of military bases outside national boundaries and the scrapping of military pacts.

The principles as conceived by India are tailored to match its national interests. Indian foreign policy planners have identified specific goals for protecting the country's security and economic needs. Maritime trade routes through the Indian Ocean, for instance, are of major importance, and the main reason behind the decision to develop a 'blue-water navy'. The presence of American bases—Diego Garcia and facilities developed in Pakistan—are viewed as a potential threat to Indian maritime interests.

Nuclear disarmament, similarly, would benefit India by curtailing China's nuclear capability. The current non-proliferation proposals, especially the NPT propounded by the United States, in contrast, are designed chiefly to stymie India's nuclear weapons programme. The acceptance of the principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-aggression would, likewise, place India in a better negotiable position against China, which, as the world knows, grabbed Aksai Chin with brute military force.

In the smaller subcontinental region, Indian objectives are even clearer and stem from domestic concerns. Events in any part of the subcontinent directly impinge on internal politics in India. The Tamil problem in Sri Lanka is a case in point. Not only did the Sri Lankan upsurge send shock waves through the Tamil population in India, but it also created the possibility of the Sri Lankan government signing a military deal with either Pakistan or the United States. Disorder in Bangladesh will similarly spill over into India (if only in the form of refugees). Instability in Nepal would affect millions of Indian citizens residing in that country, and to an extent, the same applies to Bhutan.

Pakistan has and continues to be a major cause of concern for two reasons. Pakistan has traditionally projected itself as a competitor to India and has carried the contest to the military level. Secondly, India's large Muslim population is not entirely unaffected by developments in Pakistan. Of particular concern to India is the possibility of a fundamentalist triumph in Pakistan. The for-

Mikhail Gorbachev with Rajiv Gandhi: assuring continued support



mer Pakistani dictator General Zia-ul Haq's deliberate fostering of fundamentalist forces his complete support for the ultra-fundamentalist Afghan rebel leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar—and support for anti-India hardliners had compelled the government to find means to keep up the pressure on Pakistan. India's Siachen adventure, the subsequent refusal to arrive at an agreement over the glacier, the refusal to accord General Zia proper diplomatic honours during his Jaipur visit last year, were all messages that signalled India's unwillingness to deal with a dictator. Zia retaliated by covertly aiding Sikh extremists, sponsoring disturbances in Kashmir, resisting Indo-Soviet attempts at establishing a broad-based progressive government in Afghanistan and pursuing a nuclear weapons programme

Benazir Bhutto, on the other hand, is favoured by the Indian external affairs ministry. Indian lobbyists in the United States are reported to have requested the Reagan administration to support democratisation in Pakistan and persuade the Pakistani army to agree to the accession of Benazir Bhutto. While Ms Bhutto cannot be expected to toe the Indian line, Indian foreign policy-makers analyse that she will attack fundamentalism and the anti-modernists in her country. She can, moreover, be expected to pay greater attention to economic development, which has been a major plank of her election campaign, and, consequently, be less inclined to interfere with Indian objectives.

Rajiv Gandhi's meeting with Benazir Bhutto during the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) meet in Islamabad in end-December will make history of sorts. For, the last time the two countries' elected Prime Ministers met was way back in the early Seventies—at the time of the signing of the Shimla Agreement. That was the famous meeting between Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Indira Gandhi, and it is both coincidental and significant that their children will meet as heads of their respective states after all these years. The new generation of subcontinental leaders could find





WHAT'S NEW... THE SOVIET UNION



● "Till we meet again, Delhi-Moscow" The refrain was sentimental The occasion the closing of the Soviet Festival in India. Present were Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi The farewell note was apt in more ways than one.

Gorbachev's November visit to New Delhi was both a beginning and an end. The Soviet Union was ending one long period of isolation and looking to the West - its technology and prosperity With India, the Soviets were beginning another era—promising renewed friendship But they did not sound convincing about the strength of their ardour



● The Soviets have called for expanded trade between the two countries, have announced a 4.2 billion rouble economic aid package for India and promised assistance for the building of a 2,000 megawatt nuclear power plant



● India is developing greater bargaining power against the Soviets to acquire new kinds of military hardware. The transfer of a Charlie Class nuclear submarine and the latest Soviet fighter aircraft, MiG-29s, is proof of the Soviet decision to remain the principal arms supplier to India.



● Soviet moves for a *rapprochement* with China is an unnerving factor in Indo-Soviet relations. Will its attempts to make peace with China affect India's security environment? Or rather, is the Soviet Union preparing to lessen its commitment to the security of India? This question could become contentious in the long term.

Does your dudhwalla serve you milk on the train?



My dudhwalla does.

You must be careful about your food and drink when you are travelling. Milk gets contaminated or turns sour fast. Always take a tin of Amul Milk Powder along.

With Amul Milk Powder you have pure, rich, creamy milk, mixed and ready in minutes. Good to drink, good for tea and coffee, dahi, lassi, kheer, custard, cakes, rasgollas...

Amul
MILK POWDER

It's like having a dairy in your home

Marketed by Gujarat Co-operative
Milk Marketing Federation Ltd., Anand 388 001

OPERATION FLOOD

RADELS 41.P:2-88

peace more attractive than continued antagonism and prefer to search for a world far removed from the fractured, second-rate state left behind by their parents. And if this happens, India would also have achieved a major foreign policy target: the freedom to act according to its natural pre-eminence in the region without having to worry about obstructions from Pakistan.

India's record so far on the friendship front reads like an ad copy. Whether the final product will match promise depends on the external affairs ministry's next few moves—and the next steps look more critical than the previous ones. Especially since beneath the current *bonhomie* lie the grimmer facts of international life. The politics of peace remains the means and not an end of international relations. Since national governments cannot wish away their objectives, peace will be acknowledged and used as long as it is expedient.

How successfully India handles the tools of friendship will determine its relations with the three major powers—the Soviet Union, the United States and China. The problem is that nothing suggests that India can truly be friends with all three major powers. Basic differences can be papered over temporarily, but not in the long run. The United States, for instance, has accommodated several Indian interests in recent years. Some US analysts argue that this stems from a desire to protect larger US interests in the region: a non-cooperative India could have attempted to destabilise Pakistan, thus thwarting American objectives in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

The United States, having vindicated its stance on Afghanistan and having started improving relations with the Soviets, can once again disengage itself from South Asian politics. This decreased interest could make the US administration less responsive to Indian interests. Mindful of this possibility, the external affairs ministry has, for the past couple of years, been working to develop a lobby comprising members of the one million-strong Indian community in the United States. A small group of American officials and Congressmen, too, are being cultivated.

Nothing, however, can override basic differences. And this is one reason why Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing, despite the publicity surrounding it, could not achieve very much. Both India and China know that their relationship cannot be transformed fundamentally without the resolution of the border dispute. The Chinese government fanatically believes that the border problem can only be solved in accordance with the principle of 'mutual accommodation'. While the Chinese have not defined this principle in so many words, the Indian government has interpreted it narrowly to mean 'accommodation' of the Chinese claim on Aksai Chin in return for Chinese recognition of India's right to other 'disputed areas' such as Arunachal Pradesh. However, Rajiv Gandhi has, predictably, rejected the principle and declared that there will be no sell-out.



D Sengupta

Rajiv Gandhi at a SAARC meeting: the subcontinent is crucial to India's interests

Without a genuine *rapprochement* with China, India can never hope for real peace or freedom of action in the subcontinent. So far, India's Soviet connection—and the present Chinese leadership's pre-occupation with domestic economic concerns—has kept Chinese tempers in check. Economic stability and increased confidence in the Soviet Union could drastically alter the Chinese leadership's stance. China could, for instance, act through Pakistan, with which it has developed strong military ties, to indirectly harass India.

A section of Indian foreign policy-makers feel that Soviet help on the Chinese front cannot be taken for granted indefinitely, no matter how cogent the Soviet arguments on this score are. The new Soviet pre-occupation with the West and its more hard-headed, calculating approach to involvement with Third World countries cannot but be a dampener on the Indo-Soviet 'mutuality of interests'.

A small but significant event that raised eyebrows and generated much talk in New Delhi's diplomatic circuit occurred at the conclusion of Mikhail Gorbachev's last visit. In the joint communique signed by the two leaders, India wanted to add a paragraph on South Africa, apartheid and the regrettable role of the West. The Soviets refused point-blank; they were not prepared to bait the West at this stage. The Indians were thunderstruck. It proved that times were changing and India had better get down to working out its global and subcontinental equations. Failure would mean India being forced to make peace with its competitors. But that peace would be defeat and not the triumph India is seeking with its friendship moves.

Indrani Banerjee/*New Delhi*



Benazir Bhutto: Indian favourite

Indian lobbyists in the US are reported to have requested the Reagan administration to support democratisation in Pakistan and persuade the Pakistani army to agree to the accession of Benazir Bhutto

"We cannot give up the Kashmir issue"

Pakistan ambassador Niaz Naik on the issues that impair Indo-Pak relations

Sixty-two-year-old Niaz A. Naik, Pakistan's ambassador-designate to India, is a veteran diplomat. Until recently, he was Pakistan's ambassador in France, prior to which he served as foreign secretary for four years between 1982 and 1986. Naik was also permanent representative to the United Nations—in Geneva from 1971 to 1974 and in New York from 1978 to 1982. Besides, in a career spanning over 40 years, Naik has held various diplomatic assignments in Pakistani missions at Sydney, New York, Rangoon and Geneva.

Naik answers a wide range of questions on the current state of Indo-Pak relations:

SUNDAY: Benazir Bhutto swears by the Shimla Agreement while foreign minister Yaqub Khan recently said that the Pakistan government will continue to raise the Kashmir issue at the international level. Isn't this reneging on the Shimla Agreement?

Niaz Naik: I am glad you asked this question. Because, you see, to make a reference to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in the United Nations in the General Assembly session is something different from actually raising the issue with a view to having a discussion on it and then having a resolution adopted. Now, in the annual General Assembly, all the 150 foreign ministers and leaders speak on the general situation in the whole world according to their own perceptions. The Pakistan foreign minister also makes a policy statement in which he refers to several things such as the Palestine question, the Afghanistan issue and all the other trouble spots—Namibia, South Africa, Kampuchea.

The Kashmir issue is on the agenda of the United Nations to which reference is made. The important point is that this reference is made in the bilateral context. If you look at the statements of our foreign minister, Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, you'll see that he is always saying that both sides (India and Pakistan) are trying to improve bilateral relations and we hope that relations will further improve once the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is resolved in the spirit of the Shimla Agreement and on the basis of UN resolutions.

But if we were to really raise the actual issue, just as it used to be in previous years, that is you write a letter to the president of the Security Council, the situation would be different. In fact, since 1957-1958, there has been no debate as such on the Kashmir issue in the Security Council. A mere reference to the Kashmir question in the General Assembly is not against the Shimla Agreement. We are only speaking of the existence of a dispute between India and Pakistan which once resolved will lead to durable peace. After all, we cannot give up the Kashmir issue.

At a rally in Rawalpindi during the elections, Benazir Bhutto had said, "We are the people who pledged a 1,000-year war with India to save the honour of Pakistan while Zia's supporters lost Siachen to India." Siachen is another contentious issue. Are you optimistic of a breakthrough in the near future?

On the Siachen issue, I am optimistic. It is a very difficult terrain. So far, the majority of casualties and infirmities have been due to inclement weather rather than any fighting. To maintain human beings at that altitude, where not even a blade of grass grows, has been very expensive.

How much has it cost the Pakistan exchequer?

I don't know. I am sure your own military people can tell you. India's expenditure is more because it has a larger presence. The situation right now is that troops on both sides are in an eyeball-to-eyeball position. That has continued since the last few years. While it is relatively easier for human beings to go there in summer, in winter it is virtually impossible. That is why I think both the sides are trying to have a discussion. Neither can India throw out the Pakistani troops, nor can the Pakistani troops throw India out. The situation is a stalemate, but a stalemate resulting in unnecessary tension.

The defence secretaries of both the

Jagdish Yadav

Pakistan ambassador Niaz Naik: "We are starting a new chapter in bilateral relations"

countries have now met three times. The last time they met was when I just arrived in New Delhi as ambassador. I assure you that though the meeting did not produce any obvious results, there has perhaps been a meeting of minds on the basic framework for future discussions. Members of both the sides have declared and reaffirmed that they will resolve this issue through negotiations, which I think is a very hopeful sign. Secondly, such negotiations must be carried out in an atmosphere free of tension, where there is no possibility of shooting in the vicinity.

A congenial atmosphere has to be created...I think India and Pakistan are yet to find the right word. It would be 'disengagement' in normal terms. I don't even want to use the word 'withdrawal' because withdrawal has a very specific connotation. The right way of saying it is perhaps that the troops are 'redeployed'. By mutual consent, so that they are at a safe distance and don't start shooting at each other.

Further, I think neither side can call it a 'ceasefire'. The Pakistan side says that in addition to the military implications, the word 'ceasefire' has political and juridical connotations. Because 'ceasefire' would mean that Pakistan would have to give up its stand, which is that this whole area—Siachen glacier—has been under the administrative control of Pakistan. And the present line on which the troops are deployed would become the actual line of control. This has still to be demarcated in accordance with the 1972 agreement. Negotiations should not prejudge the respective positions of both sides. So 'ceasefire' is not the point, not even withdrawal, because the Pakistani and Indian press will go after our respective governments, saying, "Oh, you have compromised."

Now that we are talking about building a climate of confidence, are concrete steps being taken to dispel the popular perception in India about Pakistan's interference in the Punjab problem?

I think it was in 1982 that this issue was first raised. I had come to India as foreign secretary; Mr Rasgotra was your foreign secretary. The matter was officially raised and I had said, "Is it conceivable that a country like Pakistan, with three million Afghan refugees, Soviet troops posing a direct threat to our security and without a democratically elected government, will get involved in the internal affairs of India? It would have been suicidal. Even Bismarck at the height of his power considered a two-front situation with the Soviet Union and France unwise. Under these circumstances, it is a historical imperative and an imperative for our survival that Pakistan tries to defuse the situation on both the fronts." Some of the Indian papers are now writing that our policy was "deceitful". But the peace offensive was honest.



"We have told the Indian authorities to send officials without advance notice to inspect the so-called training centres for Sikh terrorists. That we would take them by helicopter to see whether they are training centres or old, derelict *gurdwaras*"

The local press here keeps saying that so many people are coming and going across the border. So many are being sheltered. The Indian authorites gave us a list of ten militants in the beginning and said that we should ban their entry into Pakistan. This was immediately done. And the list was regularly enlarged. I think from then, it became 20 and now it includes several hundred names. In addition, we, on our own, issued instructions to all the entry points not to allow any Sikhs into Pakistan.

But pilgrims can go?

Pilgrims go with the approval, concurrence and the selection of the Government of India on special occasions to visit Sikh holy places. Hindus also go on similar *jathas* but apart from that, no other Sikh can come into Pakistan.

What if he is a businessman?

No, we have issued very strict instructions to all our embassies abroad. We have told them not to give a visa to any member of the Sikh community.

Are you saying there are no Sikh tourists in Pakistan?

Yes, no Sikh tourists come. We have been accused of harbouring terrorists, giving them sanctuary, training, money and weapons. A couple of times, we have told the Indian authorities that you have indicated the so called training centres, you may send your officials without advance notice and we would take them to inspect the so-called training places, if necessary by helicopters, to see whether these are indeed training centres or old, derelict, crumbling *gurdwaras*. We did try to check but there was nothing.

***Did an Indian contingent go to Lahore to inspect the* gurdwaras?**

Yes, we have taken them.

The recent incident involving Brigadier Abbasi (Pak military attaché who was expelled on charges of bribing an official to get classified information) was unfortunate. You had gone on record to say he was manhandled and diplomatic formalities had been violated in dealing with the case. But Prime Minister Bhutto said she hoped this would not affect relations. Is this a closed chapter?

This particular incident, yes. But we still have not been able to find out why this happened at this particular juncture. Normal activities of all diplomatic missions are to remain informed of the developments in the country. It is not spying. Our defence attaché has not been involved in any such activity. This was a pre-planned trap. For the sake of argument, if Abbasi was becoming a little troublesome, then the friendly way, the normal diplomatic way, under such circumstances, is to quietly tell the ambassador to transfer the person. But what I am agonised about is the physical manhandling. He is a very senior officer, he is a brigadier about to become a general. I think the defence attaché is a highly respected figure in all the embassies. To physically beat him, abuse him, is not *insaniyat* (humanitarian). This is where the test of your friendly intentions comes.

I am still not clear as to why this happened at this particular time—when a democratically elected government was about to assume office in Pakistan. If he was being observed by the security agencies for long, as they claim, they could have done it months ago. Why wait for this inopportune time when we are starting a new chapter in our bilateral relations? Our response has been low-key. We did not ask your defence attaché to leave, but some inconsequential persons in the Karachi consulate. If we had acted the same way and immediately asked your defence attaché to leave, we would have escalated the tension.

Interviewed by Patralekha Chatterjee/ *New Delhi*



Waiting in the wings

Ever since MGR came to power, Karunanidhi has been in political limbo. The forthcoming election is his big chance

This is the last real chance and Muthuvel Karunanidhi fully well knows this. If he botches it, he will probably never come to power again in Tamil Nadu. For 11 whole years, while M.G. Ramachandran's sway over the people remained undiminished, Karunanidhi waited in the sidelines—and patiently. Assuring himself and his supporters that the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) could rule only as long as MGR was alive, that the party didn't have a cohesive ideology, that its appeal rested solely on the former filmstar's personal charisma. And that once MGR was no more, the AIADMK edifice would crumble and the Tamilians would revert to supporting the DMK as they had done between 1969 and 1977.

There was a logic to the argument and his followers believed him. A Malayali who married a Brahmin, MGR knew that his political appeal was better founded on his image as a screen hero (who always stood up for the rights of the downtrodden) rather than on Dravidian ideology. True, he decried the imposition of Hindi every now and then, indulged in some mild Brahmin-baiting, increased reservation quotas and went on a bit about the glories of Dravidian culture. But these were populist gestures and measures. At heart, MGR was something of a moderate, happy to be left alone to rule the state by forging an alliance with the ruling party at the Centre.

The first part of Karunanidhi's prediction has been vindicated. The AIADMK is indeed in disarray—having split into two factions, the first led by MGR's Brahmin wife, Janaki, and the other by his leading lady, the plump but comely Jayalalitha. Better still, the Congress(I) in the state, barring unforeseen developments, seems set to go it alone. This will make it a four-cornered contest when the state elections are held in January and Karunanidhi knows he stands to gain a great deal from this. After all, didn't the DMK get as much as 30 per cent of the popular vote in the Lok Sabha elections in Tamil Nadu as early as 1984? If this did not reflect in the number of seats the party won, then surely it was because of the electoral pact between the AIADMK and the Congress.

Now it remains for the wily politician to fulfil the second part of his prophecy. A failure could mean more than just a personal setback. The DMK is the lifeline of the Dravidian movement today. If the party loses, in what is an electoral situation tailor-made for victory, the movement itself is in for a serious reversal.

Karunanidhi will be looking to play the Dravidian card. He has done so time and again in the past, missing no opportunity to appeal to Tamil sentiment and chauvinism. Some of this has been pretty low stuff. For instance, he constantly attempted to make political capital by drawing attention to MGR's Malayali origins. He would argue that Malayalis were being favoured for state government jobs and that they were flourishing at the cost of Tamilians in the state. "There are two Keralas——one run by Karunakaran and one by MGR," he would say. This once led an AIADMK minister to counter that Karunanidhi's family hailed from Andhra Pradesh and not Tamil Nadu. Karunanidhi threatened to fast unto death if the minister could prove his claim.

This kind of thing may not have made a dent in MGR's popularity, but it never failed to get him into the press. About four years ago he allowed himself to be arrested after ignoring three court summons in a case that implicated him in the "theft and leakage" of a commission report. Once again, this meant the front pages. As any pressman in Tamil Nadu will corroborate, Karunanidhi makes very good copy. He can be devilishly clever and extremely funny in his public speeches and his interviews always have at least a couple of memorable quotes.

He is a man who will do anything for a bit of political mileage. Last year, he invited prosecution by burning copies of an Article of the Constitution (which dealt with language policy). And, lately, took to embarrassing MGR by charging him with ignoring the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka. He has savaged the Indo-Sri Lanka accord ("India's signing the agreement is as clownish as the registrar of marriages signing in place of the bridegroom when a couple come to register their marriage") and begun supporting the militant LTTE (after describing its leader as a "fascist" last year).

In a sense, it was his reputation as a demagogue and an orator that brought him to power. Karunanidhi was not even around when the DMK was founded as a breakaway group from the DK. But his populist appeal and his clever rhetoric led him to overshadow senior leaders and when the DMK was voted to power in 1969, he teamed up with MGR to capture the state government.

MGR's decision to strike out on his own has left Karunanidhi in something of a political limbo since 1977. When the former was ailing in a New York hospital from an illness which finally killed him, Karunanidhi had said: "I want MGR to recover fast. Without him there is no spice in electioneering. I have no rival to cross swords with." Gracious words, but Karunanidhi must be happy that his rival is out of the way. For now, he has a chance to occupy the centrestage of Tamil Nadu politics—a place he believes is rightfully his ◻

Karunanidhi has missed no opportunity to appeal to Tamil sentiment and chauvinism. Some of this has been pretty low stuff

The Kirloskar Electric Challenge Series

Everybody, well almost everybody, knows that Kirloskar Electric makes a range and variety of DC motors that's virtually unparalleled in the country.

But did you know that Kirloskar Electric designed and developed a replacement for one of the world's finest and most proven DC traction motors–with hardly any specs–for the first time in India?

There are over 200 superb American shunting locomotives working in the country, moving materials in steel and cement plants and generating stations These traction motors had worked continually for more than 12 years without a hitch, many a time under abuse conditions After such remarkable service, they were running into problems

The Rourkela Steel Plant asked us to develop DC traction motors as replacements The client's instructions were short "Your motors must perform like the originals. And they must be mechanically and electrically interchangeable" There was just one catch There were hardly any specs barring the tractive effort versus the speed curve of the locomotive

Would we be able to get inside the minds of the original designers and crack the secret code and specs of the motor? And even if we did, could we attain the technological level of the Americans? And could we improvise and invent since we couldn't possibly have access to the materials they used?

Hardly anyone in the industry was willing to take on the job Were we then rushing in where angels fear to tread? Quite likely. But, we decided, nothing ventured, nothing gained We said yes

The whole essence of import substitution is a strong and experienced engineering team with the patience and the commitment to work for years till it designs and manufactures an identical replacement for the original Plus one other critical factor. the total involvement and continuous guidance of the customer We were lucky We had both

Our design engineers along with the Rourkela experts, spent days on site observing and logging the original motor's performance, capabilities, duty cycle loadings, the frequency and duration of the currents drawn, etc They realized that irrespective of the nominal ratings assigned to these motors, they had to frequently deliver thrice the power and torque expected



For three months we studied the motor in our factory We took it apart, grasped its design philosophy, then finalized kilowatt, torque, speed and overload parameters. We got down to the drawing board The designing objective was to pack as much power as possible into a small frame and to maintain sufficient reserves to meet the demands of traction duty

Within 8 months, we delivered the prototype motors They were almost identical with the original in performance In fact, the identity was so close, not only could the motors be interchanged but the entire rotors and stators could also be interchanged All ten motors have now been delivered to the Rourkela plant and are working extremely well

What, you may well ask, makes us take on such challenging jobs that others won't touch? The truth is standard motors — small, medium and large — are our bread and butter We make them with an enormous amount of care because our livelihood depends on them. But it's the really tough jobs that give us our kicks We don't just thrive on them, we need them to feel alive What we are doing is developing technological muscle and invaluable expertise and experience. It saves the country crores in foreign exchange And it does wonders to our self-confidence and the confidence our customers have in us They know that when nobody else can do the job, Kirloskar Electric will.

Kirloskar **KIRLOSKAR ELECTRIC COMPANY LTD**

Regd Office. Industrial Suburb, Rajajinagar, Bangalore 560 010.

When nobody else can do the job, Kirloskar Electric will.

Prabha/KEC/26/88

GUEST COLUMN

UDAYAN SHARMA

The Raja's many faces

Will the real V.P. Singh stand up?

V.P. Singh always keeps his political options open. Even in July 1987, when popular perception was that the Raja was determined to uproot the 'evil' Rajiv Gandhi regime, the former ruler of Manda was secretly parleying with PMO secretary Gopi Arora and Union minister Rajesh Pilot with the intent of rejoining the Cabinet. (A fact known only to a few people in Delhi.) At a meeting held in his residence, the Raja was told by Pilot that Rajiv wanted to restore him to grace.

The Raja was willing to be taken back into Rajiv's fold, but conditionally—he had to be made home minister and given charge of the Congress(I) campaign in the Haryana byelections. Pilot in turn wanted the assurance that Singh, for his part, would declare that Rajiv was his leader. No problem, said the Raja: "I am not angry with Rajiv Gandhi. He is, no doubt, my leader."

The negotiations concluded, Pilot was on his way out, when he discovered, to his utter surprise, that the Raja was striking political bargains with others, too. For entering Singh's house as he was leaving was dissident Congressman Ashoke Sen. Mistaking Pilot for another dissident, Arif Mohammad Khan (there is an uncanny resemblance between the two), Sen confided: "Arif I have spoken to Gianji." He then went on to disclose the strategy of the Raja's camp to a horrified Pilot. Says Pilot now: "After listening to Ashoke Sen, I was convinced that Vishwanath was playing a double game."

Anyhow, in the end, Singh acknowledged Rajiv as his leader as he had promised. And that very night, one of the Raja's minions phoned Delhi from Kanpur reminding those in power that the Raja had kept his part of the bargain and now it was their turn to deliver. That is, make Singh the home minister in the central Cabinet. But the way things worked out, all that Singh succeeded in becoming is one of the many leaders of an increasingly fractious Opposition.

What is particularly galling is the Raja's amazing lack of consistency and the brazen ease with which he carries it off. Take his stance on Bofors, for instance. When Singh had first resigned as defence minister, he had risen up in Parliament to give Rajiv Gandhi a clean chit on the Bofors deal. But somewhere along the line, Rajiv became the villain of the piece and the Raja never tired of making out that the purchase of the Swedish howitzer was nothing short of a national disgrace. His supporters took particular relish in taunting Rajiv with the slogan: "Mr Clean, Mr Clean, *kyon gandi hai top machine*?" (Mr Clean, why is the gun of such poor quality?) No effort was spared to convince the country that the Bofors deal had endangered the security of the nation.

Then came the Bofors trials, held in the deserts of Rajasthan, for the benefit of the doubting Thomases in the ranks of



V.P. Singh: playing both sides with adroitness



Rajiv Gandhi: was willing to take the Raja back



V.P. Singh at a Jan Morcha meeting: shifting stand

the Opposition. Convinced that it was a good weapon, they concluded that the gun was the best the army could have purchased. A consensus that, obviously, did not please Singh. After this reverse, all one heard from the Raja, for a while, on the Bofors issue was a stony silence.

When the silence was finally broken, all that was revealed was the former minister's confusion. He didn't quite seem to be able to distinguish between Svenska and Lotus, for one. And surely, when he made those wild charges in Patna—that the Bofors payments had gone into Rajiv Gandhi's Swiss bank account—the Raja should have known that the documents he was referring to had already appeared in *The Hindu*. However, he made out as if he had the scoop of the century. Some even believed him, if only for a while. Once his bluff was called, all he did was to absent himself from Parliament, instead of apologising for the damage he had caused to the Prime Minister's reputation.

But then the Raja's politics has always been based on deceit and hypocrisy. His statements after the Moradabad killings, the Maya Tyagi rape case and the massacre of Harijans in Deoli and Sadhupur are sufficient to expose him. Or take the instance when V.P. Singh had just walked out of Rajiv Gandhi's government, a look of injured innocence about him. He had made out that he intended resigning from the Rajya Sabha, only to backtrack quickly. Careful to maintain his political image, he explained: "If we resign, then no one will be able to keep dissent alive in the Congress Party. The tyranny of the Anti-Defection Bill will be perpetuated." So, the Raja has stayed put in the Rajya Sabha.

His shifting stand on the Jan Morcha, too, shows up his opportunism. When V.P. Singh walked out of the Congress, he needed a platform to take on the might of the Rajiv Gandhi government. So, he formed the Jan Morcha. Initially, he was saying that the Jan Morcha might be converted into a political party, or a wing of some political party. But once the idea of the Samajwadi Janata Dal (SJD) was mooted, the Raja decided, in his wisdom, that the politicians in the Jan Morcha would join the SJD and the non-political types would stay put in the Morcha. Then came the declaration that those who remained in the Morcha would not get a party ticket to contest elections. Singh's final pronouncement on this subject was that everyone in the Jan Morcha had to join the Janata Dal and that the Morcha stood dissolved. But, of course, by then the Raja had no further use for the Jan Morcha or men like Ram Dhan, who chose to retain membership in it.

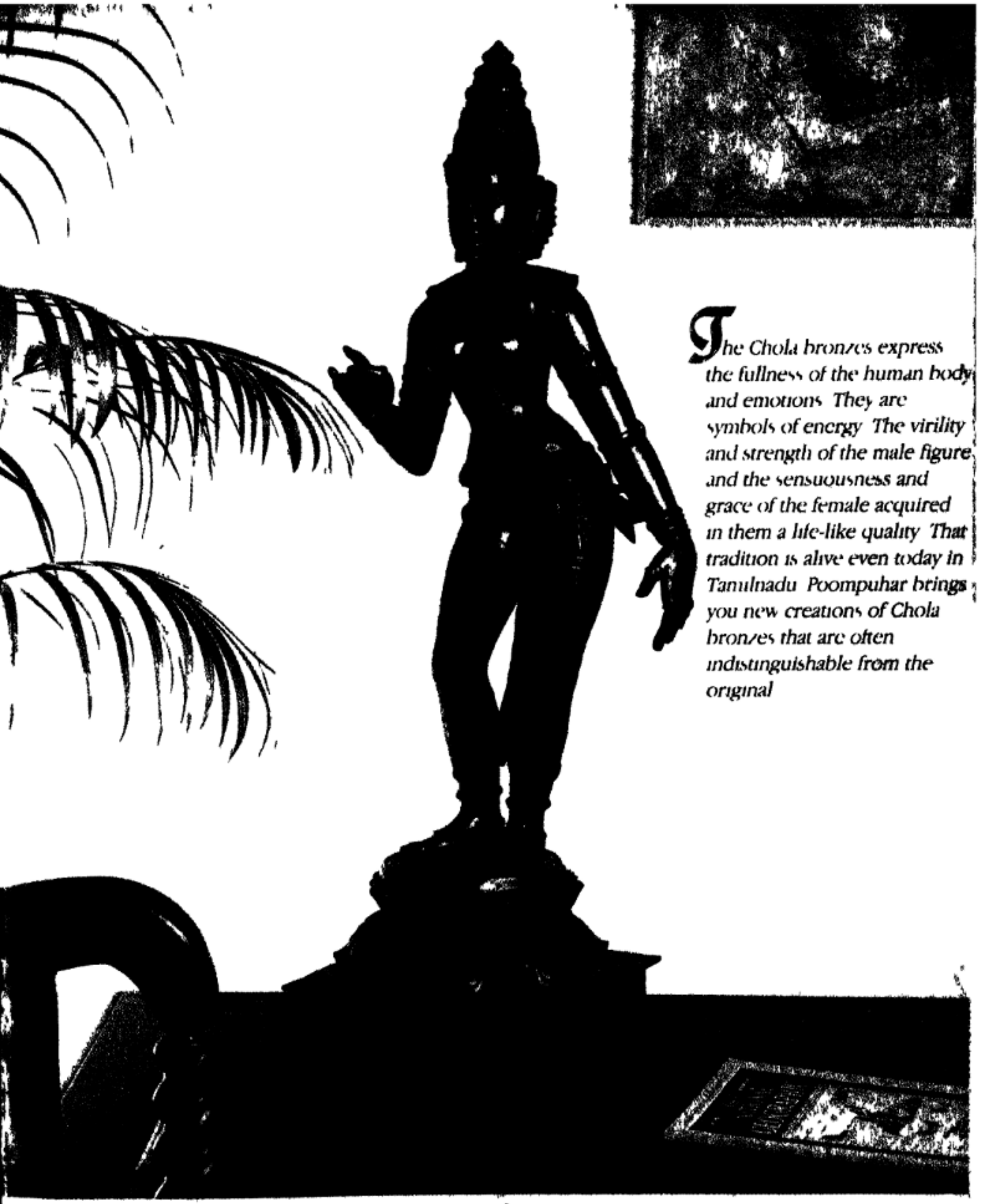
Surely when V.P. Singh charged that the Bofors payments had gone into Rajiv's Swiss bank account, he should have known that the documents he was referring to had already appeared in *The Hindu*. But he made out that he had the scoop of the century

But nowhere does Singh's duplicity show up more than in his refusal to take an unequivocal stand on the communal issue. Sometimes he seeks to become the hero of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, accepting the Rajrishi title in Banaras, amid stirring shouts of *Har Har Mahadev*. At other moments, he is the champion of Muslim rights, travelling to Meerut, accompanied by a party of Urdu journalists, to express sympathy for the victims of Hindu communalism. Even in his speeches he takes care to ensure that he displeases no one, content to mouth platitudes: "Children of the same mother have common blood," and much more in the same vein.

If Singh represents anything in Indian politics, it is the feudal element---which has been trying to destroy India's nascent democracy and capture power for itself. In 1947, these elements were defeated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and in 1969 by Mrs Gandhi (with help from the socialists). Now the Raja of Manda has assumed their leadership and the outcome of his battle against Rajiv Gandhi, will prove decisive in determining the future of the Indian republic.

Particularly depressing is the fact that the Raja pays no attention to the issues which really plague the nation—Punjab, rising communalism, unemployment and the danger to national integrity from the various secessionist forces within the country. But then V.P. Singh has no answers to these problems. All he can do is criticise the country's leadership whenever it achieves anything of any consequence—his Patna allegations immediately followed the successful Indian Army action in the Maldives.

In fact, V.P. Singh, unwittingly or otherwise, has become a tool of the CIA. The American agency strives to unseat democratically elected governments in Third World countries, by drumming up false charges against them. The idea is obviously to replace them with governments that are pliable and weak. The CIA would like this to happen in India, too, and the Raja's machinations are only aiding the agency in its nefarious designs. ■



The Chola bronzes express the fullness of the human body and emotions. They are symbols of energy. The virility and strength of the male figure and the sensuousness and grace of the female acquired in them a life-like quality. That tradition is alive even today in Tamilnadu. Poompuhar brings you new creations of Chola bronzes that are often indistinguishable from the original

Poompuhar

The Tamilnadu Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd.
(A Government of Tamilnadu undertaking)

818, Anna Salai, Madras 600 002. Ph: 832724 ■ 104/105, Brigade Road, Bangalore 560 001. Ph: 576582 ■ Shops 21 & 22, First Floor, CIT Shopping Complex, Dakshinapan, 2, Gariahat Road, Calcutta 700 068. Ph. 420028 ■ C-1, State Emporia Complex, Baba Kharak Singh Marg, New Delhi 110 001. Ph: 343913.

Lost and found

The rich heritage of Murshidabad rediscovered

Three times the capital of Bengal, Murshidabad—the city and district—today lives on reflected glory, its glorious past relegated to the pages of history books. To most people, Murshidabad is associated with the Battle of Plassey, the unfortunate Siraj-ud-Daulah, Mir Jafar, Lord Clive, Warren Hastings and Maharaja Nanda Kumar. Not many know that the district wielded historical and political importance for centuries before that.

One of the earliest chroniclers, the seventh-century Chinese traveller Oh Yuan Chwang, referred to Murshidabad's oldest archaeological sites in glowing terms: "The people are very rich and patrons of learning," he said.

The illustrious, King Sasanka, the successive rulers of the Pala and the Sena dynasties, as well as Hussain Shah, all chose to house their capital in Murshidabad. Archaeologists have discovered a treasure trove of artefacts— seals, coins, terracotta bricks, sections of temples, stone carvings, bronze images—while monuments of the latterday Nawabi era dot the landscape, though most of them are in various stages of decay.



Courtesy Bangiya Sahitya Parishad

Bronze Vishnu, circa 10th—11th century



State Archaeological Museum, Calcutta

Head of a *devata*, Karna Suvarna, Gupta period

Neglected badly too are the crafts of the area, once renowned all over the world. French chroniclers of the 16th century record that Cossim Bazar sold 22,000 *gat* (1 *gat*=100 pounds) of textile abroad. Also, according to this account, ivory carvings of that district had acquired international fame.



Baluchari sari, 19th century

The market for silk products has flourished, thanks to government intervention—but elsewhere the picture is dismal. Hamstrung by government import-export regulations and directives regarding procurement of ivory, many craftsmen have turned to other media like *shola* and sandalwood. Renowned all over the country for its purity and finish *kansa* (bell metal) from Khagra, which once occupied a pride of place in all households rich and poor, is about to disappear. Of the 150 *kansari*



State Archaeological Museum Calcutta

Lady in green veil, miniature painting on ivory, 19th century

Archaeologists have discovered a treasure trove of artefacts—seals, coins, terracotta bricks, sections of temples, stone carvings, bronze images



State Archaeological Museum Calcutta

***Chaitanya sadabhuja*, accompanied by King Pratap of Orissa, Noshipur school of painting, 18th century**



Ashutosh Museum Calcutta

households in Khagra, only one remains. The rest have become modern-day traders—vegetable vendors or *paanwallahs*.

To focus attention on the rich heritage of the district and revitalise the crafts of the area, the Murshidabad regional chapter of the Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) organised a three-day historical-cum-crafts fair in Krishnanath Collegiate School in Behrampore from 25 to 27 November. On display were over 150 exhibits—antiquities collected from families all over the district and from the collection of several Murshidabad-based families now living in Calcutta. The first comprehensive display of Murshidabad antiquities under one roof, the exhibition also included photographic displays of antiquities housed in several institutions—the Victoria Memorial and the Ashutosh Museum in Calcutta, the State Archaeological Museum, the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, and the Hazarduari Museum, Murshidabad.

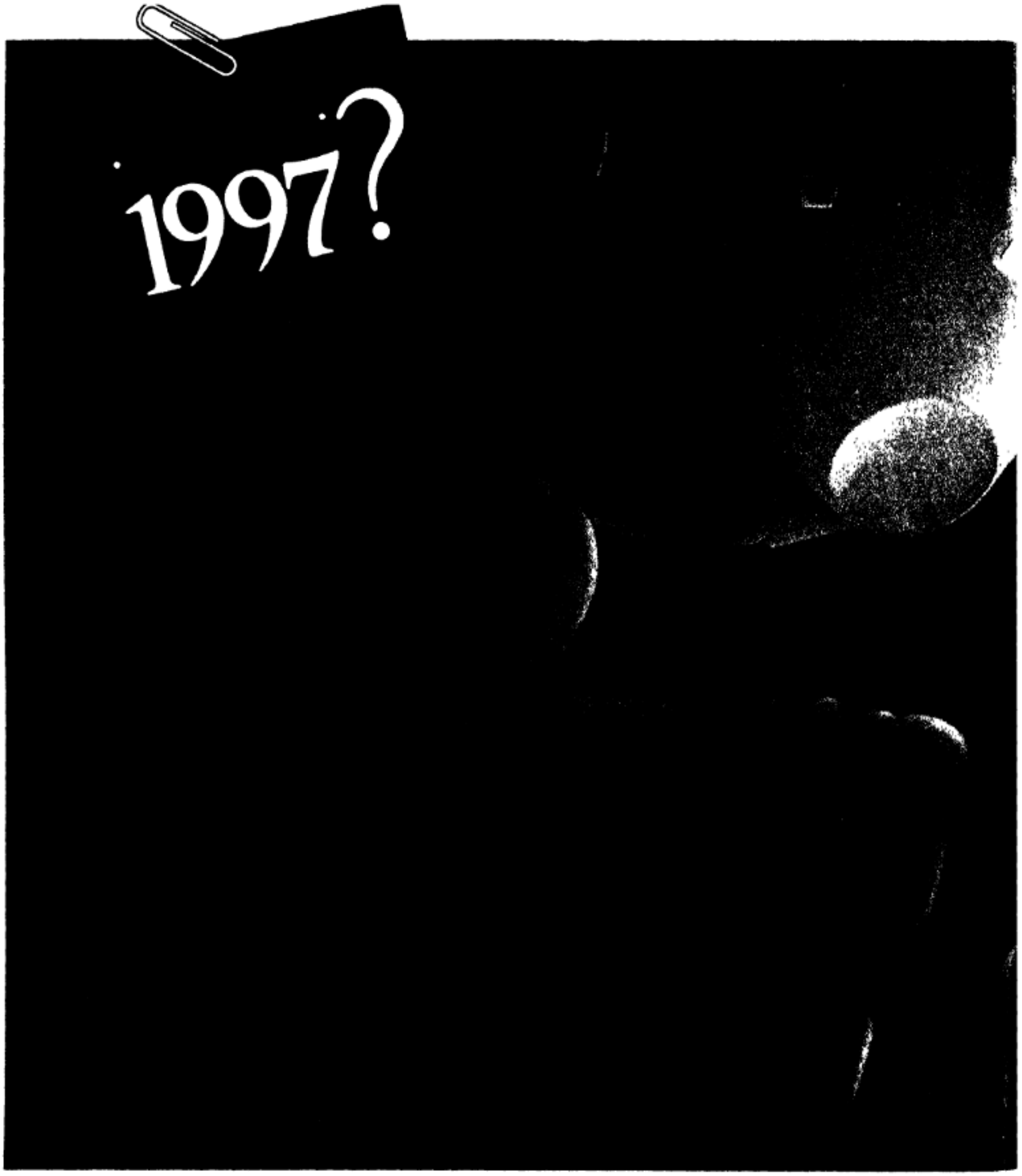
On display were several unique exhibits—a *namabali* in Baluchari design, probably the only one of its kind available in the country today, Maharaja Nanda Kumar's embroidered *pashmina* shawl, exquisite *bidri* hookah bases (the craft has subsequently disappeared), a woven ivory fan with silver strips, old brass utensils, *paan daans* typical of the Mughal era.

Debjani Sinha



Courtesy Gouna Shankar Roy

Maharaja Nanda Kumar's embroidered *pashmina* shawl



INTRODUCING 1997. AND FACES

That question mark is hope. Hope for mothers and babies. And, of course, for clean air to be still around in 1997. So none of us would need a gas mask to breathe through.

Today, clean air is vanishing fast in our cities. And every badly maintained fuel driven vehicle spewing toxic matter is hastening its sad exit. And our lack of concern does not lighten our burden of guilt.

It's certainly true that we can't do without our vehicles. But it's certainly not true that we can't take better care of our vehicles. Or, control their toxic emission level.

To help you and clean air, MICO is organising Emission Checks in the following cities. For your vehicle. Free. Look



IN LOVE ?

up your local newspaper for dates and venues. And drive in. To help bring back clean air.

FREE EMISSION CHECKS at Ahmedabad, Bhubaneshwar, Calcutta, Chandigarh, Coimbatore, Delhi, Ernakulam, Indore, Jaipur, Kanpur, Lucknow, Madurai, Nagpur, Patna, Pune and Secunderabad.

Bring Back Clean Air

MICO

TOURISM

Rolling out the carpet

The mood is upbeat in the hotel and travel trade with the government finally taking a close look at the tourism policy



A view of the Kovalam beach, seaside delight

Santosh Dutta

While addressing a conference of international hoteliers in New Delhi in October, minister of state for tourism Shivraj Patil spoke about how the travel industry should reach out to the soul of the tourist. From all accounts, the government too is doing some soul-searching of its own to solve the problems that have plagued this industry mainly the step-motherly treatment it has received since Independence

Besides taking the private industry into confidence for the first time – which includes regular meetings with the department of tourism and occasionally with the cabinet secretariat—recent policy decisions have certainly boosted the morale of this money-spinning industry. Says Inder Sharma, chairman of the New Delhi based Sita Travels: "It makes us feel tourism has finally come of age in India."

Critics say that this turnaround in government policy has resulted from a shortage of foreign exchange earnings and the realisation that tourism---with its net hard currency income of almost Rs 1900 crores at the end of the last financial year, the highest among all industries —can bridge this gap. By the end of the next decade, this figure could go up to Rs 5,000 crores annually. Says an industry executive who declines to be identified: "It's also being realised that tourism can develop with a negligible foreign exchange input, if compared to earnings. But whatever the reason, it's a good trend."

A look at recent developments help summarise this feeling of optimism within the industry. In the last nine months, a permanent sub-committee for tourism has been constituted within the ministry to monitor the working of the government's tourism policy as well as the working of the industry as a whole. Luxury coaches and cars can now be imported by the industry to cater to the fussy tourist Foreign collaboration in the hotel industry is now permitted; a foreign partner can even hold majority shareholding in an Indian venture and repatriate profits easily. Indian hoteliers now pay a lower rate of interest on term loans and enjoy tax concessions. And, to go by Patil's statement in the Lok Sabha on 5 December, foreign charter flights, besides Goa, can operate to Varanasi, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, Ahmedabad and even Bhubaneswar.

In fact, the government is now doing what it ought to have done from the

A Goa beach: a haven for tourists



N Prasad

start: get going. Foreign tourist arrivals crossed the one million mark for the first time in 1986. The targeted growth is to hit the 2.5 to 3 million mark by the end of the century. A beginning has already been made towards that end, but what lies ahead is a lot of hard thinking and



Varanasi Hotel: a view of tradition

Avnish Pasricha

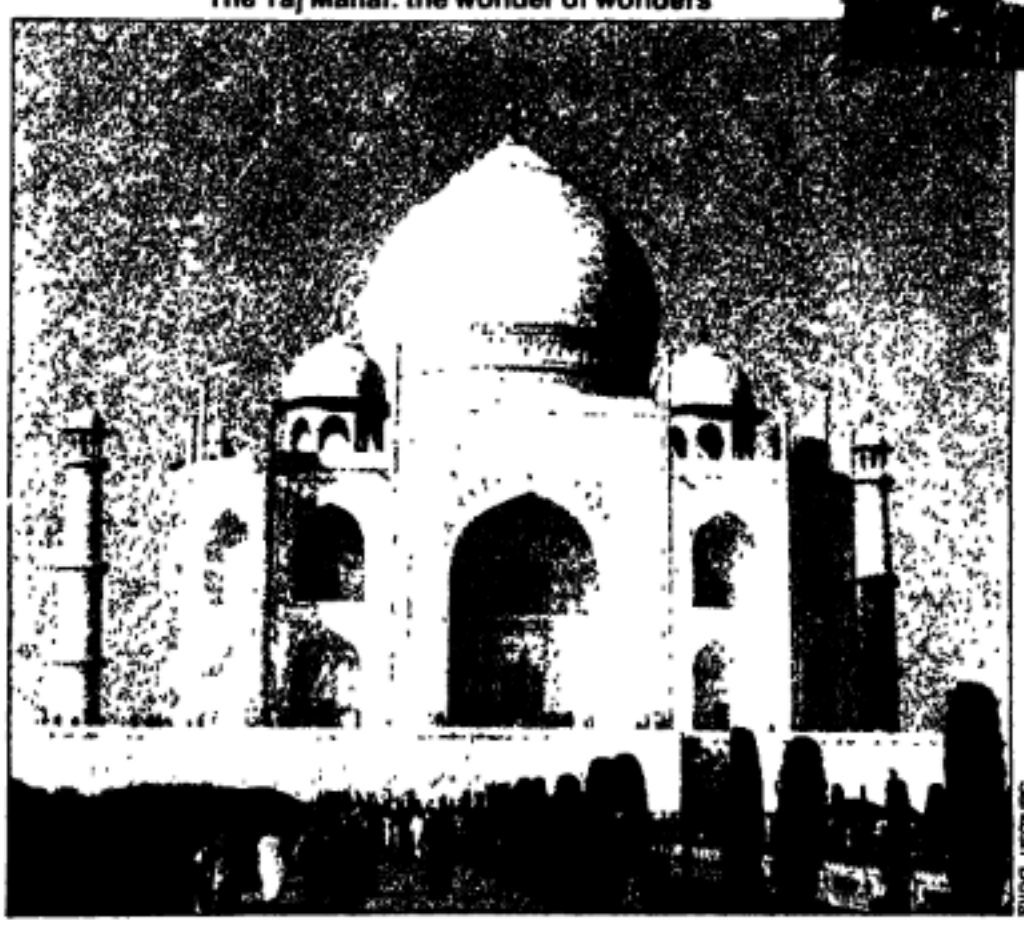
even harder work.

India already has a number of things going for it—unmatched mountain panoramas, superb beachfronts and resorts, wildlife sanctuaries and enough culture to overload any tourist's perceptions. Says R.K. Lakshman, chairman and managing director of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC): "The key elements are the people, the atmosphere, the rich and varied colours. In fact, India is quite unusual compared to conventional tourist destinations in the developed part of the world."

However, hand in hand with scenic splendour and vibrant culture are pitfalls in organisation which can—and often does—cloud India's image in the mind of the tourist. There are huge gaps in the tourism infrastructure, and often a lag between plans and their implementation.

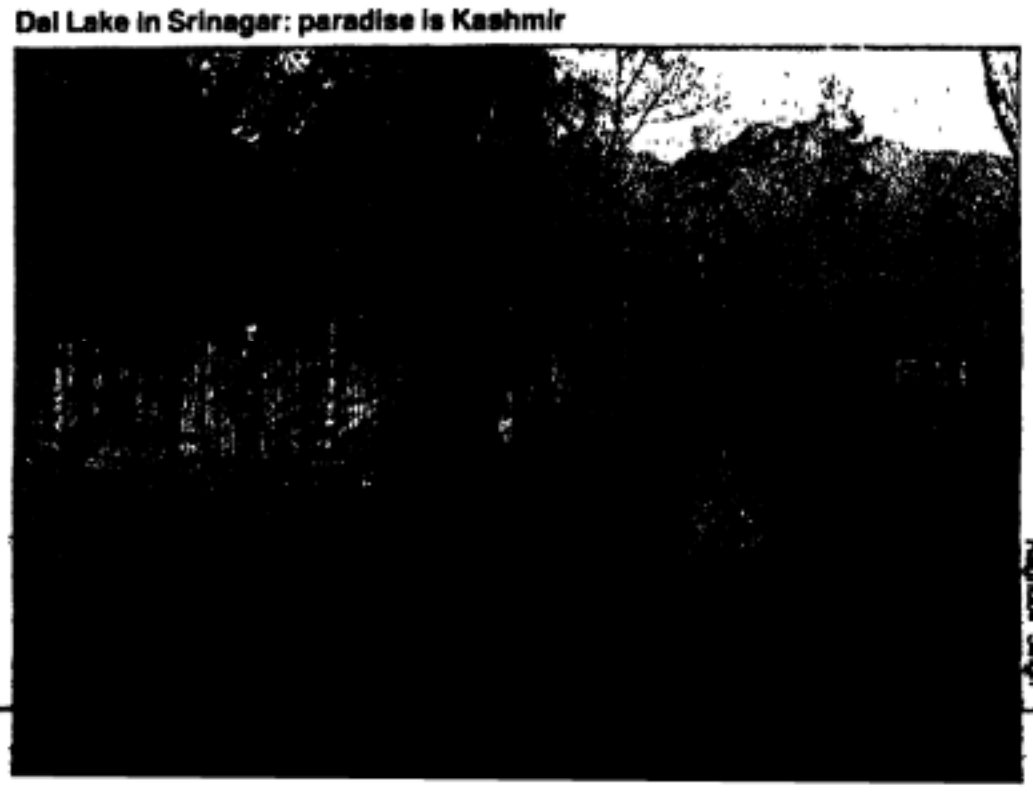
For example, says Rabindra Seth, an editor for a host of travel-trade publications in New Delhi: "You can't land 500 passengers in Goa one day and find there aren't any rooms available. So charter flights to Goa are limited." During the peak tourist season in winter, rooms just aren't available in most destinations, be it at the Kovalam beach, Jaipur, Varanasi or New Delhi. This would necessitate more quality hotel rooms, especially in places which can now receive charter flights.

In Goa, say industry executives, hotel rooms are of a high standard, but the airport is shoddy. In the case of Kovalam, the beach resorts are ideal but the road leading to it from Trivandrum city winds through very crowded parts of the town. If there was a direct road link just for Kovalam, tourists—both foreign and domestic—would have easier access to the resort. The plan for a direct road link has been gathering dust for the past 17 years. Sita Travel's Sharma comments on another aspect of imbalances: "The customer isn't concerned that Indian Airlines doesn't have enough planes to ensure seats for everyone. He's concerned with the fact that I decided to visit this country but didn't get my reservations once I reached India." He adds: "On the one hand - and rightly so—we are drumming up promotion abroad, yet have made little effort to ensure a hassle-free trip for the tourist."



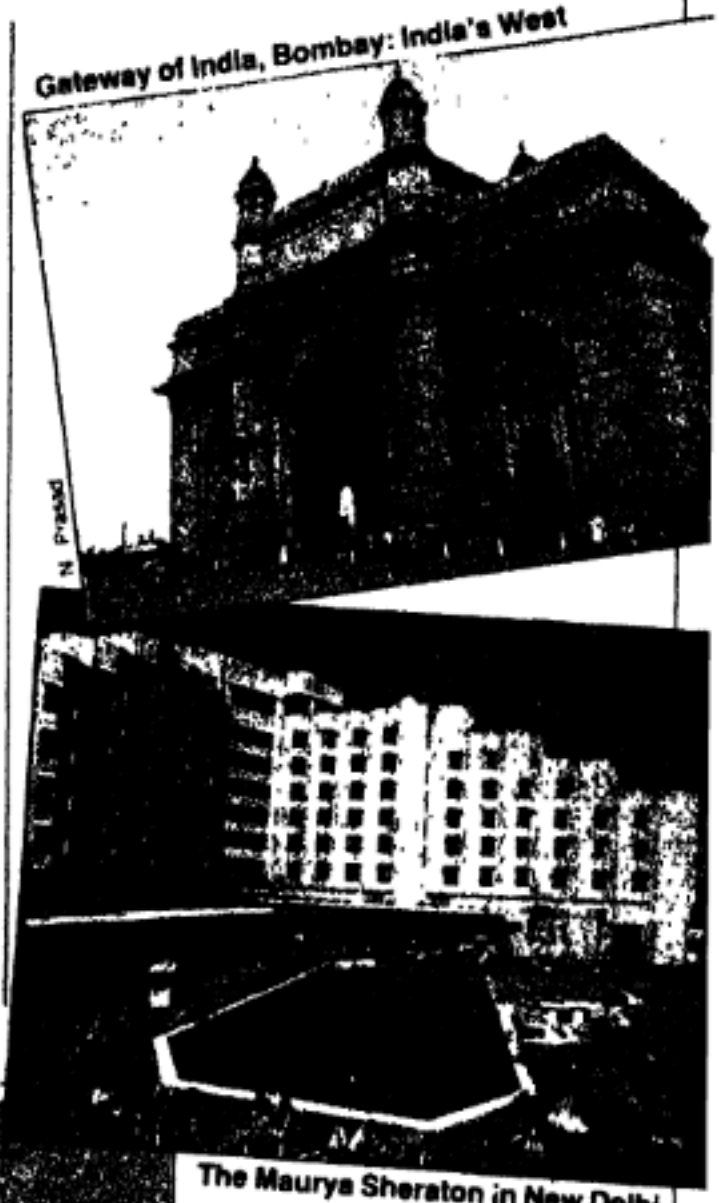
The Taj Mahal: the wonder of wonders

Santosh Dutta



Dal Lake in Srinagar: paradise is Kashmir

Raghubir Singh



Gateway of India, Bombay: India's West

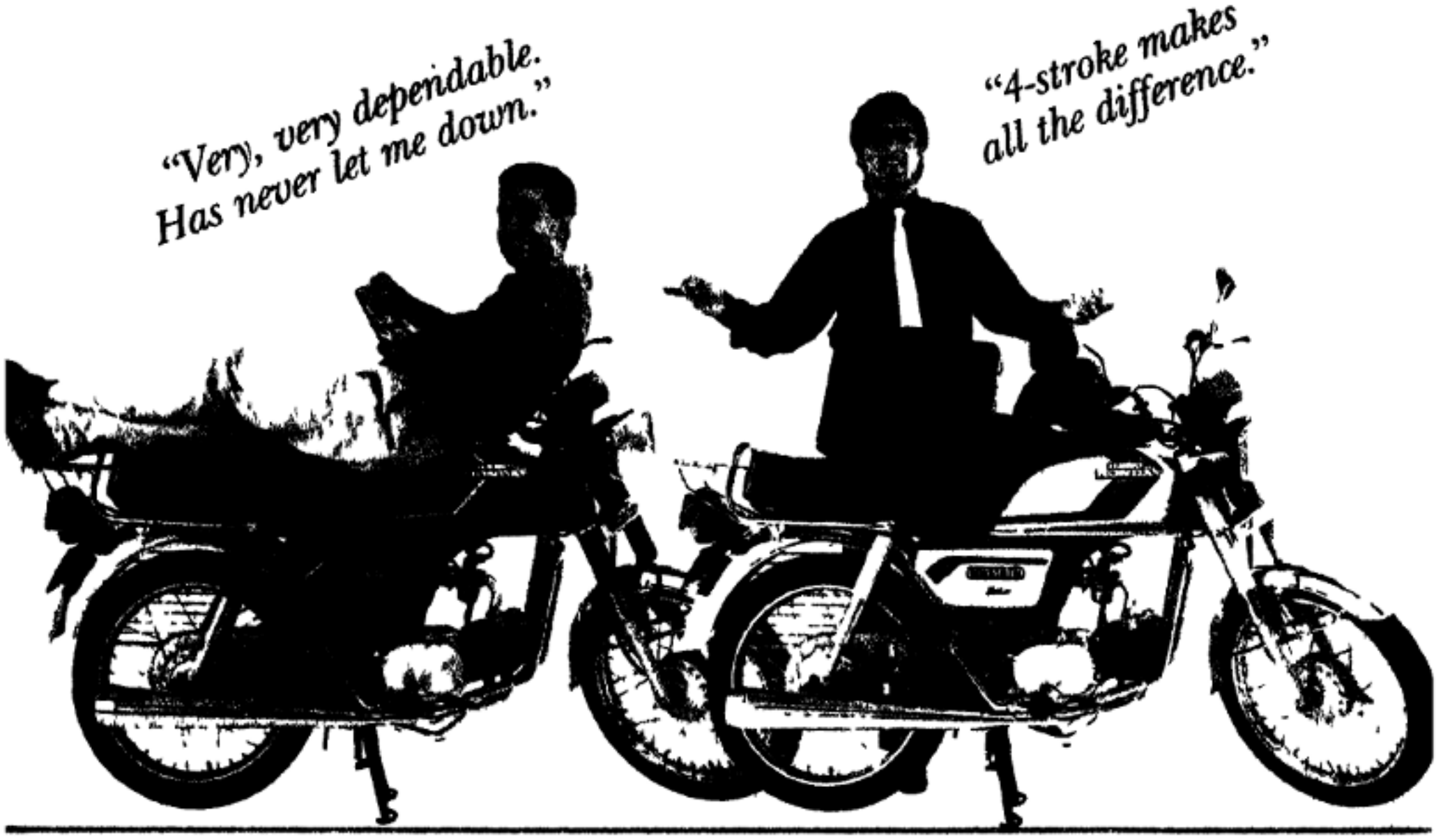
N. Prasad

The Maurya Sheraton in New Delhi

Hand in hand with scenic splendour and vibrant culture are pitfalls in organisation which can cloud India's image in the mind of the tourist

You can't stop a man on a Hero Honda.

From talking.



When we launched the Hero Honda CD 100 in 1985, we knew it was a good thing. A fact confirmed by the owners.

Some are moved by the economy (80 km/litre*). Some by the easy maintenance. Others by the name of Honda. And all exult in the riding pleasure of India's only 4-stroke 100 cc bike. Honda engineering— Hero's choice.

In all, 200,000 happy owners, each with his own reason for feeling good. To all of you, we can say one thing. You've got a good thing going.

All said and done...

You've got a Good thing Going!

HERO

Selling a land of diverse charms

The hardselling of India has begun, finally. Thirty-eight years after India set up its first tourism office, the department of tourism has woken up to the necessity of marketing as a crucial aspect of its business. It's no longer a case of taking a tourist's interest in travelling to India for granted, but one of drumming into his head that it's among the best destinations he could pick on while making his plans.

The tourism department has increased its promotional budget four-fold. The prospective tourist is now being wooed by advertising in magazines and even television in the West; earlier, it was limited to the smaller reach of travel-trade publications. Instead of a single campaign for the whole world, separate campaigns are being launched, aimed specifically at the UK, France, Germany, the United States, as well as the newly emerging markets—Japan, West Asia, Eastern Europe, Soviet Union and Australia. Also, in an unprecedented move, the private industry is being increasingly consulted by the government to provide suggestions on how to effectively sell the product: India.



Rabindra Seth: tourism marketing

On the surface, it's simple. Find out where the tourists come from, blitz them with advertising, and offer them a good deal and incentive to visit India.

However, things haven't quite worked out that way. Says Rabindra Seth, a long-time industry executive and an editor with Cross Section Publications, a major travel-trade publishing company: "India's tourism marketing is like the curate's egg. It's only good in parts."

The problem is: how exactly should India be sold? Should it continue to invade the world's perception as a land of snake charmers, beggars and erotic sculptures? Or should it be projected as a land of bright sunshine, palm fringed beaches, lofty peaks and ski slopes? Should India emphasise specific destinations within the country or should the whole country be served up on the platter?

Evidently, India prefers the mass tourism approach. The idea is to provide something for everyone, be it cultural tourism — still the biggest draw—trekking and white-water rafting. Says Seth: "This is the only key for the future. If tourism trends change, we will always have something to fall back on. It's a surety."

Even within India—although marketing awareness is on the upswing—approaches are lopsided, if not downright ignorant. Possibly the only exception is the Jammu and Kashmir department of tourism, which has always led the pack with its innovative marketing approach and promotional activities. The department's 'Four Seasons' campaign to highlight Jammu and Kashmir as a year-round destination rather than just a summertime refuge has paid off handsomely. This led to a campaign with prominent personalities making their pitch for the state. Realising the value of promotion, the state department has continuously upped its budget for this purpose. It now spends Rs two crores a year compared to Rs five lakhs a decade ago.



Help may be on the way. In May this year, the Planning Commission's tourism committee published a report which attempted to identify problem areas and suggest solutions. The report recommends a 'country marketing plan' in important markets by "pooling resources of various public and private agencies instead of independent and disjointed efforts presently undertaken by these organisations, so as to project a better image of the country which would yield an abundant fall-out for tourism growth and also be an advantage to trade and commerce. It also suggests an "overhaul" and "strengthening" of the department's overseas offices, and to post officers there with a "strong marketing orientation."

The report also comes down fairly heavily on other lacunae in the current approach. "Till recently," it says, "tourism promotion in India consisted mainly of dissemination of tourist information through distribution of literature in response to inquiries. Lately, a slightly more professional approach has been adopted but certainly not at the level of our competitors. After all, it has to be realised that we are in a highly competitive situation with each country wanting a bigger share of the tourism cake."

So, the light appears to have dawned. All that remains to be seen is if the government continues with the momentum, rectifies its shortcomings, and in the end, the world is lured with the bait and makes a beeline for India.

Sometimes, policies border on the ludicrous. Video cameras are not permitted in complexes which house historical monuments. In this video age, if tourists were allowed to use a video camera, then he could take his memories back home to show his friends and relatives. In turn, they may be motivated to travel to India and view its marvels. Again, if a tourist wishes to carry a tripod for his camera into a complex, he has to obtain permission from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) office in New Delhi. Therefore, if the tourist lands in Bombay, Madras or Calcutta, then he has to travel all the way to New Delhi if he wishes to use a tripod. Ingenuity and common sense sometimes win over these rules: last year, a Canadian tourist —among thousands of others, surely— received permission to photograph the Khajuraho temples provided he did so from afar. He simply used a zoom lens to photograph

what the ASI thought it could prevent him from doing - the erotic sculptures on the temple walls

In a more serious vein, the department of tourism, at least on paper, knows what it has to do. A report by the Planning Commission's tourism committee more or less chalks out a course of action for meeting the country's needs in this area

The suggestions contained in the report are endless. It suggests that the strategy to develop tourism should be based on "the principle of low-cost economy, higher levels of productivity, improvement in the efficiency of infrastructure and promoting competition". It also suggests developing selected tourist circuits instead of spreading a lot of funds over the whole country, to develop further from "traditional" sightseeing and cultural tours into trekking, winter sports and wildlife tourism in order to "attract more tourists and lengthen their stay in the country". The report goes on to discuss the need to double the present capacity of hotel rooms to one lakh by the year 2000 AD, and to set up a tourism finance corpora

The tourism committee suggests promoting selected tourist circuits, and moving away from traditional sightseeing into trekking, winter sports and wildlife tourism

tion with an initial equity base of Rs 100 crores to help out entrepreneurs in this sector. It mentions the need for setting up more institutions to churn out ever increasing numbers of trained cooks, airline ticketing agents and hotel receptionists.

Counsels Sita's Sharma: "Make up your mind about what you want from tourism," adding, "there's only one yardstick to judge the success or failure of tourism.the economic benefits that we get. If we laid this as a yardstick, it would take care of the environment, the culture shock, everything."

What the industry is waiting for now is to see whether the government follows through with its plans. A concerted effort now certainly appears worthwhile for the future.

Sudeep Chakravarti/*New Delhi*

STOCKMARKETS

Bulls go on the rampage

The boom days of 1985 are back on Dalal Street and companies are gearing up to hit the market with new issues

Vilas Mahajan of the Bombay Stock Exchange has a ready reckoner to guage the health of the stock market: six months ago it took him seven minutes to get into the elevator and ascend to his office on the thirteenth floor of the Bombay Stock Exchange building. Today, the crowds milling around the exchange have multiplied and Mahajan has to wait for 20 minutes in a serpentine queue before he gets back to his office.

The good times are rolling along once again on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). The bulls are stampeding and the market is climbing at a rate that matches the best boom days of 1985. On 18 November, the BSE Index touched a new peak of 719.7 and it has dipped only slightly since then. Says BSE executive director M.R. Mayya: "If you have any doubts about the mood in the market, go into any stockbroker's office. See the crowds and see the transactions."

But these are not the ready reckoners to judge the health of the market. As the stock market keeps climbing, all the indicators are flashing green signals. Around February-March this year the Bombay Stock Exchange was doing about 30,000 transactions a day, worth anywhere in the vicinity of Rs 20 to 30 crores. Today, these figures have multiplied. In each day of frenzied trading, more than one lakh transactions are struck, worth anywhere around Rs 125 to 150 crores.

As the number of transactions has zoomed, so has everything else. At the beginning of the year more than 20,000 share transfer forms were being distributed. Today, more than one lakh forms are being distributed. And about seven months ago the exchange was taking deliveries of about Rs 100 crores every month; now this has risen three-fold to about Rs 300 crores a month.

The climb began around the middle of the year and it has never looked back since. In March more than 30,000 transactions were taking place each day. By June, this had risen to 35,000.In July and August this doubled to around 70,000-80,000. In September and October it climbed again to 90,000 transactions a day and it peaked in November just after Diwali. Says Mayya: "Such a big jump was not expected in seven or eight months."

Inevitably, the sudden upsurge has caught the brokers unawares and put the system under heavy strain. Brokers who had fallen on lean days now find themselves buried under a mountain of paperwork and are struggling to cope. On three days this month, the BSE authorities took the extreme measure of closing the exchange to allow the brokers time to clear the backlog of paper work, and give the market time to cool down. That brought angry protests from the stockbrokers who saw a good day's business going down the drain.

The question that is uppermost in everyone's mind is, how long will it last? Inevitably, opinions vary. On one hand some brokers believe that the bull markets will continue till well into January and end its climb around 850.

The Bombay Stock Exchange building



Others, however, think that the market needs time to absorb the gains of the last few months. Ram Pipariya of Aridhi Investments believes that the era of steep and sudden growth is now almost coming to an end. Says Pipariya: "Growth has always been followed by consolidation. Henceforth, the consolidation will start and the sharp increase will no longer be repeated."

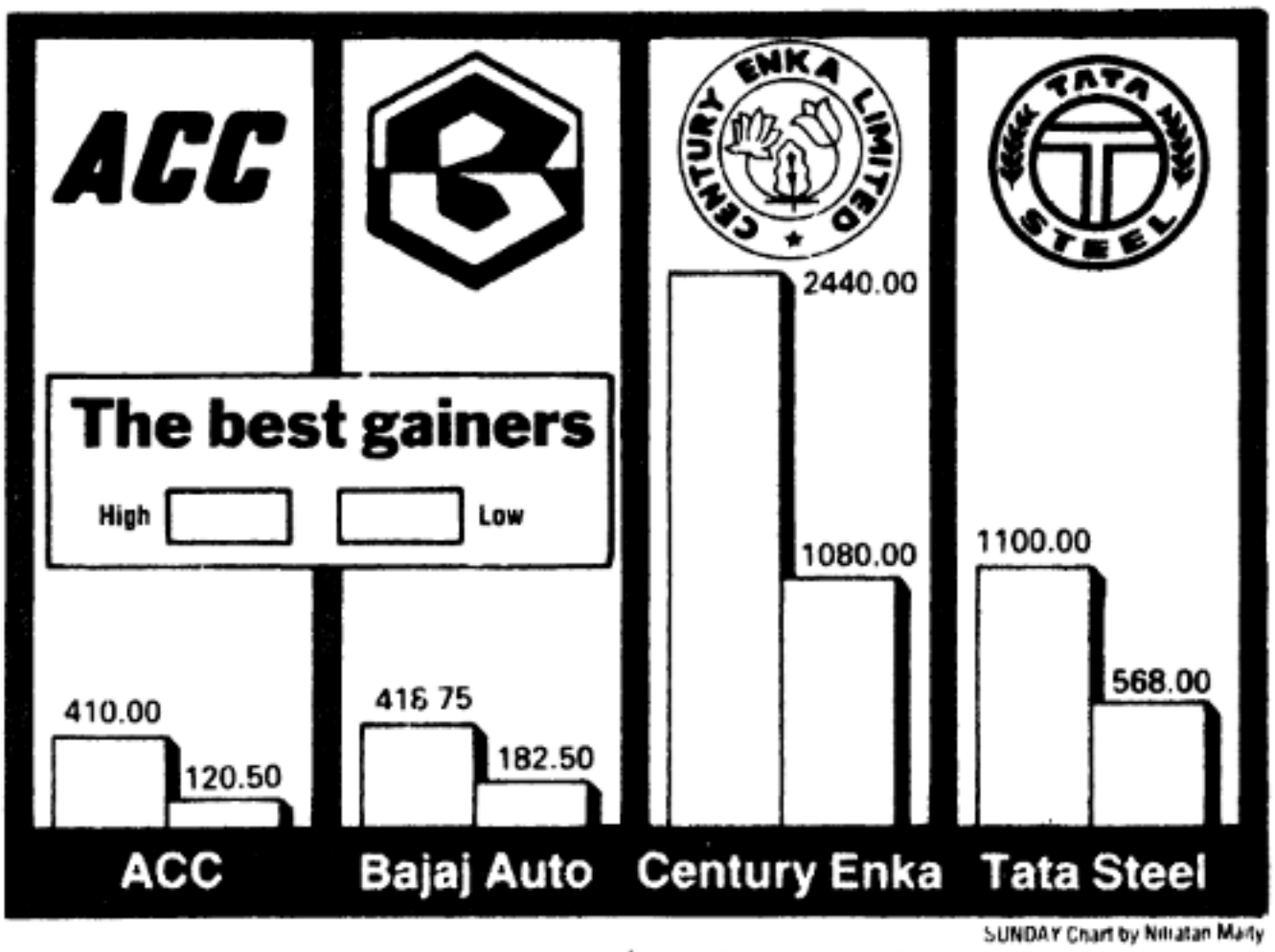
But, for the time being at least, things could not look rosier. With only one notable exception—Reliance Industries—all the other market leaders have been moving at a scorching pace. Associated Cement Company (ACC) which was around Rs 180 during the middle of the year when industrialist Mahendra Swarup bought his way into the company, has kept rising and touched a peak of Rs 410. Tata Iron and Steel (Tisco) which had slipped to around Rs 568 during the dog days of early 1988, has almost doubled to Rs 1,100. Century Enka is up from a low of Rs 1080 to around Rs 2,330. Similarly, Bajaj Auto has moved up from Rs 182 to Rs 418. Another, Mahindra and Mahindra, rose from Rs 48 to Rs 119 leading to rumours that a takeover bid was in the offing.

Other less fancied scrips were moving upward equally smartly. DCM Toyota which has had a tough year, rose



M.R. Mayya: crash unlikely

nevertheless from Rs 6.50 to Rs 15 at the beginning of December. Similarly, Allwyn Nissan which was taken over a few months ago by the Mahindras, has climbed from a hopelessly low point of



SUNDAY Chart by Niliatan Maity

Rs 3.75 to Rs. 12.50.

Many companies, meanwhile, are moving to take advantage of the bull market while the going is good. There are thought to be almost Rs 2,000 crores worth of new issues getting ready to hit the market in the next few months.

Even the mega issues which stayed away from the market are now returning with a vengeance. Tisco is planning a convertible debenture issue which many brokers believe will be one of the largest ever and probably in the vicinity of Rs 600 crores. Oswal Agro, run by Abhey Oswal, the growth king from Ludhiana, is planning another mammoth Rs 309-crore issue in January. A whole string of other companies including Deepak Fertilisers, Sterlite Industries, Essar and Grasim Industries are expected to hit the market one after the other in the next few months.

From all indications they should fare well. Many of the new issues which have hit the market in the recent past have done very well reflecting the confident mood of the market. The Grasim issue closed on 15 December just three days after it had opened. Another new issue, Tata Honeywell, was also a big hit with the investors and was 60 times oversubscribed. Several other issues which came out in October, including Esab India, Adhinath Textiles and Jain Irrigation, were oversubscribed more than ten times. Says Pipariya: "When share prices rise people turn to new issues."

R. Pipariya: 'slow rise now'



The reasons for the upswing in the market are not difficult to find. Mayya says that the initial push came when the government reintroduced the investment allowance exemption and a string of other concessions was followed soon by a steady stream of reports of good corporate results. That was enough to give the market the big nudge it needed.

Says G.B. Desai, president, Bombay Stock Exchange: "Almost all the industries except textiles are doing well."

The boom got fresh momentum later in the year as it became clear that the monsoons were going to be good this year. And then, it got a final push when the Reliance Petrochemicals issue succeeded, proving that the money was still there for anyone who made the right moves to mobilise it.

Yet memories of the last crash still persist and will not be dispelled so easily. But all the brokers are at pains to stress that 1988 will not see a re-run of the crash of 1986. Several factors have changed. The institutions have increased their presence in the market and there are now new players like SBI Capital Markets and the Canara Bank Financial Services. On top of that, the investors are also more wary about the companies which they invest in. Says Mayya: "With a larger number of players now, we do not think that the market can crash. Besides it is better regulated now."

Many companies are moving to take advantage of the bull market while the going is good. There are thought to be almost Rs 2,000 crores worth of new issues about to hit the market

The stock exchange authorities are now desperately trying to catch up with the new volumes of business by increasing computer capacity. In about 18 months the exchange will also be getting more space to enable it to have a second modern trading ring.

The brokers are now waiting with fingers crossed to see what will happen next. Pipariya says he now expects the markets to rise more slowly as they will need time to consolidate the gains of the next few months. And everyone is waiting with bated breath for the next budget—if it is very stringent it could send the markets into a spin again. But for the time being everyone is making the best of boom times.

Paran Balakrishnan/*Bombay*

COMPANIES

A ray of hope at GKW

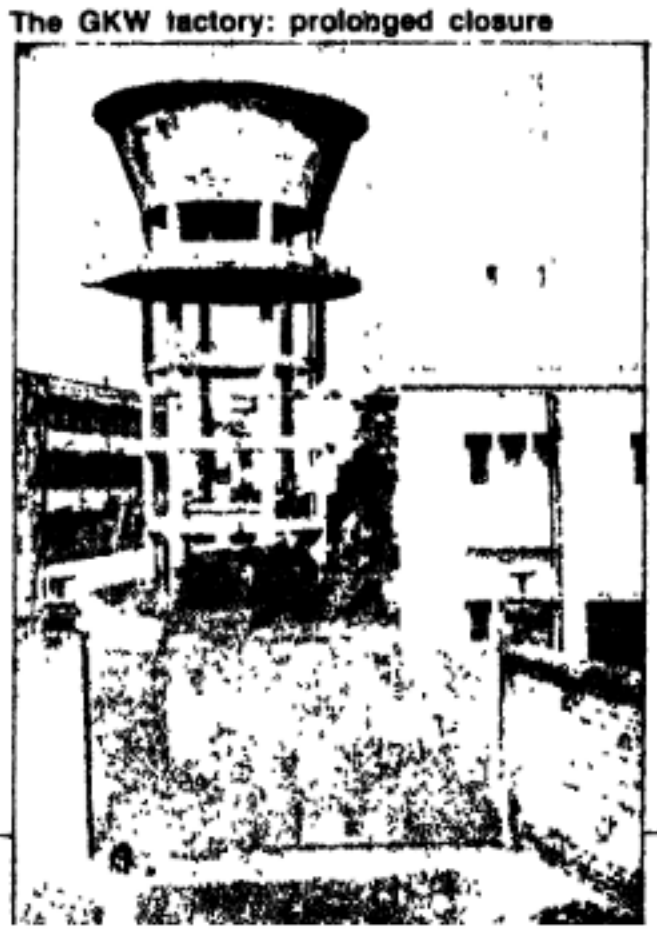
The 13-month lockout at the engineering giant may end if the new formula is accepted by the workers

For almost a year it appeared to be the end of the road for a premier engineering giant. The largest unit of the Calcutta-based Guest Keen Williams (GKW), the Andul Road works, has been under lockout since 28 October, 1987. Even while other multinationals in the city like Bata and Dunlop have sorted out their problems after prolonged lockouts, and Metal Box is busy working out a revival strategy, GKW seemed unable to bring off a rescue act.

But now, after a 13-month impasse, the GKW management seems to have finally formulated a package of proposals which might set the machines rolling once again at its Andul Road works. Though talks have been held periodically with the representatives of the five trade unions that control the unit's workforce, for the first time there is a visible thawing of attitudes on both sides.

To some extent this change of heart was brought about by government intervention. The decision to reopen the unit was reportedly taken at a meeting held early this month between the management and West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu. With the state government keen to ensure the reopening of the unit at the earliest, the management is now optimistic that the Andul Road factory would become operational from the last week of December in a phased manner over a period of six months.

The GKW factory: prolonged closure



But before that there will be many changes. The management has apparently decided to discontinue 13 production activities in the steel, bolts and nuts and engineering and machinery divisions rendering 1,250 workmen surplus. However, GKW directors hope that with the cooperation of the joint front of labour unions, all workers identified as surplus will accept the early retirement scheme within the next six months. While around 700 employees have already accepted the company's proposed voluntary retirement scheme, at least another 360 to 400 must respond so that the date of reopening the Andul Road works is not postponed.

The management and unions are believed to have reached an understanding that all workers due for retirement in the next five years will opt for the company's early retirement scheme. According to one estimate, around 930 workers fall in this category, of which around 565 have already accepted the separation scheme. Of the remaining 365 workers, 120 are due for retirement in any event in 1989 and 1990, while another 225 to 250 workers are due to leave between 1990 and 1993. The unions will be entrusted with the tricky task of ensuring that this section opts for the separation scheme quickly.

This formula was arrived at after many rounds of discussion and after taking the overall viability of the unit into consideration, the GKW management is quick to add. Between the first round of management-union bipartite talks held on 23 March, 1988, and the last round held on 30 November, the surplus labour figure had been revised several times, management sources point out.

What the government seems to have liked in the new separation formula is the effort of the GKW management to retain the younger employees. Hence, the decision to weed out those who have very little service period left.

All's well that ends well, may be refrain at GKW today. But the 13-month lockout has taken its toll—the tragic death of the three children of an employee, P. Mall, which has attracted a great deal of media attention. There are hundreds of others suffering in silence.

Debjani Sinha/*Calcutta*

Truce with a swap deal

For a while the Chhabria brothers and the Ambanis looked eyeball to eyeball. The bone of contention: the battle to control Larsen & Toubro. The Chhabrias bought around 1.5 per cent of the L&T equity last year, but the Ambanis, sensing a good kill, used their money power to buy 12.4 per cent of the company's shares and

The L&T house

get themselves onto the L&T board. They expected the Chhabrias to disinvest their stake, which they didn't.

With that the ego of Dhirubhai Ambani was pitted against the arrogance of the Chhabrias who appear to have convinced themselves that takeovers are their exclusive domain. But, for once, the Chhabrias found they had bitten off more than they could chew. Flush with funds from the Reliance Petrochemicals mega issue, the Ambanis picked up 4 per cent of the equity in Dunlop India—the jewel in the Chhabria crown—and threatened to buy further into the tyre giant. That was enough to send the jitters in the Chhabria camp—till common friend Murli Deora came to their rescue. The chastened Chhabrias have now agreed to swap shares and call a truce.

Century Enka pulls strings

Who said the Ambanis alone wielded clout in the corridors of power? The lease agreement for the sprawling land in the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation complex in Pune which houses the Century Enka factory is not yet finalised. This was discovered recently when the company put up its proposal for expansion and the authorities were looking into the relevant papers. Then how did this blue chip Aditya Birla group company start production? More surprisingly, how did Century Enka convince the financial institutions to sanction funds for its earlier project despite the incomplete land lease documents?

Aditya Birla: influential



Too hot for McDowell?

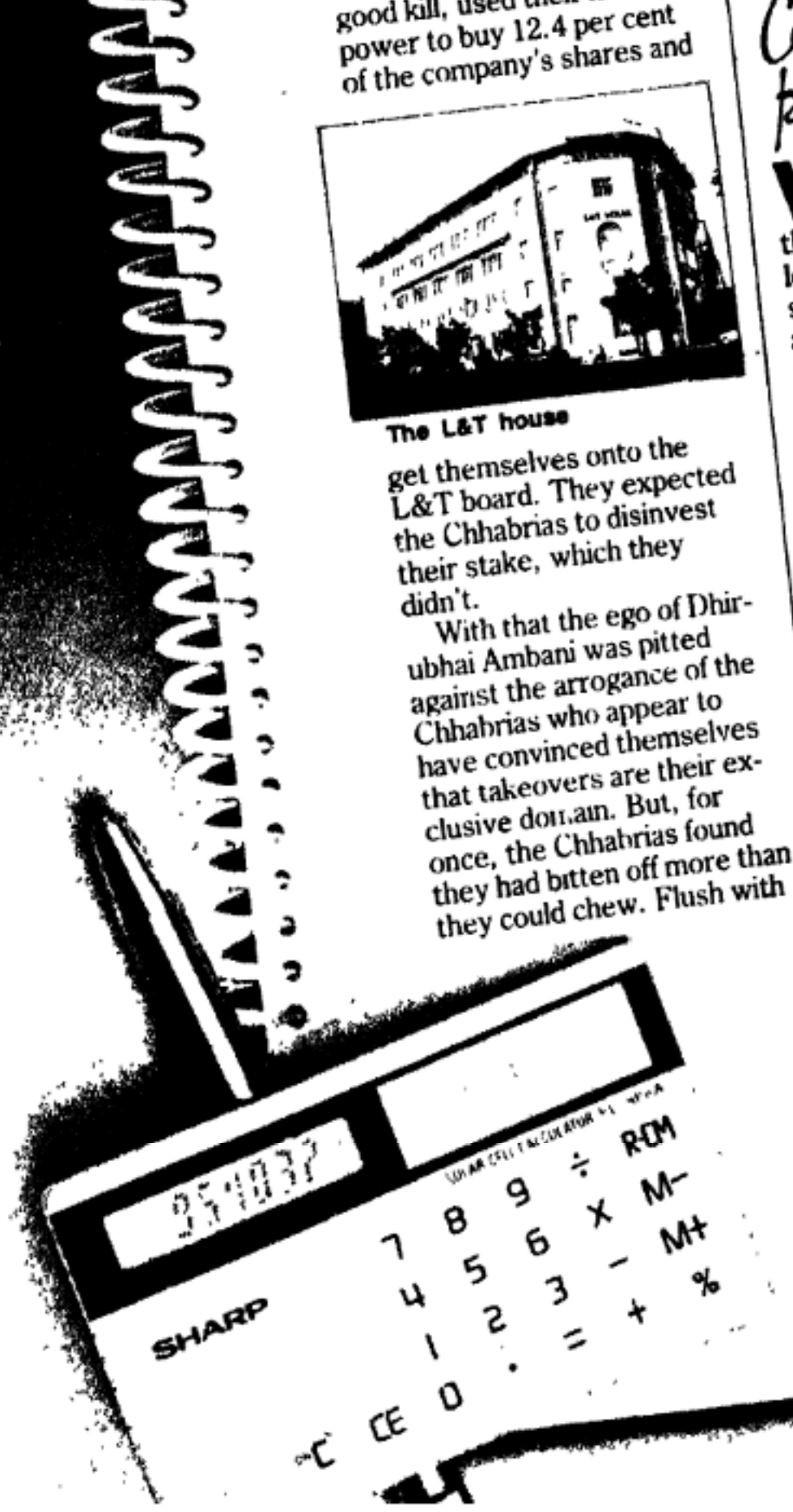
For Vijay Mallya who has joined the ranks of corporate raiders, this is a setback which he may not have bargained for. Faced with plummeting sales in a market that is becoming fiercely competitive by the day, McDowell and Co., a United Breweries subsidiary, has decided to gradually withdraw from the soft drinks market. But McDowell is going about the process in a cautious manner to avoid too much publicity. It has reportedly decided to withdraw marketing, distribution, advertising and promotional support for its three soft drink brands—



Vijay Mallya: hasty retreat

Sprint, Thrill and Rush—from the beginning of next year.

Of course, McDowell is reluctant to admit that it has thrown in the towel. Company sources argue that this step is actually meant to give greater autonomy to the bottlers who have grown in maturity. But corporate circles believe that Mallya is beating a retreat because McDowell is in no position to survive in a market that will soon be dominated by the global cola kings: Coke and Pepsi.



A son for scandal

Controversy continues to dog Haryana's first family—this time it's rape

"If the Congress fails to get him, then his family surely will," said a wag in Haryana, of chief minister Devi Lal. Within the space of two months, the peasant leader's progeny have been involved in two major scandals. First, there was the mysterious death of Supriya, one of Devi Lal's granddaughters-in-law, who died of a bullet wound in the family's Teja Khera farmhouse in Sirsa district. The family claimed it was suicide but foul play was suspected, partly because of the circumstances in which Supriya died and partly because of her strained relations with her husband, Abhay Singh.

Now, Devi Lal's youngest son, Jagdish Singh, has been charged for raping a villager. According to the woman, 35-year-old Rameshwari, who lives with her husband Banwari Lal, in a small *dhani* (farmhouse) near Chauthala village, it happened like this. On 7 December, an inebriated Jagdish Singh (he is a known drunkard and even Devi Lal has admitted that he has a drink problem) and three of Rameshwari's brothers-in-law (Joteram, Lakshman and Krishnan) came to the *dhani* in the morning. They arrived in a jeep which was driven by Jagdish's bodyguard, who is deputed from the Haryana police. The purpose of the visit, according to Rameshwari, was to intimidate her husband because of a family quarrel.

Rameshwari's husband and her two sons were away working their fields when Jagdish entered the *dhani*. She says that he dragged her to a small room upstairs, where she was locked up for three hours and raped. Says a tearful Rameshwari, *"Jagdish nay meri izzat main kutch bhi baki nahin chora."* (Jagdish divested me of all dignity.) She managed to slip out of the room once on the pretext that she needed some water to drink, but Jagdish dragged her up again.

The neighbours, apparently, were too scared to intervene. And Rameshwari's husband, Banwari Lal, who rushed home on hearing the commotion, told SUNDAY that Jagdish's bodyguard advised him to flee if he wanted to save his life. Rameshwari says that the bodyguard had apologised to her, saying that he was but a government employee and had to do what he was ordered to.

There is another aspect to the story that has been missed in press reports. When Jagdish had Rameshwari with him in the room, a good friend of hers, Parameshwari, had come to the *dhani* to visit her. Parameshwari told SUNDAY that Rameshwari's three brothers-in-law, who had accompanied Jagdish to the *dhani*, had sexually assaulted her after she discovered that her friend was locked up in one of the rooms. Parameshwari's son, Rohtas, whom she had brought along, was beaten up by Joteram, Krishnan and Lakshman.



Rameshwari; (inset) Jagdish Singh: grave charges

Rajesh Kumar

Rameshwari, Banwari Lal and their two sons fled the village after the incident. Believing that the only way to bring Jagdish Singh to book was to approach Devi Lal himself, Banwari Lal left for Chandigarh. From all accounts, the chief minister gave him a patient hearing and then ordered the SSP of Sirsa, Kartar Singh Tomar, to arrest all those involved (even if one of them was his son), if they were found guilty. Devi Lal also gave Banwari Lal Rs 120 and had his car drop him at the city bus stand.

Meanwhile, there were interesting developments taking place in Sirsa. SUNDAY learns from sources that Om Prakash Chauthala, Devi Lal's MP-son, visited the Teja Khera farmhouse, and soon after, so did another son, Ranjit Singh, who is an MLA. It is believed that the visits were aimed at persuading the police to hush up the matter. The police, surprisingly, chose not to register a case and it appears that there is no charge on record. Banwari Lal, though, was kept in police custody for 12 hours. He says that the police forced him to put his thumb impression on a *rajinaama* (agreement) under threat that they would arrest him for possessing an unlicensed revolver if he didn't comply. Being illiterate, Banwari Lal says he does not know what he signed; the police aren't saying anything on this matter either.

Devi Lal has since refuted the charge that his son had sexually assaulted Rameshwari, saying that the reports were "incorrect and baseless". He admitted that Banwari Lal had met him, but said that all that he complained about was of having been beaten up by his two brothers, Joteram and Lakshman. No mention was made of rape, the chief minister said.

But the last has clearly not been heard of this incident. And as in the Supriya case, Devi Lal is going to be asked a lot of uncomfortable questions by the Congress party and the press. How this scandal will affect him politically is a matter of conjecture. But for him, running the family is proving a damn sight harder than running the state.

Anil Tyagi/*Chauthala*

Ghisingh rules the hills

The GNLF sweeps the polls in Darjeeling, predictably crushing both the CPI(M) and the Congress(I)

WEST BENGAL

A cold wave sweeping through the hill town of Darjeeling on 15 December brought down the mercury appreciably. But the temperature within the portals of the local St Joseph's College was rising steadily as polling officials carefully scrutinised each ballot paper. Outside the imposing stone structure, large crowds had gathered since morning, waving the familiar green-and-gold flags and lustily cheering the victory of yet another Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) candidate. And by the end of the day, the entire town took to the streets to celebrate the victory of their beloved party.

Never before had a ruling party faced such a crushing defeat. Brushing aside the challenge of the mighty CPI(M) and the formidable Congress(I) and putting down the banner of revolt raised by the dissidents, Subash Ghisingh steered the GNLF to a massive and historic win in the first-ever elections to the newly-constituted Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council. And, with the overwhelming mandate of more than 83 per cent of the Nepali-speaking people of the hills, Ghisingh has emerged as the new guardian of the Gorkha identity.

A victory for Ghisingh and the GNLF was very much on the cards. It was but natural that a party which had fought a long and violent battle for the rights of the Gorkhas would emerge victorious at the hustings. What was perhaps unexpected was the total rout of the Opposition, including the dominant partner of the ruling coalition in West Bengal—the CPI(M). Out of the 28 elected seats in the 42-member hill council, the GNLF romped home with as many as 26 seats. The CPI(M) managed to win in two constituencies while the Congress(I) and the Gorkha League (Dhimmal faction) drew a blank. The Gorkha Volunteers Cell (GVC), which had decided to oppose the GNLF as it felt that Ghisingh had let down the Gorkhas by agreeing to the proposal of a hill council instead of a separate state, faced a similar fate.

All opposition, it seemed, was simply swept away by a wave of ethnic upsurge. But bare statistics alone will not reveal the real dimension of the GNLF victory. In most of the constituencies, the GNLF contestants polled more votes than those of all the others taken together. Such was the people's faith in the GNLF that out of the 15 seats that the CPI(M) lost—the party had contested 17—as many as eight of their heavyweights forfeited their security deposits, polling less than 100 votes against the GNLF's 10,000-plus. The debacle suffered by the Congress(I) was even more embarrassing: in all the seven constituencies it contested, its candidates lost thier security money.

Ghisingh's fear that the people might be swayed by Subba's populist rhetoric, however, proved unfounded as none of the GVC candidates and the rebels managed to win. Even Chhatre Subba was humbled in his own constituency, Bongdungra in Kalimpong, by over 3000 votes by a relatively lightweight GNLF candidate.

But despite the decisive victory, Ghisingh's problems are far from over. For, the GNLF supremo is well aware of the



GNLF supporters participating in victory celebrations; (inset) Subash Ghisingh: the undisputed leader



Arup Banerjee

But neither the CPI(M) nor the Congress(I) really posed a threat to Subash Ghisingh. For, both the parties were least interested in a victory as this would defeat the very purpose of the Darjeeling accord. The real challenge to Ghisingh's supremacy came from the GNLF dissidents masquerading as independents in most of the constituencies. Moreover, the GVC, the police wing of the GNLF which Ghisingh had formed during the Gorkhaland movement to take on the security forces, had openly come out against the leader and Chhatre Subba, the noted militant and GVC chief, had declared that the council elections would be a referendum on whether the Gorkhas were content with a hill council or would prefer to continue their struggle for a separate Gorkhaland.

constraints under which he has to function: though he will have 26 of his partymen in the council, as many as 14 members will be nominated by the West Bengal government. And though the voting rights of those nominated will be limited, they could effectively function as a pressure group.

Moreover, Ghisingh and his colleagues must have realised by now that there are far to many promises to fulfil. For the present the people are justifiably excited, but once the euphoria is over, the Gorkhas are bound to take stock of what they have got and compare it with the sacrifices they have made. Only time will tell whether Ghisingh and his council members will live up to the aspirations of the Gorkhas.

Rajiv Bagchi with bureau reports

Revenge of the ex-ministers

Digen Bora and Patowary try to embarrass the chief minister by leaking information to the press

ASSAM

When Prafulla Mahanta reshuffled his Cabinet and dropped 12 ministers he may have anticipated that his decision would not go unchallenged. Though the initial outburst of anger has subsided and most of the 12 dropped ministers have reconciled themselves to their fate, two of them have reportedly set in motion a systematic campaign in their bid to vilify the chief minister. The two ex-ministers, Digen Bora and Chandra Mohan Patowary, hit upon a devious way to malign Mahanta: by selectively leaking information to the press and, at an appropriate time, demanding a change in the leadership. But no sooner had the plot unfolded than Patowary was suspended for indulging in anti-party activities.

In the last one month, a number of allegations of corruption and nepotism against Mahanta have surfaced in the press. None of these reports amount to a major exposé, but they are enough to embarrass Mahanta who has not been able to satisfactorily contradict any of them. Among the most serious charges is Mahanta's reluctance to take action against some allegedly corrupt forest department officials. Soon after the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) came to power in December 1985, it ordered an inquiry into the alleged embezzlement of several lakhs of rupees by senior officials of the forest department. The report of the enquiry, conducted by the special vigilance cell, was submitted to the government last year. It recommended instituting criminal cases against 51 officials. However, this has not been done so far. Indeed, many of them have even been elevated to better positions.

Mahanta's reply to the allegation, published in a section of the press, is that he has sent the report to the political, law and forest departments for their opinion. He insisted that once these were received punitive steps would be taken.



Ashoke Chakraborty

Prafulla and Jayshree Mahanta: at the receiving end of a vilification campaign?

Another allegation against Mahanta is that as forest minister, Mahanta had allegedly made allotments for the supply of sleeper berths to the railways to certain persons and firms. The most controversial beneficiary was Damodar Jodhani who has also penned a biography of the chief minister. Jodhani had allegedly collected huge sums of money from various institutions in Assam by impersonating as a correspondent-cum-advertising representative of *The Times of India*. He was recently arrested for fraud, when the Times' management lodged a complaint with the local police. When the matter was raised during the last Assembly session by an Opposition member, who merely substituted the word 'allotment' with the word 'permit', Mahanta circumented the issue by saying that the two were not the same, and that the member was trying to 'misguide' the house.

An Assamese fortnightly revealed that Mahanta's wife, Jayshree, had purchased a little over two *kathas* of land in a prime area of Guwahati, Uzan Bazar, for Rs 70,000. A number of papers, one of which even published a copy of the sale deed, questioned the authenticity of the deal, specially when the going rate in the area is over Rs 1 lakh per *katha*. Another press disclosure exposed the manner in which Mahanta had been distributing grants out of the state lottery fund profits. It maintained that out of a total profit of Rs 1 19 crores in two years (1986-88), Rs 4.3 lakhs had been allotted to just one district—Nagaon. And of this sum, Rs 34.7 lakhs were given to various institutions and organisations based in Mahanta's two Assembly constituencies—Nagaon and Kaliabor. The reports alleged that in contrast, the Bengali dominated district of Karimganj had received only Rs 50,000.

In spite of repeated efforts made by SUNDAY to contact Mahanta he was not available for comments on the last three allegations. But his supporters point out that as far as the lottery profits are concerned the two most active proponents of the 'oust Mahanta' campaign, were also on the sub-committee constituted by the government to oversee the disbursement of the profits.

In any case none of these reports made a major impact on Mahanta's position. But possibly bolstered by the perception that they might have eroded the chief minister's credibility, the anti-Mahanta lobby approached the home minister, Bhrigu Phukan, the PWD minister, Atul Bora, and the Speaker, Pulakesh Barua, to take over as leader of the AGP Legislature Party. All three turned down the offer, though Barua took his own time to do so.

Political observers feel that the decision taken by Phukan and Bora may have been dictated by the fact that they were also party to the controversial reshuffle carried out by Mahanta, and if they assumed leadership, the same people who are presently conspiring against Mahanta, would then conspire against them. According to another viewpoint in political circles a change in the leadership is unlikely due to the lack of a credible alternative to Mahanta.

Radhika Ramaseshan/*Guwahati*

Dissidence drama

Moves to oust Arjun Singh from the chief ministership gain further momentum

MADHYA PRADESH

For the present, at least, it seems that chief minister Arjun Singh can breathe easy. The news that 40 members of Parliament had written to the Prime Minister demanding that Singh be removed from the chief ministership of Madhya Pradesh has been dismissed as "farcical" by sources close to the Prime Minister's office. Bhanu Pratap Sharma, who has no love lost for Arjun Singh, also confirmed that no such memorandum has been submitted to Rajiv Gandhi, either jointly or separately, as it has been reported in a section of the press. But that does not mean that Singh has nothing to worry about.

The MP's have not lost any opportunity to inform Rajiv Gandhi about the 'alarming situation' in Madhya Pradesh. And there are as many as 33 MP's who are opposed to Arjun Singh. As one of the chief minister's critics pointed out: "Rajiv Gandhi is our only leader. And if anyone else tries to project himself as the sole leader of Madhya Pradesh, we will not tolerate it."

The charges against the chief minister are many. But it is the president of the Gwalior city Congress, Prakash Khandelwal, who has been the most strident in his criticism. Khandelwal has not hesitated to spew vitriol on the chief minister and even claims that Arjun Singh has joined hands with the Opposition leader, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, to undermine the strength of the party.

Khandelwal, who owes allegiance to the Madhavrao Scindia camp, recently found an opportunity to castigate the chief minister once again when the dispute over the nominations for the administrative committee of the 'Gwalior *mela*' surfaced. The city Congress president charged that Singh had nominated all his supporters for the different committees while others had been ignored.

Dissident Congress MPs maintain that their crusade against the chief minister was launched almost three months ago. Their main grouse is that Arjun Singh has caused incalculable damage to the party in the state by promoting himself. Pointing to the introduction of two new schemes by the CM, the *tendoo patti sarkarikaran abhiyaan* and *adhikar abhiyaan*, dissidents say that both these programmes were included in the 20-point programme but the CM chose to ignore this and took credit for the new schemes. According to some leaders, work on the 20-point programme has come to a standstill in many districts of the state.



Arjun Singh with (left) Vora: many opponents

Another allegation against Arjun Singh is that he is surrounded by "corrupt" ministers like Bansilal Ghatlahare, Mahesh Joshi and Vishnu Rajoria. They also allege that the "*tendoo patti* contract" was awarded to the cooperative headed by MP Subhash Yadav, who is said to be very close to the CM. Yadav, say dissidents, is making crores from the deal.

Still others maintain that Arjun Singh is doing his best to undermine the credibility of Union ministers Madhavrao Scindia and Motilal Vora who have been touring the state to help strengthen the party. The CM, according to some partymen, has asked district collectors not to help the central ministers.

Meanwhile, Chandulal Chandrakar, the PCC(I) president has also defected to the dissidents' camp. Chandrakar, who had till recently been a close confidant of Arjun Singh, accused the CM of neglecting the drought-hit Chhatisgarh region. No doubt these charges have embarrassed the chief minister but he chooses to shrug them away. He has even proposed the name of Ghratlahare as a replacement for Chandrakar for the PCC(I) presidentship. Vora too has suggested his own candidates for the post. And though the Prime Minister may not be willing to accede to the dissidents' demand for a new chief minister, it is just possible that he might decide to pacify them by appointing a PCC(I) president of their choice.

Rajiv Shukla/*New Delhi*

A spanner in the works

Will the agitation by the Vanniars delay the Assembly polls?

TAMIL NADU

Question: When will the elections be held in Tamil Nadu?
Answer: 21 January.
Question: But will the elections be held?

The debate goes on. For months now politicians and media pundits have asked the question. And even though their query was answered, when it was announced that the state would go to the polls on 21 January,



Governor Alexander: earning the wrath of the Vanniars

doubts persist. One reason for the continuing scepticism is the Vanniar Sangham, a major force in the state's political scenario and a dominant caste group, which has declared war on Governor Dr P.C. Alexander. The Sangham is miffed with the Governor as he did not straightaway sanction them the 20 per cent reservation quota in government jobs and educational institutions, that it has been agitating for.

The Sangham's ire has already taken the shape of violent agitations. Dr Alexander, meanwhile, told newspersons on 12 December that the government has accepted "in principle" that within the overall limit of 50 per cent reservation for backward classes, there should be a separate reservation for certain groups

including those considered to be "most backward". But the Governor has deferred the decision to sanction quotas till the land reforms commissioner, P.V. Venkatakrishnan, gives in his report on the numerical strength and status of the various communities that are demanding reservations. He explained that the Vanniars would surely benefit from the policy as they have been identified as one of the "most backward" groups along with 38 others way back in 1972. "This is the maximum the state government can do in the present situation," the Governor declared.

But the Vanniars were not impressed. The founder-leader of the Sangham, Dr S. Ramadas, at once announced that the call for the poll boycott would be implemented in right earnest. The only difference would be that instead of the DMK and its president Karunanidhi, who had earlier been identified as enemies of the Vanniars, the Congressmen would be blacklisted as traitors and dealt with accordingly. "We shall dig up a grave and bury the Congress(I) in Tamil Nadu," Ramadas threatened. He also cautioned the administration against postponing the Assembly elections on the pretext of Vanniar violence, like it had done in July last.

Political observers feel that Dr Ramadas' threats should not be dismissed as violence has been an important feature of his agitations. At the moment, the Sangham is all ready to unleash a trail of violence in the northern districts where his men have established a huge support base. Their main targets are likely to be the Congress' poll campaign in addition to the traditional Harijanwadis.

The administration has already responded by bringing in central paramilitary forces which have spread out across the Vanniar belt in a bid to stop the escalating violence. Meanwhile, Union ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao and Buta Singh are conducting negotiations with Dr Ramadas and his team. If a deal is clinched, it would not only ensure peaceful polling on 21 January but also win for the Congress the votes of Vanniars.

The outcome of the talks is also crucial for the Congress. If it fails to pacify Dr Ramadas and his men, the only alternative to a violence-marred election would be a postponement which again would ruin the party's credibility. Embarrassingly for the Congress(I), its political rivals have already begun to claim that the Congress(I), which is still not confident enough about its poll prospects, is looking for a way to wriggle out—and what better way to do [illegible]an postpone the elections?

R. Bhagwan Singh/*Madras*



The Marxists prepare for their party congress: keeping things on a low key

Of conciliation and compromise

The Marxist government is keen to keep out of controversy's way till the party congress is over

KERALA

Controversies have dogged the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government ever since it assumed power 20 months ago. But now, with the 13th congress of the CPI(M) scheduled to be held from 27 December, the Marxist-led government is bending over backwards to keep out of controversy's way. So much so that the Marxists are even willing to compromise with Congressmen over issues which they have till now flatly refused to entertain.

So when chief minister E.K. Nayanar agreed to order a judicial probe into the controversial *lathi*-charge on Congress(I) demonstrators in Palghat, he took even the Congressmen by surprise. K. Karunakaran and his men had been demanding a probe into the *lathi*-charge, in which a Congress MP and three MLAs were seriously injured, but in vain. Speculation was also rife that Union home minister Buta Singh would visit the state when Karunakaran went on record by stating in the Assembly that if Nayanar did not order an inquiry "more competent men from the Centre" would look into the matter. But after turning down the demand several times, the chief minister suddenly gave in and announced a judicial probe. A jubilant Karunakaran crowed that it was "yet another victory of people's power over Marxist stubbornness".

The Congress(I) was in for another surprise. The Congress(I)-led United Democratic Front (UDF) had been demanding that the state Assembly be convened so that the members could discuss the 'deterioration of law and order' in the state. Within 48 hours of the call given by the Opposition, the LDF Cabinet urged the Governor to

summon the House. Even Karunakaran was taken aback by the government's ready response to the call.

However, there is more to the LDF's action than meets the eye. The chief minister, who recently clashed with Governor Ramdulari Sinha, probably hoped that by convening the session at the fag end of the year, he would be able to postpone the Governor's address. And any nasty shocks that Mrs Sinha may have in store for the government, would not occur at a time when the CPI(M)'s congress is in session. But, on the other hand, this move has come as a surprise to the Opposition which has enough arsenal to put the ruling government on the defensive when the Assembly session commences.

Another instance of the Marxists' attempts to defuse tension and keep things on a low key till the congress is over, is the excise minister's capitulation over the demand to shift the liquor shop at Azhimavu. The excise minister, T.K. Ramakrishnan, who is said to carry even more clout than the chief minister, had turned down repeated requests by the Sarvodaya workers, prohibitionists and the local people, to shut down the liquor shop. His argument was that if the government gave in to their demand, it would set a precedent. But the agitationists would not give up and the tussle went on for 15 long months. But two weeks before the CPI(M) congress, Ramakrishnan announced that the government had decided to shift the shop to some other ward in the *panchayat*.

The state's Marxists have also declared a truce with the RSS, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Muslim League. In Nadapurom, where clashes between the Marxists and the League's members had started taking a communal colour, the state secretary, V.S. Achutanandan, appealed to party workers to eschew violence and ever since a semblance of peace has returned to north Kerala. With the RSS and BJP too, who have been alleging that the CPI(M) workers resort to violence against their members, the government has adopted a conciliatory posture. State-level and district-level committees have been set up with representatives of the CPI(M), RSS and BJP to ensure that their workers do not indulge in violence against each other.

Whatever the motivation for the government's actions, these have unwittingly helped to refurbish its image which had taken quite a beating in the recent past. Perhaps, the state congress of the CPI(M) is what Nayanar needed to bail him out.

Swaroopa Kartha/*Trivandrum*

Death by neglect?

Resident doctors agitate for better medical facilities at the J.J. Hospital after a doctor loses her life

MAHARASHTRA

J.J. Hospital's brush with notoriety is not a new phenomenon. The authorities of the state-owned hospital were recently hauled up by Justice Lentin for administering adulterated glycerine injections resulting in the death of 14 patients. But instead of pulling up its socks the hospital's administration has been as lackadaisical as ever. Just as the tragic events of 1985 were beginning to fade from public memory, the death of a 26-year-old resident gynaecologist, due to the unavailability of life-saving drugs, sent 300-odd resident doctors once again on the warpath.

"How many more people are to die before the hospital authorities and the government's health department wakes up to the fact that the hospital's stores and equipment are in a mess?" asks Dr T. Venkat, the spokesman for the Maharashtra Association of Resident Doctors (MARD). The resident doctors who have been agitating for better maintenance of hospital equipment, which at the best of times are not in a working condition, were catapulted into action when Dr Rita Vij succumbed to an allergy that she developed soon after she was administered a penicillin shot. She could have been saved by a particular antidote but the hospital's stores did not have the necessary life-saving drug.

The dean of the hospital, S.K. Ganeriwal, who was away in Amravati to attend the wedding of his niece, was blisfully unaware of the incident. The acting dean, Dr Patodia, too was unable to contact Ganeriwal as he did not know about his whereabouts. But when the dean returned three days after Dr Vij's death, he was gheraoed by resident doctors who forced him to "accept moral responsibility for the negligence that led to the death of Dr Vij".

According to Dr Venkat, though a sum of Rs 8 crores has been allocated to the hospital for the purchase of drugs, it never has any life-saving drugs when they are needed. In fact a nurse in the paediatric department pointed out that basic essential drugs and instruments such as ampicillin, blood transfusion sets, paediatric IV sets, soda bicarb, etc. were never available in the stores.

In a bid to end the stalemate, the government initiated talks with the resident doctors which culminated in the signing of a resolution that conceded a bulk of MARD's demands. The resolution contains a guarantee by the government that a stock of essential drugs will always be maintained at all government hospitals. For the present, a list of 60 vital drugs has been drawn up. The list will be reviewed every three months and updated when necessary. The document also vests enhanced powers with hospital authorities to ensure that essential equipment are repaired promptly.

Surely, this is a step in the right direction but whether it will bring about any improvement in the hospital's health care system remains to be seen.

Olga Tellis/*Bombay*



Resident doctors and nurses of J.J. Hospital gherao the acting dean: callous administration

A CM flexes his muscles

Chaudhary demotes dissident ministers and inducts new faces in his Cabinet

GUJARAT

Amarsinh Chaudhary may not be the most loved chief minister but neither is he a push-over. The chief minister of Gujarat, whose 41-month rule has continuously been under attack, gave the lie to speculation that he was on his way out when he inducted eight new faces in his 11-member Cabinet on 13 December. The Cabinet expansion was also a signal to the dissidents that they would not be rid of Chaudhary as easily as they had presumed. And a jubilant chief minister exulted: "Number 13 is lucky for me."

Chaudhary has scored over his rivals in more ways than one. Not only has he divested some of the dissident ministers of their important portfolios but also added insult to injury by putting them in charge of not-so-important ministries like ports, water resources, *panchayats*, etc. Among those who have been demoted are M. Vijaydasji, the former No. 2 in the Cabinet and agriculture minister, Harisinh Mahida, the former revenue minister, and ex-education minister Hasmukh Patel. All of them have made no bones about the fact that they are supporters of Madhavsinh Solanki.

While the dissidents have been demoted, the chief minister has rewarded his faithful aides with extra responsibility. Finance minister Arvind Sanghvi has been allocated additional charge of education, Nalin Patel, minister for energy has been elevated to the rank of a Cabinet minister and Vallabh Patel has been retained as health minister despite his frequent outbursts against Chaudhary. The backward classes too have found more representation in the ministry as seven out of the eight new entrants belong to this group.

To balance his tough action of demoting the dissident ministers, Chaudhary has tried to make peace with some of his detractors including Solanki, Ahmed Patel and Yogendra Makwana. Newcomer Vajubhai Jani, for example, is close to former PCC(I) chief Ahmed Patel while Shanta Makwana, wife of former Union minister of state for steel, Yogendra Makwana, has also been inducted. In the process, Chaudhary will now have a lighter burden as he has had to shed five portfolios that he formerly held. "I will now be able to devote more time for party work," Chaudhary said.



Amarsinh Chaudhary with (left) Ahmed Patel: bitter rivals

The ministerial changes, however, have far from pleased the dissident MLAs. And it is little wonder then that only 30 of the 147 Congress(I) members attended the oath-taking ceremony in the Assembly on 13 December.

How long Chaudhary will be able to keep ahead of his dissidents remains to be seen. The chief minister has already sounded a conciliatory tone by announcing that another expansion of the ministry will be held in the near future. Also, the appointments of chairmen and managing directors for various boards and state-run corporations are still pending and these could always be held out to dissidents to dissuade them from relaunching their campaign against Chaudhary.

Mahesh Trivedi/*Ahmedabad*

Divided they lose

With the BJP's call for a Vananchal state, the Jharkhand movement may lose its steam

BIHAR

It is a recipe for disaster. The leaders of both the Jharkhand movement and the BJP are out to garner the tribal votebank in Bihar by giving their respective calls for a separate state. But there is one major difference: while the Jharkhand movement aims at carving out a separate state comprising 21 districts spread across Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh, the BJP-sponsored Vananchal state would ideally comprise 12 districts of south Bihar. Religion, however, remains the mainstay of both movements. The Jharkhand movement is perceived to be one that has the support of the Christian missionaries and the BJP, on the other hand, has the backing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Recently, the BJP president, L.K. Advani, addressed a well-planned rally at Ranchi and exhorted party workers -- mostly non-tribals -- to shed their blood so that they could achieve their goal of a Vananchal state. Advani went on to condemn the missionaries who he maintained had spread out in the remote corners of Chhotangapur and Santhal Parganas. The president, of course, had nothing but condemnation for the Jharkhand movement which, he claimed is being "aided and abetted by the church". It was to check the influence of such "anti-national forces" that the Vananchal movement had been launched, he added.

A week before the BJP rally, the Jharkhand Coordination Committee (JCC) organised a huge meeting at Ranchi and later the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) too held a rally in Calcutta. At both the meetings, the leaders struck aggressive postures threatening to resort to rail and *rasta roko* agitations to realise their goal.

With both the BJP and the Jharkhand leaders stepping up their activities, it seems as if the inevitable outcome of the mounting communal tension will be an escalation in violence.

Faizan Ahmad/*Patna*

A rebel is born

Will Mohinder Amarnath be the first Indian cricketer to play in South Africa?

In most parts of the world, "South Africa" is a dirty expression. Mohinder Amarnath, a veteran cricketer, is now allegedly trying to use it to embarrass the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

It all started with the national selection committee deciding to drop Mohinder from the first Test squad against New Zealand. Coming as it did, almost immediately after good performances in Sharjah and Dhaka in successive one-day competitions, it was shocking not just to the player concerned but to the enthusiasts of the game as well.

But, in a country noted for its prudishness and its singular lack of humour, "a bunch of jokers" the expression with which Mohinder chose to describe the selectors – was too hard for them to swallow. While this is just what thousands of followers of the game in the country must have felt about the selectors, Mohinder, of all people, gathered the courage to put it in words.

Initially, the reaction was one of stunned silence. Board officials, long used to playing God to players, didn't know what exactly hit them. Naturally, they could not take Mohinder's comment in the spirit in which it was uttered. The board of selectors led by Raj Singh Dungarpur had erred grievously. And their pomposity only made things worse. The game is played basically for the entertainment of the public, not for the private pleasure of people with dubious cricketing backgrounds. The people had a right to know why a player like Mohinder had been axed.

Despite an outcry in the press, Raj Singh refused to explain why Mohinder was dropped. It was left to BCCI secretary Ranbir Singh to say that the team "must have been selected on cricketing merits". But it was clear to the followers of the game that Mohinder's exclusion had little to do with his cricketing merit, because the veteran all rounder had proved himself many times over.

The furore over Mohinder Amarnath's exclusion has, albeit belatedly, raised questions about the constitution of the national selection committee. What, for example, is a man like Raj Singh doing in the company of players like Chandrasekhar and Tanhane? The last time around, Raj Singh wasn't even in the country to choose the Indian team. This time, his visits to see the players in action in different matches have been few and perfunctory, at best. Above all, many former cricketers have questioned the selection of Raj Singh as chairman because he was a mediocre player himself and had not even played a Test in his life. According to these cricketers, no one could have any confidence in a committee headed by Raj Singh.

Raj Singh had played for Rajasthan in the Ranji Trophy but the state is not a force to reckon with in the national context. Mohinder Amarnath, on the other hand, had cricket in his blood. His father, Lala Amarnath, was one of the most illustrious cricketers of the land. His brother, Surinder, was an even better cricketer than him, but was strangely ignored by the selectors repeatedly. Says a piqued Mohinder: "My father never minced words when he felt that injustice was being done. The authorities retaliated by ignoring my brother's claim for a Test cap. And I think I have suffered enough from their whimsical attitude."

Mohinder Amarnath began his Test career in 1969 but played only 69 Tests in a 19-year career. This is mainly because Mohinder has been repeatedly dropped from Test squads. And, on many occasions even insulted by the Board. Once, Amarnath was summoned

The furore over Amarnath's exclusion has raised questions about the constitution of the selection committee. Unless the committee is revamped more rebels will be born



Amarnath: lashing out at the selectors

to Chandigarh by the Board secretary. Since the captain of the Indian team was to be announced on that day, Mohinder naturally thought that he was being offered the captaincy. But the Board had other plans: Amarnath was brought over to serve as a substitute for Dilip Vengsarkar, in case the latter refused to sign the Board's contract. Vengsarkar, of course, signed on the dotted line. But Mohinder Amarnath was not even given an air ticket to fly back home.



The ace all-rounder has normally been silent on all controversies. But how much can a man suffer especially when his career is jeopardised by the whimsical decisions of the selectors? According to the legendary Mushtaq Ali, "I would have used much harsher language than 'a bunch of jokers' if I had been treated that way. Mohinder is one of our best cricketers. The selectors had no right to exclude him. It may be recalled that Sunil Gavaskar had also openly criticised the Board in the past, but the selectors did not have the guts to punish him for it.

What is a man like Raj Singh Dungarpur doing in the company of players like Chandrashekhar and Tamhane? According to many cricketers, no one could have confidence in a committee headed by Raj Singh



Nikhil Bhattacharya

Raj Singh; (inset) Mohinder: crossing swords

But Mohinder has finally queered the pitch for himself by flouting a key rule: as a signatory to the agreement of the Board, he was not allowed to write on the tour of the New Zealand side. But he has filed despatches for Dev Features, which appeared in newspapers across the country. This move automatically attracts suspension.

This blatant violation of Board rules has led to the speculation that Mohinder is set on playing in South Africa. Earlier this year, efforts had been made by South African industrialists to get a rebel Indian tour going. And, Mohinder was allegedly given the task to get a team together for a sum exceeding a crore of rupees. Board circles feel that by flouting laws, Mohinder has only ensured his exclusion from the Indian team to tour the West Indies.

Once he is dropped, Mohinder could turn around and say, "See, they've got me out again," and proceed to play in South Africa, if not as part of an Indian team, at least as an individual taking part in the Currie Cup, the national competition there. Such a move would ensure fat returns, but would also force the government to debar him from re-entering the country. In that case, insiders feel, Amarnath will take up residence in England.

Board president Biswanath Dutt has been very circumspect. "How can you indict a person before you actually hear him out," is what he says. "I have been empowered by the Board executive to set up a committee to go into the whole issue. After our first meeting, we will ask the player to tell us whether he actually called the selectors 'a bunch of jokers'." When asked whether this was necessary now, since Mohinder had already violated another rule by writing on the New Zealand series, he said, "That is a different issue. Of course, after hearing him, we will have to take that fact, too, into consideration. But I am not ready to condemn a person even before he has been proved guilty."

Although this was a placatory gesture on the part of the Board president, it is certain that Mohinder would be banned from playing for at least six months. But if he acknowledges the statement attributed to him and refuses to apologise, Board officials feel that Mohinder could be banned for life.

But if these decisions come before 23 January, 1989, and if Mohinder opts to play for South Africa, it would cause great embarrassment to the BCCI. On that date, the International Cricket Conference is to meet in London to consider a proposal placed by the West Indian board to ban all cricketers with South African links from playing Test cricket. England has been staunchly against passing a resolution to this effect and their efforts will certainly be bolstered by the fact that Mohinder has opted to play in South Africa.

Meanwhile, Mohinder Amarnath faces an uncertain future, his career jeopardised all the more with his recent statement that a country which suppresses Harijans has no right to condemn apartheid. It was, in fact, this remark that prompted speculation about his future. Bemoaning that the English cricketers were merely professionals earning a livelihood through the game, Amarnath felt it was wrong to ban them from playing in India just because some of them had earned some money in South Africa. The cricketer then went on to comment on the situation faced by Harijans in India

Whatever decision the Board takes, it is now certain that Mohinder has burnt his boats. But when will the BCCI clean its own house and constitute the selection committee more rationally? If there hadn't been a man like Raj Singh at the helm and the committee was not formed along regional lines, there would have been no complaints to begin with. It is a fact that the selectors hardly ever take pains to notice promising cricketers in their own regions—much less at the national level. Their judgements are on the basis of scorecards and word-of mouth assessments. Once the Board decides that the selectors themselves would be chosen on merit, the best cricketing talents could be garnered. But an ivory tower Board begets an ivory tower selection committee. In such a situation it is only natural that rebels would be born out of talented cricketers like Mohinder Amarnath.

Arijit Sen/*Calcutta*

ARCHITECTURE

A sphere of excellence

Auroville's architectural wonder is also the centre of petty squabbles

If Steven Spielberg suddenly came upon it, he would think it was the beginning of *E.T.* in real life.

Out in the middle of practically nowhere, in the 50 sq km settlement of Auroville 14 km from Pondicherry, architectural history is in the making: a spheroid space frame nearly four storeys in height. The likes of it do not exist in India and are rare even in the rest of the world. It is being put together, literally brick by brick, by 600-odd people from as many as 25 countries, disciples of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who founded Auroville, all of them participating in the birth of Matrimandir—the 'soul' of the 'City of Dawn'.

"It looks like a spaceship that has just landed in this wilderness," admits Piero, an Italian civil engineer supervising the construction of Matrimandir. But for most other Aurovillians, Matrimandir is, in fact, quite the opposite. It is a force surging out of the earth, the "central force" that the Mother spoke of, "the cohesive force of Auroville". Some of them even lament the Matrimandir's architectural splendour. "It is not meant to be a tourist must, it is not meant to be a temple," says Gille, a German civil engineer living in Auroville for nearly a decade who, like all Aurovillians, goes only by his first name. "For us, Matrimandir is really a physical manifestation of our aspiration to the divine."

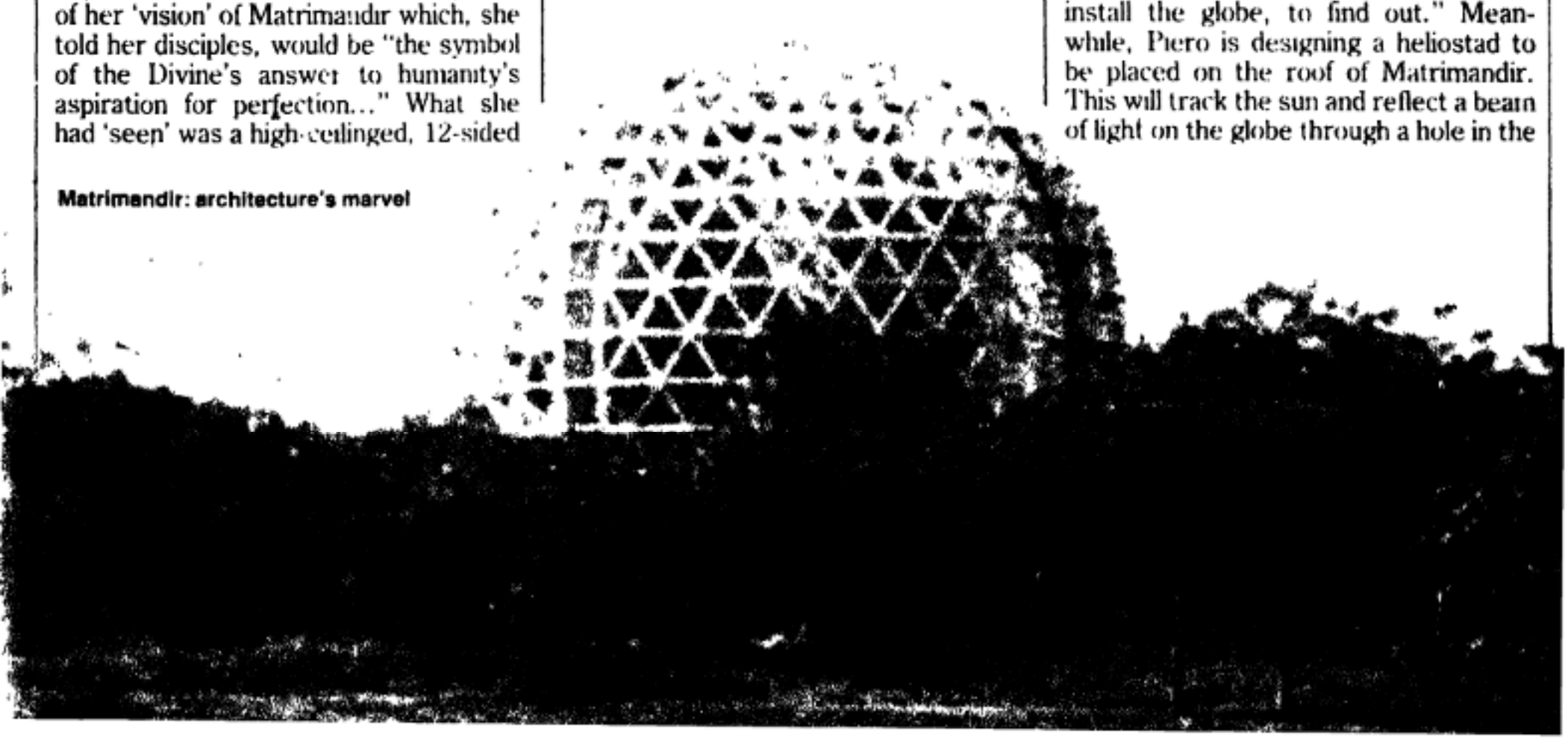
In 1965, the Mother had first spoken of her 'vision' of Matrimandir which, she told her disciples, would be "the symbol of the Divine's answer to humanity's aspiration for perfection..." What she had 'seen' was a high-ceilinged, 12-sided room like the inside of a column with 12 columns in it. And at the centre of the room, "a living light"—a crystal glass globe 70 cm in diameter, on which a beam of light would fall constantly, creating a strange effulgence. With little more than these guidelines, she had set two of her architect disciples, Roger Anger and Paolo Tommase, to work.

Many models later, a plan was approved and construction began in early 1971. It is a plan of simply grand proportions though it is but half-realised after 17 years of effort. The spheroid space frame—29 metres by 36 metres—is made of a network of concrete beams set in triangles. The 'skin', as the triangular network is called, is supported by four huge curving pillars. Suspended from these pillars is the inner chamber—15 metres in height, 24 metres in diameter, 12-sided and with 12 columns. The massive hall has just been finished. According to the plan, this windowless, air-conditioned and unlighted meditation hall will be completely marbled in white. And at the centre of the room will be the crystal globe.

Out in the midst of practically nowhere, in the 50 sq km settlement of Auroville 14 km from Pondicherry, architectural history is in the making

While the estimated cost of Matrimandir is put at Rs 3 crores—one that Piero feels will be overshot anyway—the crystal globe alone is being made for a phenomenal Rs 22 lakhs. And with good reason. A 70 cm diameter glass globe was a challenge no firm was willing to take up. Ultimately, it was the famous optical instruments company, Zeiss, of West Germany, which tentatively accepted the job. On 14 July this year, Zeiss reported success and Aurovillians who went to see it returned entranced. Technically, the globe is "optical", which means pure and perfect. And, as one Aurovillian who saw it said, "It had this quality of silence."

What remains a mystery, however, is the illusion that is to be created by a beam of light falling on the optical globe. "Will the globe reflect the light, let it pass through, or diffuse it?" wonders Mauna, who is in charge of the Matrimandir office. "We will have to wait till 15 August next year, when we plan to install the globe, to find out." Meanwhile, Piero is designing a heliostad to be placed on the roof of Matrimandir. This will track the sun and reflect a beam of light on the globe through a hole in the



Matrimandir: architecture's marvel



An open-air auditorium: part of the geometric Matrimandir grounds



Piero: discharging a tough job

inner chamber roof. At night, a set of four halogen lamps will be used.

Another dazzling aspect of the Matrimandir is going to be the 'skin' covering. Originally, architect Roger Anger had planned to cover the framework with enormous gold discs clamped on loosely to create an effect of a golden shimmer. When calculations showed that 10 kg of gold would be needed, Anger, who lives in Paris, considered anodising the discs for the same effect. But during a recent visit to Matrimandir, Anger was so impressed with the triangular network effect of the 'skin' that he changed plans once again.

According to the latest plan, sheets of especially constructed translucent glass would be fitted into each triangle of the frame so that the light can pass through and highlight the triangular pattern. The gold-anodised discs are to be retained, but in smaller size and fewer numbers. It is a plan for which the Institute of Science, Bangalore, and some big glass manufacturing and engineering companies in Madras have been roped in. Complicating the task is the fact that no two triangles in the framework are alike. So, glass sheets for every section will have to be measured and cut individually.

These complications are, however, delaying the completion of Matrimandir and causing some heartburn among Aurovillians. The old controversy between the two architects of the building—the French Roger Anger and the Italian Paolo Tommase has also been resurrected. When the Mother had first conceived of Matrimandir, she had contacted Roger Anger. But it was Paolo Tommase who had, of his own, come to the Mother with an 'inspiration' to build Matrimandir. Later, Mother had admitted that "I don't know at all if Roger is capable of feeling it (the divineness of Matrimandir), but Paolo is capable ..I think Paolo has a power of conviction in him."

The two architects submitted their respective designs: Anger in gold and Tommase in white marble. And even as the numerous permutations and combinations were being worked out, Anger literally 'stole' a march over Tommase. Tommase had visualised something very simple, "like a great shell, one part of which would come out of the surface and another part would be buried in the ground." When the Mother was shown the sketch by a disciple, Satprem, she asked: "Are you sure that he (Tommase) hasn't seen Roger?...(because) that was the first idea Roger told me, almost identically the same words..." to which Satprem had answered: "But Roger's idea is Paolo's idea, in fact."

Also a bone of contention are the plans for the Matrimandir grounds, which are "geometric" too, with 12 gardens and 12 lakes. "Paolo had started the whole thing in the spirit of a Japanese garden," says chief engineer Piero, "as the Mother had wanted it." What Mother had said was that the Matrimandir "will be surrounded by...tall trees, various kinds of flowers...There will be rockeries in Japanese style, with varieties of cactus, small waterfalls, small pools..." Today, however, the gardens are very formal, almost English in their symmetry. Paolo Tommase is reportedly so unhappy with Anger's oft-changing, complicated plans that he has,in a bit of a huff, limited his own interest to the inner chamber of Matrimandir only.

"For us, the gap between the fantastic and the real is very pronounced," says Piero, "but Mother's fantasy was almost a reality for her and she brought you too close to this fantastic realm." But even for someone who implicitly believes this, Roger Anger's design is within the "realm of possibility". Whether it will ever be fully translated into reality is something no one is taking bets on. The Aurovillians' patience, however, is remarkable. One Aurovillian, now dead, had 'predicted' in a book titled *A House Of The Third Millennium*, that Matrimandir would be ready only in February 2000, 29 years after it was started.

The Aurovillians are willing to wait. And the wait, even for the non-Aurovillians, is perhaps going to be worth it. If not inspire, Matrimandir is bound to impress even the most prosaic. To see anything else like it, one would have to travel all the way to Paris to see the marvel of modern architecture, the Geode, which is a spheroid spaceframe like the Matrimandir, with, what is more, a mirror finish. Or visit the Epcot Center in Florida which looks like a mammoth golf ball. But neither seems half as esoteric or as fantastic as this temple in a nearly forgotten settlement.

Monideepa Banerjie/*Auroville*

While the estimated cost of Matrimandir is Rs 3 crores—a figure that will be overshot anyway—the crystal globe alone will cost a phenomenal Rs 22 lakhs

Photographs Monideepa Banerjie

Time moves on, and the roles which were Rekha's, go to Sridevi. Yash Chopra's *Chandni*, for instance. The role, conceived with the Estee Lauder advertisement—Rekha—in mind, has now gone to her arch rival (in much more than professional matters, alone), Sridevi.

Whatever else the ageing siren might have taken lying down, this was quite obviously not it. She raged: "Who says Sridevi is all that young? Hadn't she done a role rejected by me, years ago, as a child artiste?"

Sorry, Ms Ganesan. But public memory, proverbially short, does not extend back to the golden age of your childhood

Or Sridevi's, for that matter.

It was life imitating art all over again

Starrers in this real-life drama were balding Pathan Mazhar Khan and the hapless *gurkha* of a multi-storied in Versova Bombay. The latter's only fault was that he had told Khan to park his car, blocking the entrance of the building, elsewhere. The response was a hearty shove.

Mazhar was heard rueing later: "No, I didn't slap him. But I wish I had."



Durgaprasad

Sridevi: Rekha's contemporary?



Rekha. age cannot wither me

Aamir Khan has finally come clean. About safely-stashed away wife Reena, that is. And the chocolate-box charmer chose the unlikely medium of the video film magazine *Lehren*, to announce the existence of Mrs Khan, to a world that knew all about her, anyway. Said Aamir, in his best grandiloquent Hindi film manner: "If I had to choose between my career and my wife, I'd choose my wife."



Aamir Khan: coming clean

Hindi cinema finally has its very own Lady Macbeth, complete with the out-out-damned-spot syndrome. And for Chunky Pandey the journey from prize stud to lady of the manor has been relatively painless. Not for his producers though, who sit twiddling their thumbs on the sets, while Chunky wallows in his bath and his imported soapsuds.

But give the guy a break. It's a tough job washing away those sins, accumulated with such relish. ■

Steps to fame

● *Their name has always conjured up visions of high-quality textiles and sprawling industrial complexes. But if Nita Ambani, the beautiful wife of the elder Reliance scion Mukesh, has her way, it may soon be closely associated with the arts—Bharatanatyam, in particular.*

Trained in dancing at the Raj Rajeshwari Dancing School under Guru Kalyansundaram, the doe-eyed Nita has been performing ever since the age of nine. But the high point of her career came with the role in Jeevan Swapna, *where the elder Ambani* bahu *played a simple village girl, who has vivid recollections of her earlier birth, when she was a princess.*



Nita Ambani twinkle toes

For the future, Nita would like to get together a troupe of her own, open a dance school and direct a dance-drama herself. It's a tall order but with the supportive Ambani clan squarely behind her, the going shouldn't be too difficult.

A tale of two cities

● First there was Maharashtra eyeing Belgaum. Now, Karnataka chief minister S.R. Bommai has obviously decided on revenge. And, if appreciation is what makes for possession, he has certainly claimed Maharashtra's pride, Bombay, for his own.

Recently in the city to be felicitated by the Kannada Sangha, Bombay, Bommai confessed: "I love Bombay more than I love Bangalore." Then, perhaps reminded of the touchy voters back

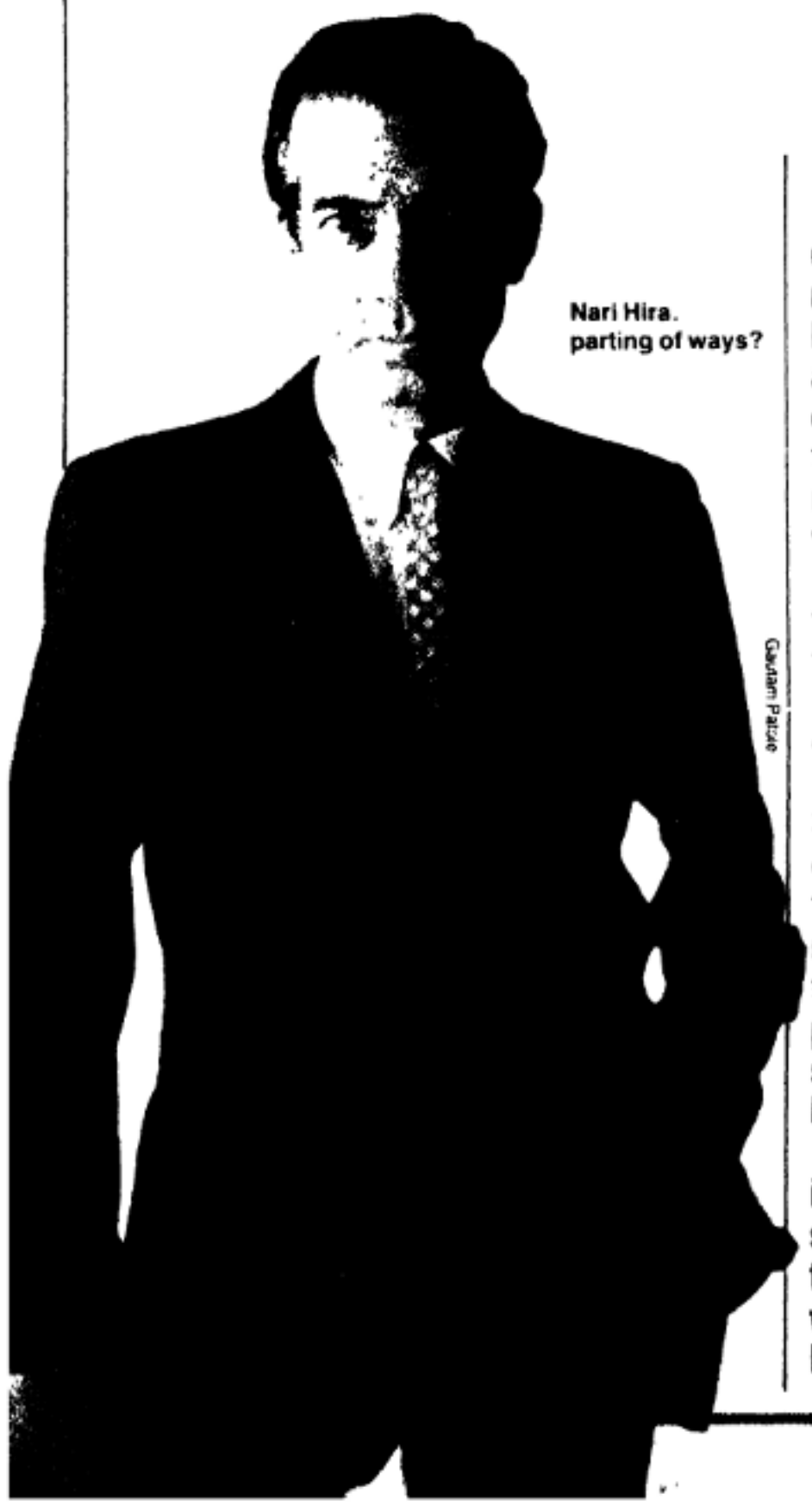


N Prasad

S.R. Bommai: the love of his life

home in Karnataka, hastened to add: "It is not that I love Bangalore less, but that I love Bombay more."

The please-one-please-all routine is all very well. Only one feels that he is going to have his work cut out, carrying it through.



Gautam Patade

Nari Hira. parting of ways?

Nari a partner?

● For once he is the subject, not the purveyor of gossip. Nari Hira, with success stories such as *Stardust* and *Parade* to his credit, has broken up with long-time friend and business partner Lalu Bajaj. Or so said those who very nearly always know.

Among their joint business ventures were Hiba Films (a video filmmaking unit) and Lana Publications. It was said of their partnership that while Bajaj provided the finance, the brains and flair were quite undoubtedly Hira's. And between themselves the two friends made enough money to maintain an apartment in London, a penthouse in New York and a swimming pool at second-floor level in Bombay.

Now, with Hira going solo into making ad films for television, people are wondering if there has been a parting of ways. But this is one story Nari's not going to tell.

Horseplay

● He likes the fillies Hardly had booze baron Vijay Mallya stepped off an international flight last week when he instructed his driver to make directly for the Mahalaxmi Race Course

No this was not to view one of the innumerable events sponsored by Mallya's liquid empire The newly-bearded liquor millionaire was rushing to the Cruickshank Indian 1 000 Guineas sponsored by his great rival and fellow alcohol tycoon Manu Chhabria

But Mallya's love of the fillies did not stop him from engaging in a quick powwow with Chhabria Perhaps they discussed what it would have been like to have been partners in Shaw Wallace Or maybe they did talk about the fillies



Vijay Mallya off to the races

Striking gold

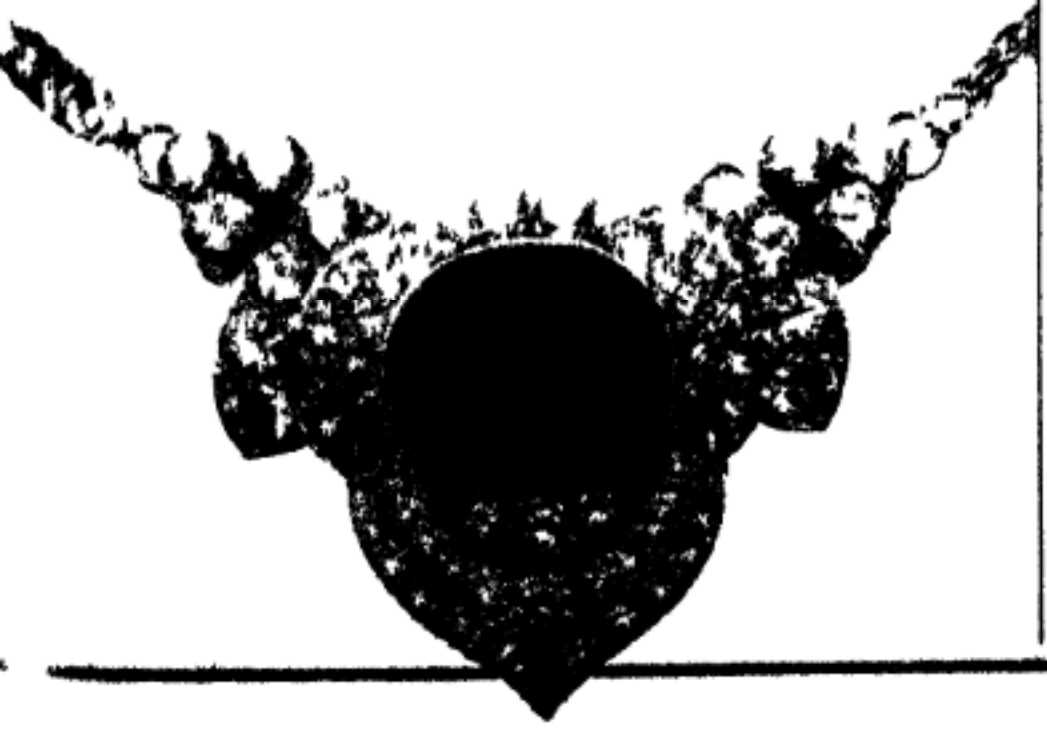
● *All that glitters is not gold And if it's Asha Kamal Modi's designer*



Asha Kamal Modi all that glitters

jewellery, it is silver, plated with 24-carat gold, and studded with precious and semi-precious stones Trained in jewellery design at the Indian Gemological Institute, Ms Modi's mission in life is to provide cheap (relatively, of course) ornaments to women Ornaments, which they can actually wear, instead of keeping stashed away in some bank locker

And as her recent exhibition in Delhi, called "Art Karat Creations 2000" proved, cheap can also be beautiful



A new act

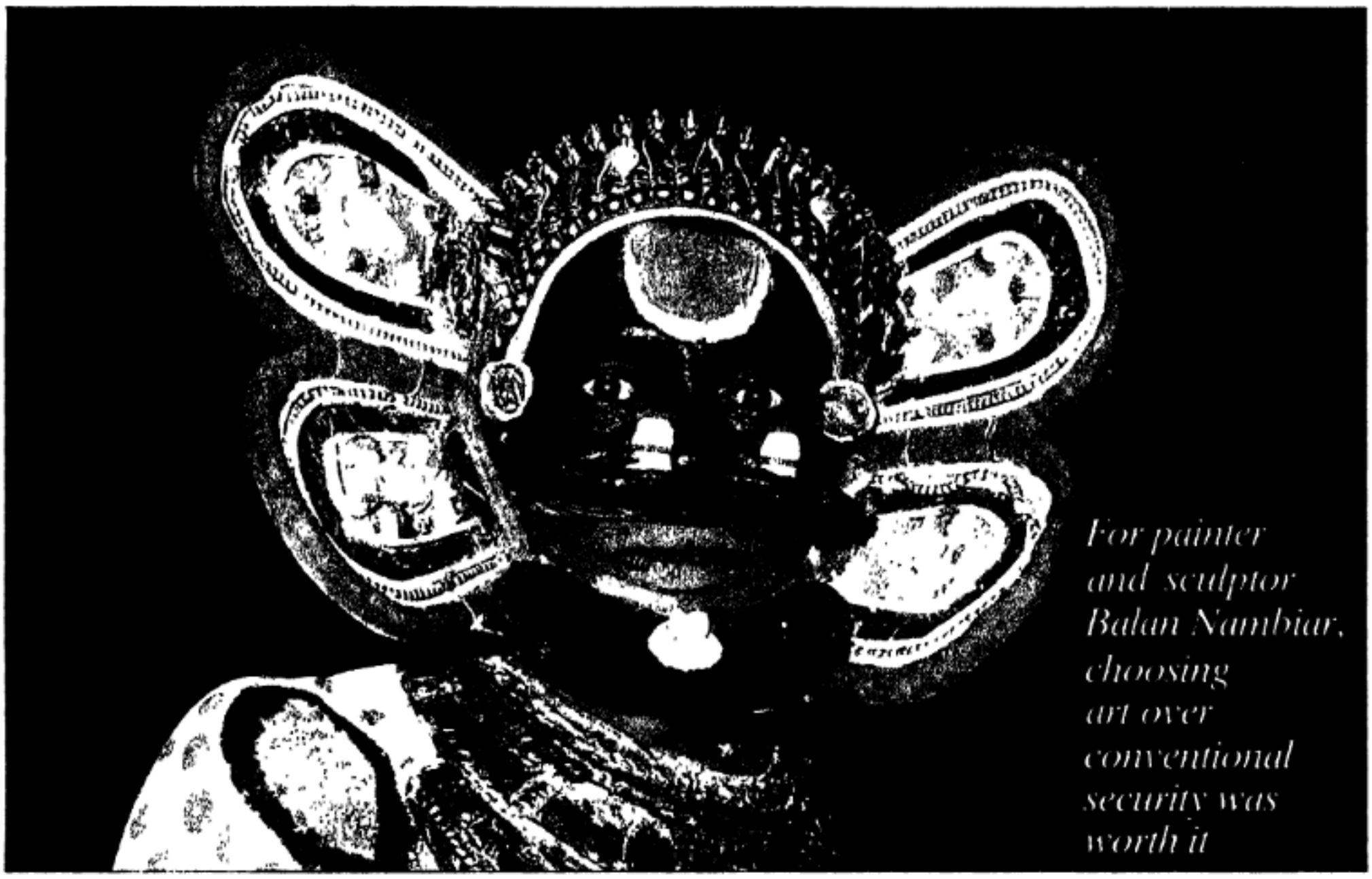
● **She has always been the literary one among the unlettered types that abound in the Bombay film industry, never mind her execrable attempts at poetry (only a ploy to ingratiate herself with intense director Gulzar, said some unkind ones). But, lesser nobility on the art film circuit, Deepti Naval, has excelled herself this time, having gone and written an entire script, all by herself.**

And the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) certainly has immense (some say, fond) faith in her ability. It has agreed to finance the film, titled *Aks*, totally. Part loans are, evidently, only for lesser lights.

The latest on Naval is that she is trying to convince Gautam Ghosh (of *Paar* and *Antarjali Jatra* fame) to direct it. It will be interesting to see if Ghosh goes the NFDC way.

Deepti Naval excelling herself





For painter and sculptor Balan Nambiar, choosing art over conventional security was worth it

The spirit calls



For the 28-year-old draughtsman holding a secure job with Indian Railways, it was a tough decision to make. In 1966 Balan Nambiar walked out of his job in Madras for a full-time career in the arts. To the members of his community, the Nayars of Kannapuram, Kerala, such action was little short of madness. But as Nambiar knew, the method behind his particular madness entirely justified this reckless plunge.

Since childhood he had been obsessed with the haunting and exotic ritual dances of his native west coast. And through the pursuit of art he has managed to liberate himself from the agony of that obsession. Today, the images of *Teyyam* and *Butha*—the ritual dances of north Kerala and south Karnataka—are the dominant motifs of Nambiar's artistic opus.

At his home in Bangalore the artist has a collection of 8,000 slides and 150 hours of music, painstakingly photographed and recorded by him over the years. Nambiar's imposing steel sculptures, bronze and concrete sculptures, paintings, and his latest passion, enamelling, are all imbued with the spirit of the dances. The muse is yet to exhaust its influence. Says Nambiar, "I have so far collected the names of 600 *Teyyam* forms and 400 *Butha* forms". In 1983 Nambiar attended *Poorna Nagamandala*, a ritual *Butha* festival of south Karnataka, held after 45 years. "In my lifetime I will not see it again."



Nambiar's fascination with the dances have made him perhaps the most versatile of Indian artists. "The ability of an artist is in realising and reaching the limits of the medium," he says. And he seems to know the limits of several mediums. Besides being an expert photographer, the artist, now an acknowledged expert on the ritual dances, has written several articles—published in international journals—and presented lecture-demonstrations with slides in Indian and European cities. In the course of 17 years, since he got his diploma in fine arts from the Government College of Arts and Crafts in Madras in 1971, Nambiar has won several national awards, held exhibitions all over the country and in Europe, has received the senior fellowship of the ministry of education and the prestigious Nehru Fellowship. For a boy who ploughed the fields in his native village until his adult years, the road to success has been long and eventful.

"It was K.C.S. Paniker who gave me the courage to leave the railways", recalls the artist gratefully. The late Paniker, principal of the Arts College at Madras, saw the young Nambiar's paintings at an exhibition in 1962 and told him to quit everything for art. Nambiar agonised for a while over the suggestion before yielding, inevitably, to the call of the wild and beautiful *Teyyam*. Says Nambiar, "Even before I knew how to write, I had been drawing pictures of the mother goddess (a ritual deity) on my slate". The images of the dance simply would not let him be. When his maternal uncle, who was his guardian in the absence of a father, gave him money to learn typing and shorthand, Nambiar cheated, "I learnt typing, but used the money for shorthand to pay for tuition from a drawing teacher." Soon enough, clandestine success followed when Nambiar passed a Madras board exam and became a drawing teacher for a year.

"I was always good at drawing and mathematics", says Nambiar. It was the latter aptitude that helped him in his private studies in engineering while in the railways. And his art shows an astonishing degree of familiarity with technology. When Nambiar first held his Garden Sculpture exhibition of 24 images in steel in Bangalore in 1975, it was a bit of a shocker. As the artist recalls, "The smallest sculpture was taller than me". The *Rice Plant* is a seven-foot steel sculpture. During his days at the Art College, Nambiar used to play truant and secretly work at the forge shop of the Indian Institute of Technology at Madras for five months. "It was against the rules. But our joint experiments at the forge shop were mutually satisfying, both for me and the engineering students."

Today, the images of Teyyam and Butha—the ritual dances of north Kerala and south Karnataka—are dominant motifs of Nambiar's artistic opus

The intense fusion of scientific precision with the impressionistic childhood images of the ritual dances have lent a unique quality to all his works. For instance the *Mystic Conch* is an eight-foot sculpture in glass-reinforced concrete. Says Nambiar, "It is mystic because in my village we believe that clockwise spirals on a conch are rare and hold magical powers". The sculpture is so designed as to show an equilateral triangle if the points on the three spirals were to be joined anywhere. Nambiar worked on this outside his native country. "In that cold January in West Germany in 1977 I chanted the *Gayathri Manthram* when I worked", says Nambiar.

Nambiar is perhaps the only Indian to have worked with glass-reinforced concrete in art. "The medium is seven times stronger than traditional cement concrete." The miraculously narrow neck in the huge conch is proof of its flexibility as well. Nambiar got the opportunity to work with the material at the R and D centre of the Portland Cement Factory in Heidelberg, West Germany. "One of the sculptures was exhibited at the Hanover Fair in 1977 and with that money I extended my stay in Europe to a whole year".

In that time he toured nine countries of the continent, "visiting every art gallery and museum". It was during his tour that he met Evelina De Poli, a nuclear scientist and daughter of the famous Paolo De Poli, the Italian who is



Independent stance

Balan Nambiar sticks to home territory

In 1970 when a young Balan Nambiar took two of his bronze sculptures to New Delhi for a national exhibition, he was told the facts of life. "If you want to make it big, come down to Delhi with a one-man exhibition and stay here for a while. You need contacts." But an angry Nambiar decided not to kowtow to the power base of the capital. He returned home and did not visit Delhi again till 1980—by which time he had already made a name for himself by his own efforts and commitment to work.

Today he says proudly, "I am one among the three practising artists in the country to have received the Nehru Fellowship. But I never went to Delhi for it." Nambiar insists that he be quoted on this. "I want people to know that it is possible to be an artist without going to New Delhi", he declares. By 1980, he had done his Garden Sculpture exhibition in Bangalore, toured Europe, held several one-man exhibitions and won many awards. Four of his garden sculptures were bought by the National Gallery of Modern Art in 1976. And he reminds you with a smile, "It was a direct purchase and not arranged through a Delhi exhibition".

Nambiar was cured of his aversion to Delhi by the late Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. Along with K.C.S. Paniker, artist-writer-educationist David Horsburgh and enamellist Paolo De Poli, Nambiar places Kamaladevi among the greatest influences on his life. "She was the most remarkable human being I have ever met", he says. Kamaladevi was fascinated by Nambiar's work with the



ritual dances and urged him to travel to Delhi and Bombay and give lectures. "Being herself from Mangalore in south Karnataka, she understood the importance of these art forms." Nambiar has lectured at the India International Centre, New Delhi, and at the National Council of Performing Arts. He now plans to tour all major cities in India with his lecture-demonstration on the ritual dances.

considered the greatest enamellist of the century. Nambiar eventually married Evelina when she came down to the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, on a research programme.

How did Nambiar get to Europe in the first place? "It was quite unusual," he smiles. In 1974 two of his paintings were bought by Air-India in Bombay and in exchange Nambiar was offered a free ticket to Europe. The artist waited for three years to collect some cash before he took up Air-India's handsome offer. Today he spends three months of every year in Europe, mostly to work with his newly-acquired skill in enamelling with his mentor and father-in-law, the great Paolo De Poli.

"Enamel in art is a difficult medium to master," explains Nambiar. "The process requires working with the components of the metallic base of copper, silver or gold, the enamel and colouring with oxides. The enamel itself, with the combination oxides, has to be heated at a temperature of 1,400 degrees Celsius for approximately 15 hours before it is powdered."The art of enamelling has existed in India since the 16th century, but only ten shades have been used. Nambiar says, "I have used upto a 100 shades".

Nambiar believes that the artist must be a dancer, musician, painter, choreographer, actor, scholar of mythology, astrology and astronomy

Not surprisingly, Nambiar's recent enamel art exhibitions at Bombay attracted rave notices. Said one review, "Balan's enamel paintings are fully evocative abstract works. His colours are exquisite...There is the influence of ritual images, the play of the mystical and cosmic in interweaving the organic and geometric shapes".

It is *Teyyam* that dances in the art of Nambiar. "It is a sacred dance in which the performer, dressed in elaborate and vivid costumes, invokes the divine spirit. Possessed by it, he, in a trancelike state, dances to the vigorous rhythms of *chenda* (drums), makes oracular statements and bestows blessings on the audience," writes Nambiar. He believes that apart from being well-versed in the rites of the occult and the mystic, the artist must be a dancer, musician, painter, choreographer, actor, scholar of mythology, astrology, astronomy and indigenous medicine. "It is a complete art form", declares Nambiar. His pictorial designs are drawn from memory without any reference material. There is a strong belief that deviation from tradition will harm the artist. And each *Teyyam*, Nambiar explains, is unique—its characteristics can be found in the facial paintings alone.

This maverick artist does not believe that the ritual dances are "Brahminical". He thinks they originate from pre-Aryan dance forms. Shiva, he says, is mostly the hero of an ancient ritual cult and all mother goddess deity forms are manifestations of Bhadrakali, the daughter of Shiva. Usually *Teyyam* performances are given by the "so-called lower castes", but during the ritual, the performer goes into a trance-like state and is possessed by the deity to be transformed into a medium between the audience and the gods.

Nambiar, drawn to this ritual year after year, is now engaged in writing an authoritative book on the subject—exploring yet another medium to present to the world. "We owe an enormous debt to the rural artists of the past", he says. "It is my attempt to at least acknowledge this debt by trying to understand the nature of that culture."

Prakash Belawadi/*Bangalore*

More light than heat

Amitav Ghosh's second book is startlingly different from his first

From the bizarre, at times exotic and explicitly eventful world of *The Circle of Reason*, Amitav Ghosh's acclaimed first novel, to the muted chiaroscuro of *The Shadow Lines*, his second novel, which has not inspired unanimous accolade, and in which even sharp and stirring incidents are gently filtered through the prism of reflective memory, denotes a sea-change. Normally, a novelist would approach the other shore, so radically different, only after many long wanderings. But Amitav Ghosh has reached it in a flash and this sudden arrival has bothered weekend reviewers who have found to their supreme dismay that history has not been woven into the destinies of the characters or that the narrative's progress has been disturbed by the onrush of memory playing truant with time. Such criticisms are understandable because critics abroad expected yet another model of the in-thing, 'magic realism', with all its web of fantasy and fable. And not having found it, they were nonplussed.

Yes, *The Shadow Lines* is decidedly different from *The Circle of Reason* in tone, texture, structure and style, and therefore, should also be assessed with fresh eyes. First, the characters—the narrator himself, Ila, grandma, Mayadebi and even Tridib—are common beings who neither aspire to be above average nor are made to appear so. Whereas Balaram, the tireless reformer and Zindi, the archetype of carnal assurance, startle us in his first novel, those in the second move us gently. We can even identify our lacklustre selves with them and this assimilation turns the novel into a part of our own experience, into our own living matrix out of which such poignant, intimate tales can emerge. Tridib's intellectualism carries the echo of our thwarted aspirations and the narrator's ties with his grandma rings endearingly familiar

But this intrinsic simplicity, even commonness, could descend to the level of forgettable banality in the absence of the Sahara and Mediterranean. That it has not is because of the reflective tone, excellent style and carefully built structure which have invested the known and the obvious with the depth and grandeur of the elemental. For example, the outbreak of communal riot in Dhaka and



Amitav Ghosh: treading new paths

Tridib's death have not only been consummately described but also cogitated upon in a manner that fuses the ideational and the emotional in one "indestructible structure of feeling" (to use Raymond Williams' expression). The essential feeling of inexplicable silence is conveyed beautifully: "This is a silence that is proof against any conceivable act of scorn or courage; it lies beyond defiance.

What welds the tone, style and structure together into a single medium refracting past and present simultaneously is the leitmotif of memory. Is it primarily the rich and painstaking remembrance of Marcel Proust dwelling, for hours on a single object? No, the compulsions of Amitav Ghosh's narrator are different. With a conscious spontaneity he weaves the tales of three families and, three locations (London, Calcutta, Dhaka) together, ties up this flow with the movement of history and, most importantly, raises searching queries to which neither the past nor the present can offer any definitive reply. At times, the question is distinctlyexistential as posed by the grandmother who is not in a position "to quite understand how her place of birth had come to be so messily at odds with her nationality".

The reader, however, never loses the thread in spite of this persistent cross-weaving of phases and places, and this underlines the author's artistry. Like a master craftsman he can transport us into those terrible nights when the Nazis rained bombs on London, in the next moment to the Sixties of Calcutta and thereafter to London again. Whereas the first contains an audacious evocation of Eros in the ruins of an auditorium, the second is alive with hopes to visit Dhaka where even a more distant past waits to be revived"

What is equally remarkable is that the overall reflective tone does not stand in the way of an agitated style or prose in ferment when events call for it. Moreover, when Ghosh willingly succumbs to it, his regulated strain of fantasy takes over. Thus while describing the narrator's drunken assault on May, or, more appropriately, the murder of Tridib in Dhaka, the style of the magic realist breaks through, vivid and fervid: "When I look around I see May: she's tiny, shrunken and behind her is that rickshaw, reaching heavenwards, like a gigantic anthill, and its sides are seething with hundreds of little men".

But the end is uninterrupted and calm, as the final phase of any tragic memory should be. It distils the experiences, desires and travels into one quiet redemptive embrace between May and the narrator. Both seem to spread a lasting, tranquil glow which questions the comment of the *Times Literary Supplement* critic who found more heat then light in this luminous novel.

Shubhoranjan Dasgupta



The intrinsic simplicity of the book could descend to the level of forgettable banality. That it has not is because of the reflective tone, excellent style, and carefully built structure

The Shadow Lines, by Amitav Ghosh, published by Ravi Dayal Publisher, New Delhi, 1988 Price: Rs 90

INTERVIEW

A dramatic affair

A British travelling group presents theatre in informal surroundings

Britain's Cafe Theatre specialises in presenting plays in an informal, intimate, relaxed atmosphere. The group also spends time with in the community, organising theatre workshops and discussions over coffee or dinner. Under the leadership of Derek Woodward, the group travels worldwide, performing to audiences across the barriers of race, culture and language. During their recent Indian tour, sponsored by the Oberoi Hotels, Rael Padamsee talked to Woodward about his group.

SUNDAY : What brings you here to Bombay, on this whirlwind tour?

Derek Woodward: It's every week in a different country really...and tell me, what actor gets the chance to stage a play, choose his own part, direct *and* travel! I consider myself fortunate. We actually spend two-thirds of our time interacting. Wherever we are—hoping to meet and serve the community of that particular city. People everywhere expect us to be commercial — but I want us to be *stimulating*.

What plays have you toured with in the Cafe Theatre so far? And how do you manage to lug your equipment all over the world?

Well, we are naturally limited in our choice of plays. A cast of 15 is just out of the question. We enjoyed stating Ira Levin's *Death Trap*, a cast of four; let's see, and then we did Willy Russel's *Educating Rita*—just a duo—but whatever we stage, we travel with all the trappings of the theatre. For instance, we've brought down one and a half tons of light and sound equipment. All our props are genuine—some of them are 100 years old, you know, they rustle and crackle as only material/cloth of those days would — in fact we carry the theatre *and* the set with us.

By that you mean you could travel anywhere right in the middle of the Sahara Desert and plop yourself down and do a show?

Well, we could, but we don't because essentially it's a "Cafe" atmosphere we seek. A large space where people gather, drink, eat and be entertained. It's a strictly urban atmosphere.

What methods do you work with? Do you, for example, give full freedom to your cast to improvise and create mood, moves, atmosphere?

Oh yes, we improvise but never ever on the stage. We discuss the play, its content and what we aim for in the text—the period, the language—during the initial rehearsals. I am very particular about blocking the play—only *after* the lines are learnt; new ideas are always worked out at rehearsals. I never allow an actor to do anything he's not comfortable with. And if your instincts tell you it's not right, you must resolve it yourself. Talk it out and when you know who you are and what you are doing you're on the right track. When there's a difference of opinion, I act as a filter.

Do you find, in your travels in many varied countries and communities that the reaction of the audience changes the performances?

We never allow this to happen. You must play the play and not let the audience play you. You see, if we stick

(left to right) Dolly Ostee, Patricia Linden and Judi Bowker in *Pygmalion*



to the text and the flow of the play that is inherent to the text, mood and structure, we find the audiences finally come round to seeing the play from our point of view. Initially there may be a tendency to laugh, to want to be entertained—but a strict discipline in performance is what we are clear and definite about—this way a balance is struck and we are true to the intention of the work.

Coming round to Pygmalion and the theme of the master/pupil relationship, are you exploring the text in a different way, for the 1980s as it were?

Yes, we've worked through the manipulative nature between man and woman, and in the play this does not arise because of her powerful personality. In our version we stress the change *she* brings over him. She returns as an equal, as a woman. In the film, if you remember, when she returns he yells for his slippers. She smiles, knowing full well that his dependency on her will eventually bind him to her, where perhaps she will emerge the master.

> **"Essentially it's a Cafe atmosphere we seek. A large space where people gather, drink, eat and be entertained"**

Do you stress the "theatrical" in your work?

If you mean theatrical as defined by the dictionary – "unreal" and "unnatural"—my answer is no! There is nothing wrong with fantasy and extension—the great art is to extend and then retain. Therefore one must decide the balance between the talent of the actor and the size of the theatre – that determines the theatricality. A tenuous thread is thrown from the stage to the audience and the actor must always be able to recapture it.

We understand that your Cafe Theatre holds workshops as part of its programme in the city. Do you all participate?

Only two or three at a time and (laughs) the workshops are actually aimed at getting people to stop acting all the time. In reality, there's more acting done off the stage, for instance, businessmen are on the boards as they enter office and sometimes extend their "act" at home. Let's say, we all wear masks, but the person behind the mask is often trapped by the mask. There is, in fact, a Greek poem, which touchingly describes the effect of the mask —where the person and the mask eventually become one.

Are you sensitive to the other performing arts such as music and dance and are you conscious of the fact that the theatre is in danger of losing its hold on the young mind—rivalled as it is by the enormity of popular music, for example, rock music?

I feel that the young mind overreacts to the blinding images of light, sound, clothes and the overall hype created by rock musicians and rock concerts today. These elements somehow seem to satisfy the tortured soul in the young today. They seek sensation in drugs, in the deafening roar of amplification. It frightens me that children are reaching out and buying this form of unreality. Communication today seems to be lost. Religion also has lost the means to communicate with the young who are in search of some truth in an effective means of communication. I feel the youth today are more out of touch with reality than they ever were...We are trying to work through street theatre and workshops with children in the hope that we reach their minds, and hold out an alternative.

What is your personal dream for the theatre?

My dream is to have actors from different countries performing with each other in a universal language in a common space, uniting the forces of "artistic" change. ■

(left to right) Derek Woodward, Stuart Sherwin and Judi Bowker in *Pygmalion*



BOOK EXTRACT



Eight annas a tail

Hugh Allen came to live in India after being injured in World War II, just when the British were preparing to leave. It was probably his passion for wildlife and hunting that made him decide to buy a farm in Madhya Pradesh. But he has always been a "reluctant predator" who deplores needless cruelty to animals—as this shikar *story demonstrates*



It was six o'clock of a May morning and already unpleasantly warm. As Babs and I sipped our early tea under the shade of the trees near the house we told each other quite unnecessarily that it was going to be another scorching day. Speaking for myself I did not really mind: the hot month of May is a slack one and I was going to spend the morning on a cool verandah with a new book; after lunch I might raise the energy to answer some letters

Jumbo, one of the dogs, was feeling lazy too and lay stretched at my feet, a shaggy and rather oversized cocker spaniel. He had always hated the heat, and unless I took him down to the river to bathe he would not stir out until the cool of evening; for he was a wise old man of 12 summers

Those were our plans at six in the morning and for a hot day they were sound. Unfortunately they did not last very long; for even as we made them, fate and the jungle were decreeing that our day should be very different indeed. For me it was to be a day that is still branded across my memory; for poor old Jumbo it was to mark the end of the road...

Bandarwallahs! Bandarwallahs! It was Kalu racing up through the orchards and shouting as he came. I knew at once what he was coming to tell me, another raid by the 'monkey-men' who had already visited us twice before. As soon as Kalu had caught up with his breath I asked him where he had seen them. When he had told me, I gulped down my tea and then went in to dress.

This time I was really going to catch them and discourage further visits; for these are cruel devils that come armed with nets, clumsy traps and old muzzle-loading guns. The live monkeys—and they prefer them to be very young—are for export and vivisection; the ones they cannot catch in their traps are shot down for the new government reward of eight annas a tail.

Illustrations. Bimal Das

Now you might well imagine that as a farmer with large orchards I should be only too happy to let these men go over the estate as often as they pleased. That, however, would be a wrong idea because by now I have the monkey situation pretty much under control whenever any fruits are on the trees. The monkeys of course always do some damage, but this is more than offest by the help these little animals give you about the jungles. Indeed, they might even save your life for they will often tell where a tiger or a leopard is hiding after a badly placed bullet.

That morning, as soon as I was dressed, I set off after the monkey men with Jumbo at my heels. We walked fast for I was hoping to find them before they could do much damage. I was carrying a rifle while Jumbo had his old red and blue ball bulging from his mouth. Somewhere, he hoped, we should stop by water and play his favourite game.

I was making for a deep and shady *nullah* which runs diagonally through the



estate and divides it into two almost equal halves. The banks of this are lined with magnificent trees, most of them tall stately *kohas*, which are loved by the monkeys for the cool shade of their topmost branches. So it was somewhere along here that I expected to find the monkey-men at work because this *nullah* is more than three miles long and the trees above it 'home' for at least six troops of monkeys.

For the first mile I found no sign of the raiders. Then I picked up what were almost certainly their tracks: five pairs of human feet, the prints fresh and over the marks of the hooves and pads left by last night's visitors. At one spot these men had stopped to rest. The ground here was littered with *bidis*, the Indian leaf cigarette; and in one place against the bank some heavy bundles had been thrown down, one of them leaving on the sand a criss-crossed pattern like a net.

If those signs had not been enough to tell me that the monkey-men were not far ahead, the next pool 200 yards down the *nullah* left no doubt of it. The grey bodies of two *langur* monkeys lay just by the water's edge. One was dead and nearly cold, the other still lived though its life was flowing rapidly away into a pool of blood seeping into the sand. Both bodies were peppered with red-brown spots where the shot that had brought them tumbling from the trees had slammed in. Neither of the monkeys had a tail.

I had known the troop from which these monkeys came for many years and had always regarded its little members as some of my best jungle friends. In many ways this was the most useful troop of all along the whole stretch of the *nullah*. The ground here is tricky; beyond the banks it is covered with heavy forest and to the north rises steeply to several hundred feet. Towards the summit of this high ground are patches of open rocky scrub. These places are difficult to reach: the way up to them is over large boulders which have between them a mass of 'wait-a-bit' thorns and other rampageous weeds; these hide deep crevices so completely that a false step can mean a heavy fall; end up at the bottom of one of these with a broken limb and you might never be found.

All these high places are loved by leopards. They come up in the early morning to take the sun and stretch out on the flat-topped rocks. As the day gets warmer they move to some shady spot to doze away the drowsy hours until night; but although they appear to sleep, one eye is always cocked towards the *nullah* below. Long stretches of it are laid bare from these high places and anything moving on the sandy bed can be seen plainly. It is seldom that there is not a leopard somewhere about here, and whenever one of these sneaking brutes becomes a nuisance, this is the spot I come to first. Then it was that the monkeys used to help, for if a leopard was indeed about they would tell me—sooner or later—where it was.

As I looked up from the bodies of the two monkeys a cold anger took hold of me. The whole troop seemed to have been wiped out for there was no sign of the others anywhere. No swaying branches up in the trees as they swung from bough to bough, and in the air were none of their usual cries as they quarrelled and played above the pool. For the next 15 minutes my anger mounted and there was but one thought in my mind: to catch these men, free whatever captives they had, and—but that could wait until I caught them.

I was about to go after them when I noticed that Jumbo was no longer at my heels. I whistled softly to bring him up from the pool in the *nullah* below. He was probably there wallowing like a buffalo with his beloved ball near his nose waiting for me to come and play. But there was no time for that now, so I sent down another and more urgent whistle when he did not come up to the first one.

I felt the first tinge of anxiety when a third call failed to bring him up. In a flash every other thought was swept from my mind and I raced back to the pool. Jumbo was not in sight, and when I started back the way I had come I saw none of his pug marks following mine. Now I was really worried. He was an obedient dog who without word to break would not have gone far on his own affairs.

From the pool I had just left to the one where we had found the two monkeys was just over a quarter of a mile with the *nullah* between them shaped like the



letter S. Slowly I worked back scanning the sand for sign of Jumbo. But there was none, the soft surface showed only my own boots, the feet of the monkey-men and the tracks of wild animals.

There was still no trace of him when at last I was standing by the pool on the far side of which were the two monkeys. Across that placid surface was the last spot where I positively remembered Jumbo at my heels. So, from somewhere between where I stood now and the other end of the water—a distance of only 80 yards—that faithful old dog had vanished into thin air.

My eyes went to the little ledge running along by the water at the foot of the bank. A feeling of sick apprehension was churning inside me and every instinct was warning of what I should find when I went along that ledge

For five minutes more I stood still and listened to the jungle. Nothing was excited, all the birds were going about their business in a calm way, and from



The 'monkey-men' are cruel devils who come armed with nets, traps and muzzle-loading guns. The live monkeys are for export and vivisection; the ones they cannot catch are shot down for the new government reward of eight annas a tail

nowhere around me came the slightest sign that anything was wrong. What I needed to tell me the truth was monkeys, but when I scanned the trees again there was still not one in sight. Slowly I started towards the ledge by the side of pool.

Half-way along it I stopped In the firm clay at my feet was the whole story and it told me that Jumbo was dead

Almost at the water's edge was the single imprint of a leopard's paw. The pad had rammed hard into the clay with the toes wide-cleft and the claws straining out. A little to the left of the pug a small patch on the ledge had been swept clean of the debris and dead leaves fallen from the trees above. The leopard had sprung down from the bank, seized Jumbo by the neck, and then shaken him so violently that his body had swept that patch. And about a yard from the ledge, motionless and just showing above the surface of the pool, a spot of faded red and blue that was Jumbo's old ball

Of the attack I had heard nothing, and why Jumbo had stayed so far behind me I shall never know. I can only think that he must have lingered about the bodies of the two monkeys and then, when he set out to follow me, he had picked up the leopard's scent. That would have stopped him, for he was well aware of the danger from these sneaking cats. By then I must have been round the first bend of the S in the *nullah*.

From the swept patch the leopard had gone on along the ledge carrying Jumbo with his legs trailing through the dead leaves by the water's edge. Then, a few yards beyond the pool, Jumbo—still alive—had broken the leopard's grip and shaken free. For a few glorious seconds, for he was a fighting man, he had kept the leopard off. The sand here had been wildly churned by both the leopard's pugs and Jumbo's in what had been a short but furious melee. Then sheer brute force had driven Jumbo back against the bank where he had been seized again From here the leopard had gone on down the *nullah* and then had bounded up the bank towards that rocky and difficult ground.

I followed slowly, the trail made easy by frequent spots of blood. After climbing steeply for about 15 minutes I stopped. From a dense patch of scrub farther up the slope I had suddenly heard the leopard.

I am not going to try to describe my feelings. All I can say, passing over the agony, is that a burning fury was urging me on to rush forward and stop those dreadful sounds by any means. But I fought the urge back. To rush forward now would probably send the leopard flying from the back of the scrub and leave him free to operate another day. It might have been very unwise, too, and no help to Jumbo now, to rush straight at an unsuspecting leopard on a fresh kill. Patience was the only thing. If I held my hand and waited I might get the revenge I wanted.

But not from here. When I had looked around me again I soon saw that I could get no nearer to the leopard without giving myself away The ground was too difficult the 50 or so yards I still had to climb before I stood the slightest chance were strewn with rocks and crackling leaves The leopard had picked his spot with instinctive cunning and from no side could he be surprised, the only thing was to leave him where he was and then set a trap on ground of my own choosing

The morning by now was so hot that there was one place the leopard was sure to come to when he had finished. That place was the pool immediately below me When he came down to drink, as he must, I could kill him from the other side of the *nullah*

With the greatest care I crept away from those heart-rending sounds, back down the rocks, then across the *nullah* and up the opposite bank where I found some cover to hide me.

The leopard took his time. It was over half-an-hour before I heard him moving on the hill —an animal unsuspicious of any danger. About half-way down he started to roll in the dead leaves; then he spent some time cleaning his claws, tearing them through the bark of a tree with sharp, plucking little jerks. All at once I saw him weaving through the trees at the foot of the high ground across the *nullah*— a comparatively small animal as his pugs had

shown. When he reached the bank above the pool he *paused* and looked dto his right and left. A moment later he came down the bank in a gracefully controlled slide to stand on the ledge beside the water.

He gave me a beautiful broadside shot as he bent to drink with the points of his elbows sharp above his back. But I was a little too eager to see him dead and raised the rifle a shade too quickly. The leopard saw the movement from the corner of his eye. In a flash his head was up and looking straight towards me. As he braced for the spring that would take him away to safety I snatched at the trigger.

I heard the bullet strike and saw the leopard leap into the air. At the top of his jump he twisted and clawed for the bank. For one uncertain moment he hung there fighting for a hold with a blur of scrabbling paws. As I ripped back the bolt I thought he was going to drop; but with a sudden effort he was up and racing away through the trees. The bullet I sent after him hit a rock well behind his tail.

Although the first shot had been poorly placed he was nevertheless a badly wounded animal and that mad rush would not take him far. Or so I thought, but when I went to look for him I sought in vain for over an hour. There was no sign of him anywhere about the spot where I thought he should have fallen; nor on the high ground was there any trace of his passing; and nowhere was there a single drop of blood. At last I came to the conclusion that I must have left him somewhere behind me and so decided to go back to the beginning—the claw marks at the top of the *nullah* bank.

From here, as I had seen before, his first wild rush had taken him about a 100 yards. Then all trace of him was lost as the ground began to rise and became rocky. I started to search around the end of this trail again, and I had only been going for about a minute when I suddenly found a clue. Across the side of a rock was a heavy smear of blood. As I bent down to examine it I was wondering how I could have missed it the first time.

But had I missed it? The rock had been catching the full rays of the sun for some time and was burning hot when I touched it. Now my follow-up had started more than an hour before, yet this blood was still wet and just beginning to trickle down the rock. *I've walked right into it!* As the thought hit me I froze beside the rock: the leopard had been here within the last few minutes and now was probably watching me from somewhere close by.

As I started to limp towards home, a whistle instinctively formed on my lips to call up Jumbo before I remembered. I paused and looked down at the dead monkey. Its little face seemed slightly ashamed and saying, 'I couldn't really help it, you know'

Any sudden movement now might bring the enraged beast on top of me. He might come even if I did not move, but it was safer to stay crouched by the rock and let my eyes search as far as they could from under the brim of my hat. There was no sign of him in front of me, so fervently hoping that he was not somewhere close behind I started slowly to my feet. A few breathless moments later, after I had looked all round, the tension slackened. The sudden rush would have come before now if the leopard had been really near.

It had been a nasty scare and I now started off much more cautiously. Not far from the blood-smeared rock a game-path led towards the *nullah*. That was the way I thought the leopard would have gone. The heat now was like a furnace and a burning thirst had probably driven him back to the pool. I was, however, taking no more chances; for it was just as possible that he had moved on from the rock because he had heard me coming and might now be waiting in ambush somewhere ahead.

As I moved slowly towards the pool I found more blood on the path. This certainly was the way he had gone and I doubled my precautions. Every bit of cover likely to conceal a leopard was now suspect indeed and had to be scrutinised carefully before going on. After I had stalked forward for another 100 yards the ground in front of me rose in a gentle fold before it rolled down to the *nullah* on the other side. If the leopard was planning mischief, just over the crest of that was a likely place for him to spring it.

A little before the fold started to rise I left the game-path and went 30 yards to the right of it. From this new position I began to creep up the slope as carefully as I could. At the top of it I paused with my finger on the trigger and my eyes everywhere at once. Suddenly I knew that the leopard was not here. Of that I was perfectly sure, for on one of the topmost branches of a *koha* tree almost above my head was a monkey.

From where it sat it could take in a sizable piece of the surrounding jungle. Yet it was calm and quiet, and from the ground appeared to be dozing. That told me that no leopard was or recently had been anywhere near here; for if that monkey had caught even a glimpse of its spotted hide it would now be racing round the tree and screaming in high alarm.

With the tension suddenly slackened and the leopard heaven knew where, I fished out a pipe. Why, I wondered as I filled it, had the leopard so abruptly changed his mind and avoided the *nullah?* The most probable answer was that he had either seen or heard me close behind him and had realised the danger of going down to the pool. If that was true, then he had for a certainty doubled back to the high ground. One thing, however, was sure: the leopard knew where I was and so it would be unwise to go back from my present position. The



safest thing was to let him think I had lost his trail by going on to the *nullah*. Then, once I was by the pool and out of sight, I could fool him by working round to the high ground from behind.

As I started towards the path leading down to the pool I was thinking again of Jumbo. Once more I was living through the agony of hearing the leopard at his meal. So it happened that as I reached the path the memory of that ordeal was undoubtedly dulling my mind and in some odd way splitting it into two differently thinking parts. I was half-way down the path when I came abruptly into the deep shadow cast by the trees along the bank. Just beyond this and straight ahead of me was a patch of blinding sunlight and the dazzling reflection from the pool. The two together were so bright that for a moment I closed my eyes.

When I opened them again it seemed that one part of my mind showed me the spotted back of a leopard crouched half behind the root of a tree and a small bush on the path six feet ahead. At the same time the other part of my mind was assuring me that no leopard could be there while a monkey sat silent overhead. A little confused but nevertheless sure that this could not be a leopard I walked on expecting to see that spotted back resolve into the litter of dead leaves it had to be.

It was only one pace short of the bush that my confusion vanished when the full length of the leopard leapt into view. For a second that seemed eternity I looked down at him. Neither of us moved and for one brief moment I thought he was dead. But he was alive, and an instant later, with a snarl of rage, he reared up in a blur of flailing paws. I tried to leap clear and went crashing into the bank. As I fought to keep my balance, sharp claws raked down my left leg. I raised my foot to kick them off and the leopard's jaws snapped shut round the heel of my boot. I slammed it down with his head still clamped to it. But with my foot caught tight I lost the last of my balance and fell heavily to the path.

Now he had me. A quick spring and the game was his. But he did not move. He might have been dead except for his furious eyes screaming hate into mine. I knew then that he was at his last gasp, but even though his strength was failing fast I could feel his jaws straining tighter round my boot. By now I had found and grabbed up the rifle. The next second I jammed the muzzle into his mouth and pulled the trigger.

He died at once. But although I had felt the blast through my boot it was some little time before I had prised his fangs from the rubber heel. Reaction hit me as soon as my foot was free. I was trembling with shock and my heart was pounding at top speed while the deep claw marks down my leg were streaming blood. I should have liked to lie down beside the dead leopard, but before I could move a wild scream of terror ripped through the air. It came so abruptly and held such a chilling note that I was on my feet in a flash and grabbing for the rifle expecting I knew not what.

All at once I remembered the monkey. It had to be that for the scream had come from high above me. From where I was I could not see it through the leaves of the trees, but the scream had startled me so much that I began to run towards the top of the bank. Just as I reached it and was looking up, the scream came again and stopped me in utter amazement.

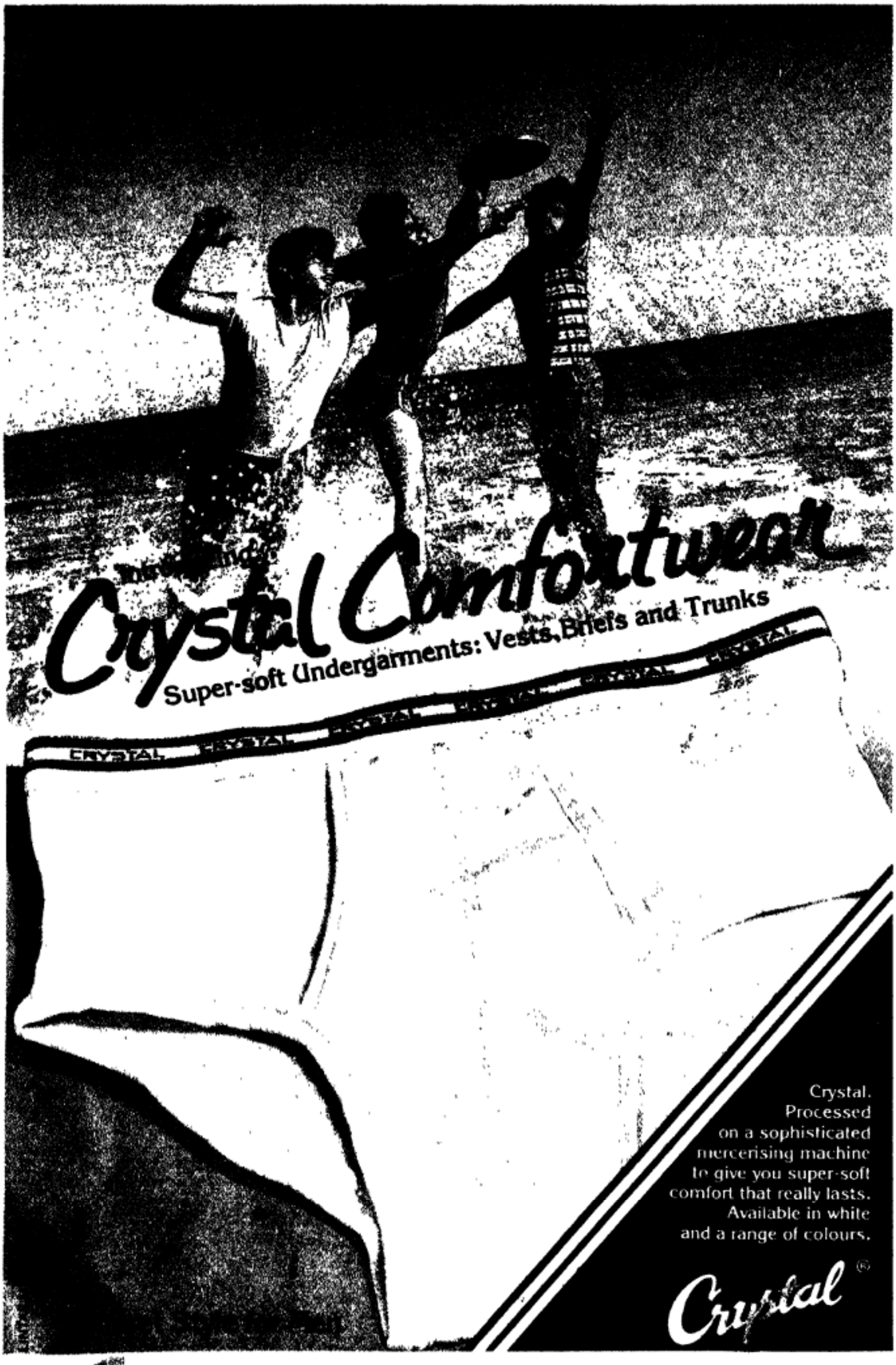
What sort of monkey was this? It didn't call at leopards and seemed so bad at climbing trees that it was about to fall off the one it was on; for it was hanging from a branch with its arms at full stretch and kicking its legs feebly in the air. Without warning the scream rent the air again. Then before my startled eyes the monkey let go its hold. It dropped like a stone, a sudden twisting flash of grey that hurtled down thumping from branch to branch until it hit the ground with a sickening thud 60 feet below.

I was still surprised, but as I made my way down to it an idea was forming in my mind. The monkey had fallen by the water's edge with its face upwards and one quick look was enough to tell me why it had not called at the leopard and why it had fallen off the tree. It was a young male monkey and it had been dying for hours. Its body was peppered with the shot from a muzzle-loading gun and it had been blinded in both eyes. It would have fallen from the tree in any case, but I believe that the sudden report of my shot at the leopard had so terrified it anew that it slipped from its perch; then, weak from loss of blood and hanging over a 60-foot drop in a strange and frightening world of blackness and pain—well, who wouldn't scream?

At last I slung the rifle and started to limp up the slope towards home. As I stepped out a whistle instinctively formed on my lips to call up Jumbo before I remembered. At the top of the slope I paused and looked down at the dead monkey. Its little face seemed slightly ashamed and saying, 'I couldn't really help it, you know.'



Great Indian Hunting Stories, ed Stephen Alter Published by Penguin Books (India) Ltd., New Delhi, 1988 Price Rs 60


Crystal Comfortwear
Super-soft Undergarments: Vests, Briefs and Trunks
CRYSTAL
Crystal.
Processed
on a sophisticated
mercerising machine
to give you super-soft
comfort that really lasts.
Available in white
and a range of colours.
Crystal ®

BEGINNING 25 DECEMBER 1988 BY AMRITLAL



ARIES (21 March—20 April) You might have to travel a lot now On the financial front, things will look up The stars are favourable for gambling and speculation All of you, however, are advised to consult your elders before doing any important work Keep an eye on your health and diet Your lover will be in a forgiving mood but this is not the ideal time for romance
Good dates: 28, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 1, 3,and 4
Favourable direction: North



TAURUS (21 April—20 May) This is a favourable week for you Sportsmen, artists and businessmen will do well The domestic front will remain peaceful Most of you will gain through an inheritance If you have children one of them might fall sick The stars are not favourable for lovers You might have to go on a short journey A letter will bring a pleasant surprise
Good dates: 25, 26 and 28
Lucky numbers: 2, 8 and 9
Favourable direction. North east



GEMINI (21 May—20 June) To succeed, you must be pushy but do not waste your time over socialising Students will do well in their examinations Politicians will score over their opponents Businessmen will be able to launch new ventures Professionals will prosper too If lovers have thought about getting married they can go ahead with their plans
Good dates: 27, 29 and 31
Lucky numbers. 3, 4 and 5
Favourable direction: South



CANCER (21 June—20 July) This is an extremely lucky week for businessmen But avoid legal hassles Employees will either be promoted or transferred to a place of their choice The phase is especially favourable for romance and marriage The domestic front will be peaceful Financially, you will be better off The stars are favourable for filmstars
Good dates: 2, 27 and 28
Lucky numbers: 5, 7 and 9
Favourable direction: South-east



LEO (21 July—20 August) If you are careful and hard-working things will work out Do not give up easily Businessmen and professionals will do especially well A promotion is on the cards for those who are employed in the private sector Do not hesitate to take calculated risks as the stars are favourable now The domestic front will remain peaceful
Good dates. 26, 28 and 30
Lucky numbers: 4, 6 and 8
Favourable direction: West



VIRGO (21 August—20 September) This is not a good week for you Do not be extravagant as the financial front does not look too bright Businessmen must not sign any contracts now Do not be impulsive Make plans for the future If things do not work out now don't lose heart, happier days are not far ahead Love and matrimonial affairs are favourable
Good dates. 25, 29 and 31
Lucky numbers: 2, 3 and 5
Favourable direction: North



LIBRA (21 September—20 October) At least one big opportunity will come your way this week Financially you will be better off and in a position to repay at least a part of your debts Friends will prove to be extremely helpful Court cases will be settled in your favour Those in the judicial service will do exceedingly well The time is not opportune for lovers
Good dates: 26, 27 and 30
Lucky numbers: 3, 5 and 7
Favourable direction: South



SCORPIO (21 October—20 November) A fair measure of good luck is in store for you However, if you really want to make it big you must supplement your good luck with a bit of hard work Be tactful while dealing with elderly relatives to ensure peace at home Politicians are advised to watch out, their enemies will try to get at them The time is not right for matrimonial correspondence
Good dates: 25, 26 and 29
Lucky numbers: 2, 6 and 7
Favourable direction: North-west



SAGITTARIUS (21 November—20 December) The stars are favourable for those who are employed in the corporate sector and government departments. This is the ideal time to invest some money Gamblers will have a good spell Businessmen should not hesitate to take risks The domestic front may not remain peaceful A new friend will help you
Good dates: 27, 29 and 30
Lucky numbers: 1, 3 and 5
Favourable direction. South west



CAPRICORN (21 December—20 January) You are advised to rely on your own intuition during this period The health of an elderly member of the family will cause you some anxiety Otherwise the domestic front will remain peaceful. Businessmen will have to tap hidden resources A promotion may be in the cards for government servants Actors will do well
Good dates: 27, 28 and 29
Lucky numbers: 7, 8 and 9
Favourable direction. East



AQUARIUS (21 January—20 February) But for the deteriorating health of someone very close to you, this will be a happy week for you Professionals will be very busy and also win the praise of their superiors Businessmen will strike some lucrative deals and make a lot of money, those who are looking for a business partner will find one Creative artists will do well
Good dates: 25, 26 and 27
Lucky numbers: 4, 5 and 6
Favourable direction: North



PISCES (21 February—20 March) You will be able to get rid of most of your financial problems this week and clear your debts Legal disputes will be settled in your favour Professionals will do very well You had better utilise all the opportunities that you get A journey is in the offing The opposite sex will be very helpful. You are advised to be tactful
Good dates: 29, 30 and 31
Lucky numbers: 2, 4 and 8
Favourable direction: South

Star Partners: Virgo—Virgo

A similar outlook on life could be the reason for the beginning of this affair and as both the Virgo man and the Virgo woman are idealistic, they will work hard to maintain their relationship. As both have a critical eye, it would be better if they could pursue separate careers so that their time together would be harmonious and pleasant

ODDS AND TRENDS

High spenders

To the average stiff upper-lipped Englishman, the results of a survey conducted by British Tourist Authority (BTA) will come as a shock. While there is extensive film footage showing naked, half-starved Indian children with begging bowls in their hands, few had even realised that Indian tourists ranked among the largest spenders in the world. In 1986 alone, some



136,000 Indians visited the UK and spent as much as £ 51 million. The survey goes on to report that the Indian tourist spent as much as £ 375 compared with the overall average of £ 389 for all other tourists. Sightseeing, shopping and visits to famous English parks and gardens interest Indian tourists the most with a majority of them making over three trips to Britain in less than 30 years. Now, isn't the maxim true that India is a land of marked contrasts?

Calling the bluff

It was P.C. Sorcar Junior who first burst the bubble. Sathya Sai Baba, the Omega and *vibhuti* producing godman, the magician said, was nothing but a conman. And now, a rationalist from Calcutta has challenged the Afro-haired *swami* to a public contest. Though his disciples—and members of the Siksha Ashram International—were quick to take up Prabir Ghosh's challenge, they soon chickened out. On 11 December, the appointed day when Ghosh was to drink a mixture of *vibhuti* at the Boys Scouts' tent on the Maidan, the Sai Baba's disciples failed to turn up. They had claimed that if Ghosh drank the mixture, six to eleven gold coins would appear in his stomach within five days. But the rendezvous was not to be. Instead, a beaming Ghosh distributed copies of the letter, which the Baba's followers had sent him, among the curious onlookers who had assembled for the unique event.



The Baba's followers claimed in the missive that they had called off the contest because Ghosh's contention of first testing the *vibhuti* mixture before he consumed it proved that "you are afraid of death" and "you could not resist the temptation of earning some gold coins". But obviously, Ghosh was convinced that he had called the Sai Baba's bluff

Bank fashion

It will be *haute couture*, Grindlays style, as the largest foreign bank in the country strives to retain its number one position. Through corporatewear the bank hopes to present a new image of service to the customer. The *saris*, *salwar-kameez*, trousers, shirts and skirts have been designed by Bombay's yuppie designer, Urshila Kerkar. The silks are from Kaysons, the trousers form Raymond's and the shirts and ties from Zodiac. Since wearing the corporate attire is optional and the staff would have to foot their own bill, the bank management was surprised that nearly 85



The Grindlays look

per cent of the 3,500 employees spread over 14 cities and 65 branches opted for the uniforms. The *saris* cost around Rs 400 each, a *salwar* set Rs 250, trousers Rs 200, a shirt Rs 100 or Rs 150, while a skirt and blouse come for Rs 200

The price of tourism

Tourism has its benefits and hazards, as Goans are now finding out. The land of sea, surf, sand and tourists has bred a new malaise: an alarming rate of school drop-



outs. And the reason, according to some teachers, is the high rate of unemployment among the educated. "Why should we finish school and then find ourselves without jobs when we can leave school and earn enough money?" queried a student who runs errands for tourists. True, but the sordid aspect of this practical approach is that a fair share of the jobs for schoolkids involve selling drugs and male prostitution! Surely, the overemphasis on promotion of tourism needs to be given a second look?

THIS INDIA

• DHOLPUR A dead man has been promoted by the Rajasthan education department. Lalit Mohan, a teacher, was appointed *tehsildar* and posted at Naib where he died in a road accident in 1980. Now he has been appointed headmaster and posted at the government secondary school at Salempur—*The Telegraph* (N. Chakraborty, Calcutta)

• TRIVANDRUM. A college professor who gave marks to a student who wrote Malayalam film songs in the English script for his British history examination is now facing the music himself. The university authorities have asked the professor to explain why the official recognition given to him as a teacher should not be withdrawn—*The Times of India* (R.S. Sahi, New Delhi)

• BHUBANESWAR In a reversal of roles, traders in the fish market here nabbed three constables and a home-guard who were stealthily removing fish from a loaded truck. The cops were given a thorough beating before being handed over to the police—*Indian Express* (M.T. Sampath Kumaran, Bangalore)

• RAJKOT: In the Bunder Road area of Porbander, the police were surprised to find liquor flowing out of hand-pumps. According to the police, when a raid was conducted in Porbander, an underground tank with 50 litres of the spirit was discovered—*Indian Express* (S. Pant, Bombay)

Prize Rs 100 for the entry given first

Illustrations: Krishnendu Chaki

Aggressive strides

Vyjayanthimala Bali, yesterday's twinkle toes, has been taking some aggressive strides into Tamil Nadu's politics of late. The dancer-cum-actress-turned-MP has been making a bid to have a say in the distribution of Congress tickets for the forthcoming elections in the state. Vyjayanthimala is no great friend of either TNCC(I) chief G.K. Moopanar or Union minister P. Chidambaram—the two men who have been chosen to decide how the goodies should be distributed.

The other day, Vyjayanthimala called on Rajiv Gandhi to warn him that things will be difficult for the Congress unless the party chooses "good candidates". She is also said to have told the Prime Minister that Moopanar and Chidambaram must not be left to do the selection and then went on to advise the PM to take a personal interest in this matter "as he is the best judge". As a parting shot, she told Rajiv that nobody should interfere in the selection of candidates for Madras South—her constituency. Those who think that Vyjayanthimala is just a pretty face that Rajiv wanted to decorate Parliament with had better start thinking again.

Ravi Batra



Vyjayanthimala Bali: advising the PM

Back to front

This seems to be the age of political alliances and fronts. And the latest is set to be launched in Karnataka by H.D. Deve Gowda of the ruling Janata Party. The dissident leader intends to form a "progressive pro backward class" front with a pronounced regional bias along with dissatisfied Congressmen and cine idol Rajkumar. Among the Congress leaders who are interested in joining forces with Deve Gowda is S. Bangarappa, whose son and daughter have married into the Rajkumar family.

But how many men in the Janata Party—now a part of the Janata Dal—will be interested in a new Opposition grouping, ask cynics who believe that such a front will amount to nothing. "If V.P. Singh could use the corruption issue to wean away Congressmen from Rajiv Gandhi, why can't Deve Gowda do the same with regard to Hegde?" counter Deve Gowda's supporters.

All politicians in Karnataka will now find a platform—either in the new front or the national Opposition or the Congress(I). Except, of course, R. Gundu Rao. None of the political groupings seem to be keen on him. And the former Congress chief minister seems destined to be left in the political wilderness.





(Clockwise from left) Deve Gowda, Rajkumar and Bangarappa: launching a new front?

H. Rajashekhar

Riding the Tiger

Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray was recently on a whirlwind tour of the district of Vidarbha in Maharashtra. He was a big hit with the people and everywhere he went, his meetings drew crowds. Then, suddenly, his tour was cut short.

After addressing an impressive gathering at Akola, he was on his way to another meeting at Amravati, when he received a threatening note from terrorists. He could not gamble with his life, said the police, and insisted that he cancel his tour. In fact, they even escorted



Bal Thackeray: false alarm?

him back to Bombay and safety. The ride back was uneventful except for a few tense moments when a white Maruti seemed to be "tailing" them. The Tiger is now back in his own den in Bandra, Bombay.

Are his supporters grateful that prompt action by the police saved their leader's life? Well, not all of them. Some of his followers say that it was all set up by Congress chief minister Sharad Pawar. It was he who arranged to have Thackeray whisked away by the police after a 'false' threat—a ploy to cut short his tour, they claim. But could the Congress(I) stoop so low to prevent Thackeray from taking his message to the masses? Well, you never know.

Politics and poetry

One leader who has distanced himself from the Opposition's bumbling efforts at unity is the Bharatiya Janata Party leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee. All the talk of forming united fronts hasn't seemed to interest him at all. Nor has the goings-on in Parliament of late-- he will be absent for all of this session

The truth is that Vajpayee is away in the United States as part of a government-sponsored delegation to the United Nations (he was also treated for an ailment in the country). Vajpayee, it appears, is in no hurry to get back. He spends a good part of his time writing poetry in Hindi which he sends to various newspapers and magazines in India for publication *Dharamyug* carried one of his gems recently.

Vajpayee's literary forays have led to some speculation in Opposition circles in Delhi. Some leaders have begun to suspect that he is staying away from active politics because he has gone soft on the Congress. Others believe that his poetry is a sure indication that he has gone soft in the head.





(L to r) Salfuddin Chowdhury, Gita Mukherjee, Somnath Chatterjee: vocal battle

Talking of Mamata

CPI(M) members in the Lok Sabha are having a hard time trying to be heard nowadays. And for once, it is not Speaker Balram Jakhar who is preventing them from taking the floor of the House: but the Congress(I) MP from West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee. Whenever a CPI(M) member from the state gets up to speak, the



Mamata Bannerjee: flummoxed

fiery and aggressive lady MP goes into her routine—interrupting, heckling and hooting for good measure. Somnath Chatterjee didn't know what hit him when he began to hold forth on the electoral reforms Bill the other day. He was virtually shouted into silence.

CPI(M) parliamentarians have decided that enough is enough. Unable to match the thundering power of her voice singly, they have decided to take her on jointly. Three CPI(M) MPs—Saifudddin Chowdhury, Somnath Chatterjee and Gita Mukherjee—have formed a group, along with a couple of Telugu Desam members, to set her right. Whenever Mamata takes the floor, they begin to hoot. Loud though she is, the vocal battle has clearly been unequal and it has left the lady quite flummoxed. But the CPI(M) apparently believes that only retribution will make her listen to the voice of reason.

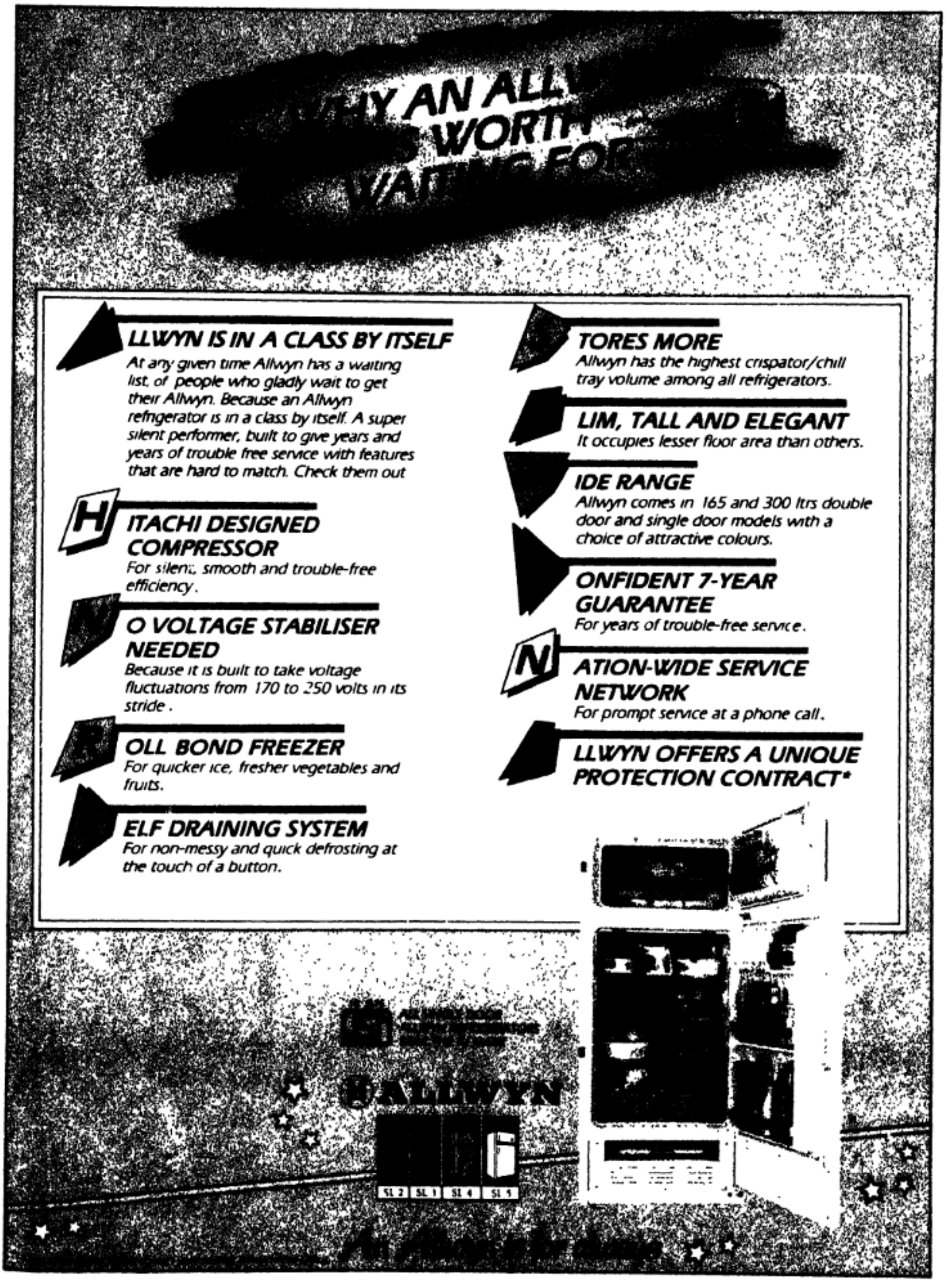
Atal Behari Vajpayee: literary aspirations



Pressing matters

If the importance of state visits is determined by the size of the accompanying press parties, then, clearly, China is the big 'un. More than 50 journalists flew out with the Prime Minister when he visited China last week. The size of a press party on a state visit usually ranges between 10 and 20. But the government clearly wants the maximum publicity for this visit and large numbers of journalists who work for the regional press have been included in the party.

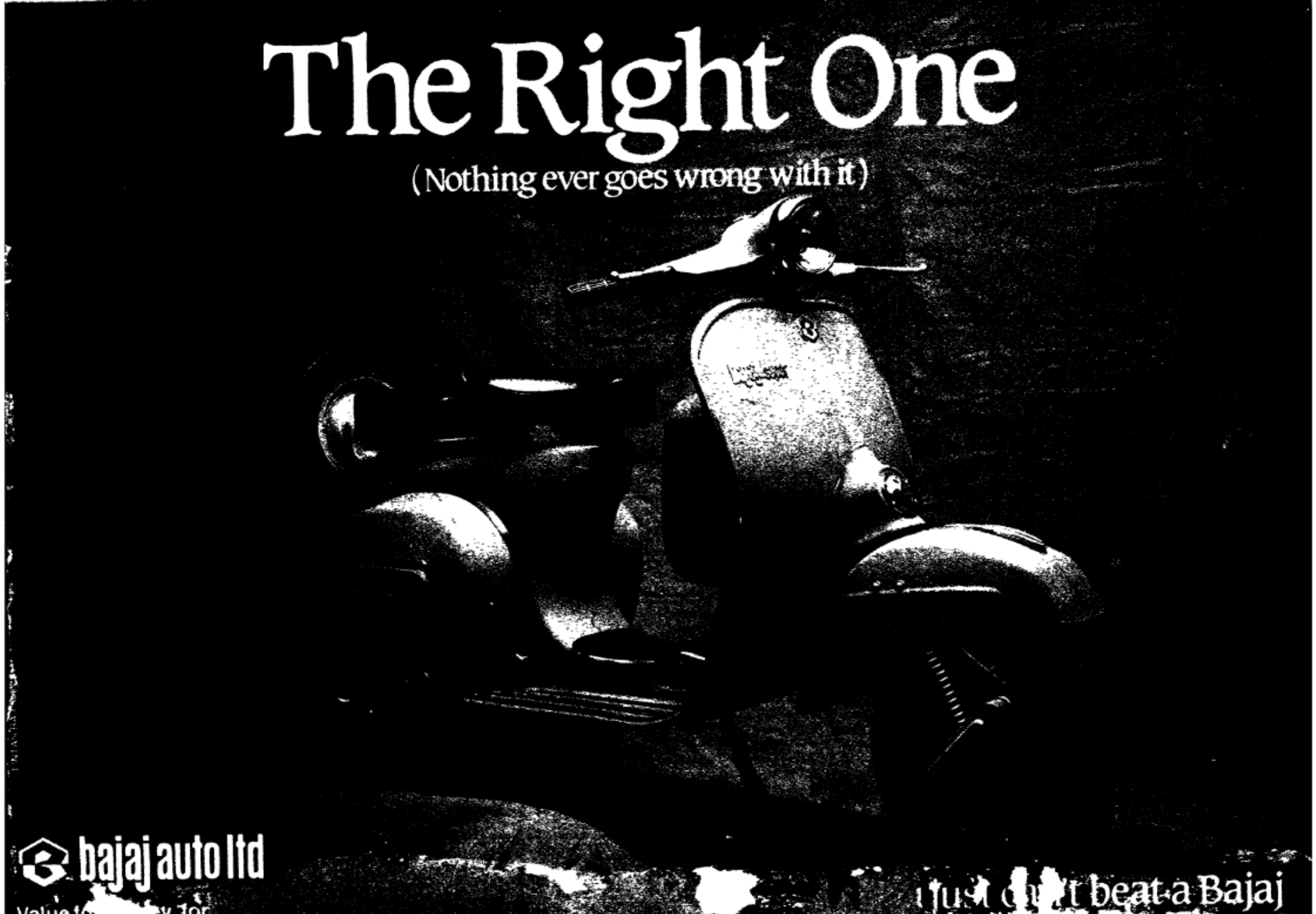
In contrast, no journalists have been invited for the PM's visit to Pakistan. "Too expensive" is the reason privately being trotted out by the government. The PM will fly to Pakistan in an Indian Air Force Boeing. Initially, he was supposed to take an AN-32 to China. But this idea was given up when someone pointed out that the smaller craft would inconvenience the press party. Finally, an Air-India Jumbo was requisitioned to allow the press to travel in some comfort.



HYDERABAD ALLWYN AREA OFFICES: Ahmedabad Ph 463181, Bangalore Ph 238885, Bhopal Ph. 64122, Bhubaneshwar Ph 52271, Bombay Ph 4927575, 4927586, 4934178, 492105 I Calcutta Ph. 440437, 446853, 433576, Chandigarh, Ph 41941, Cuddapah Ph 2230, Ernakulam Ph 368002, Gauhati Ph 32691, Ghaziabad Ph 843204, Hyderabad Ph 43407, Jabalpur Ph 22665, Jaipur Ph 65729, Kanpur Ph 245249 Karnal Ph 2480, Madras Ph 861401, Nagpur Ph 45125, New Delhi Ph 734740, 730715, Patna Ph 32745, Pune Ph 39029 Vijayawada Ph 62544, Visakhapatnam Ph 61652

The Right One

(Nothing ever goes wrong with it)



bajaj auto ltd

Value fo[illegible]ey for

[illegible] just don't beat a Bajaj